

Memo shortage of supply

November 30th 2018

Re: Bricanyl® Turbohaler® (terbutaline)

Description of product affected

Bricanyl® Turbohaler® is a dry powder inhalation device containing terbutaline 0.5mg/dose. Terbutaline is a short acting selective beta2-adrenergic agonist used for the relief and prevention of bronchospasm in asthma and other bronchopulmonary disorders in which bronchospasm or reversible airways obstruction is a complicating factor.¹

Background

Astra Zeneca UK Ltd, the manufacturer of Bricanyl® Turbohaler® have informed healthcare professionals that they are currently experiencing an interruption to normal supplies. This is resulting in a temporary stock shortage and although some stock will be available in December 2018 the stock shortage of the Bricanyl® Turbohaler® is unlikely to fully resolve until end of January 2019.²

There are no supply problems with other Turbohaler® devices (Symbicort® and Pulmicort®)

Alternative agents and management options

Bricanyl® Turbohaler® is the only terbutaline inhaler available in the UK and there is no directly equivalent product.³ However patients can be switched to an inhaler device containing salbutamol which is an alternative short acting selective beta2-adrenergic agonist. Salbutamol and terbutaline inhaler devices are both included in national guidelines and at the same points in treatment pathways.^{3,4,5}

There is no evidence for any difference in efficacy between salbutamol and terbutaline⁵ and patients can be reassured that it is safe to switch to the alternative product. However when switching from one inhaler to another there are differences in the way devices are primed and used.

- It will be necessary to discuss a change in product with each patient and ensure that they can use the new device.
- Patients should be advised that if they are switched to salbutamol and find they need to use the new product more often, to seek advice from their pharmacist, nurse or doctor.

There are a variety of salbutamol products available including standard metered dose inhalers, breath actuated inhalers and dry powder devices.^{3,6} Leaflets can be downloaded from The Internet and training videos are also available online to support healthcare professionals and patients in the use of a new inhaler device.

Some resources are given here:

RightBreathe – Website developed for prescribers presents comprehensive dosing information and prescribing particulars for all inhalers and spacer devices. Includes treatment pathways, photos of products and links to demonstration videos.

<https://www.rightbreathe.com/>

Asthma UK – Website for patients includes videos for patients on how to use their inhalers.

<https://www.asthma.org.uk/advice/inhalers-medicines-treatments/>

<https://www.asthma.org.uk/advice/inhaler-videos>

References

1. Summary of Product Characteristic. Bricanyl Turbohaler, 0.5mg/dose, inhalation powder. Accessed via eMC on 22/11/2018
<https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/product/869/smpc>
2. Personal communication Astra Zeneca November 2018
3. British National Formulary online. Accessed via NICE Evidence on 22/11/2018
<https://bnf.nice.org.uk/treatment-summary/asthma-chronic.html>
4. NICE. Asthma: diagnosis, monitoring and chronic asthma management. Clinical guideline [NG80]: November 2018:
<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng80>
5. SIGN/BTS British guideline on the management of asthma.[SIGN 153]: September 2016: <https://www.sign.ac.uk/assets/sign153.pdf>
6. Rightbreathe <https://www.rightbreathe.com/>

Acknowledgements

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