

Policy statement - Management of hyperhidrosis

- Patients with localised mild-moderate hyperhidrosis (HDSS 1-2) should be treated in primary care and not referred to the community dermatology service or secondary care (see appendix 1 for severity scale).
- Patients with generalised hyperhidrosis should be referred to the Community Dermatology Service (DHUFT or About Health). Refer directly to secondary care where iontophoresis or botulinum are required.
- Oxybutinin immediate release (IR) (off-label) should be prescribed in preference to glycopyrronium bromide (off-label). The level of evidence for oxybutynin IR and glycopyrronium bromide are of similar strength (weak). Propantheline bromide is the only oral anticholinergic licensed for hyperhidrosis in the UK but is considered to be less effective than oxybutynin or glycopyrronium. Prescribing of (off-label) glycopyrronium is not routinely commissioned and any prescribing should have been approved on an individual patient basis through the CCG's individual request process based on a patient's exceptionality.
- Endoscopic Thoracic Sympathectomy (ETS) is only commissioned following a multidisciplinary approach which supports it with both dermatology consultant and thoracic surgeon opinion. The evidence for benefit of this intervention is weak and there is significant risk of morbidity
- Tap-water iontophoresis is non-invasive and may be used for palmar, plantar and axillary hyperhidrosis. Axillary iontophoresis is effective in practice despite lack of published evidence (expert opinion). Costs are limited to activity costs for the initial treatment schedule.
- The evidence for using glycopyrronium bromide solution with iontophoresis is weak and costs in primary care are prohibitive. Where the use of glycopyrronium bromide solution with iontophoresis is being considered the supply of glycopyrronium bromide solution should remain with secondary care as a "red" drug.

Introduction

- Multiple localised and systemic therapies are available for the management of hyperhidrosis. The purpose of this document is to provide an evidence based and cost-effective treatment pathway for primary care, community services and secondary care.
- Hyperhidrosis is a disorder of excessive sweating beyond what is required for thermoregulation. The condition may be localised (also referred to as primary or focal hyperhidrosis) or secondary to medication or a medical condition (generalised hyperhidrosis).¹
- The most important issue in directing therapy for hyperhidrosis is to differentiate between primary and secondary hyperhidrosis and between subtypes of primary hyperhidrosis (i.e., palmar, plantar, axillary, or craniofacial – the areas with a high density of eccrine sweat glands).
- A complex dysfunction of the innervation of sweat glands via the sympathetic nervous system is likely to play a role in the pathophysiology of hyperhidrosis. Primary hyperhidrosis increases the risk of cutaneous infection and has a significant psychosocial burden and a negative impact on quality of life.²
- As there is no standardised definition of 'excessive sweating', clinicians base their diagnoses in part on measures to estimate how hyperhidrosis affects a patient's quality of life. The Hyperhidrosis

Disease Severity Scale (HDSS) should be used as this is easy to use and validated against other questionnaires (see appendix 1).³

- This policy is broadly in line with the NICE Clinical Knowledge Summary on hyperhidrosis⁴. However, the pathway is simplified by recommending GPs could initiate oral anticholinergic prior to referral into secondary care.

Notes about the pathway documents

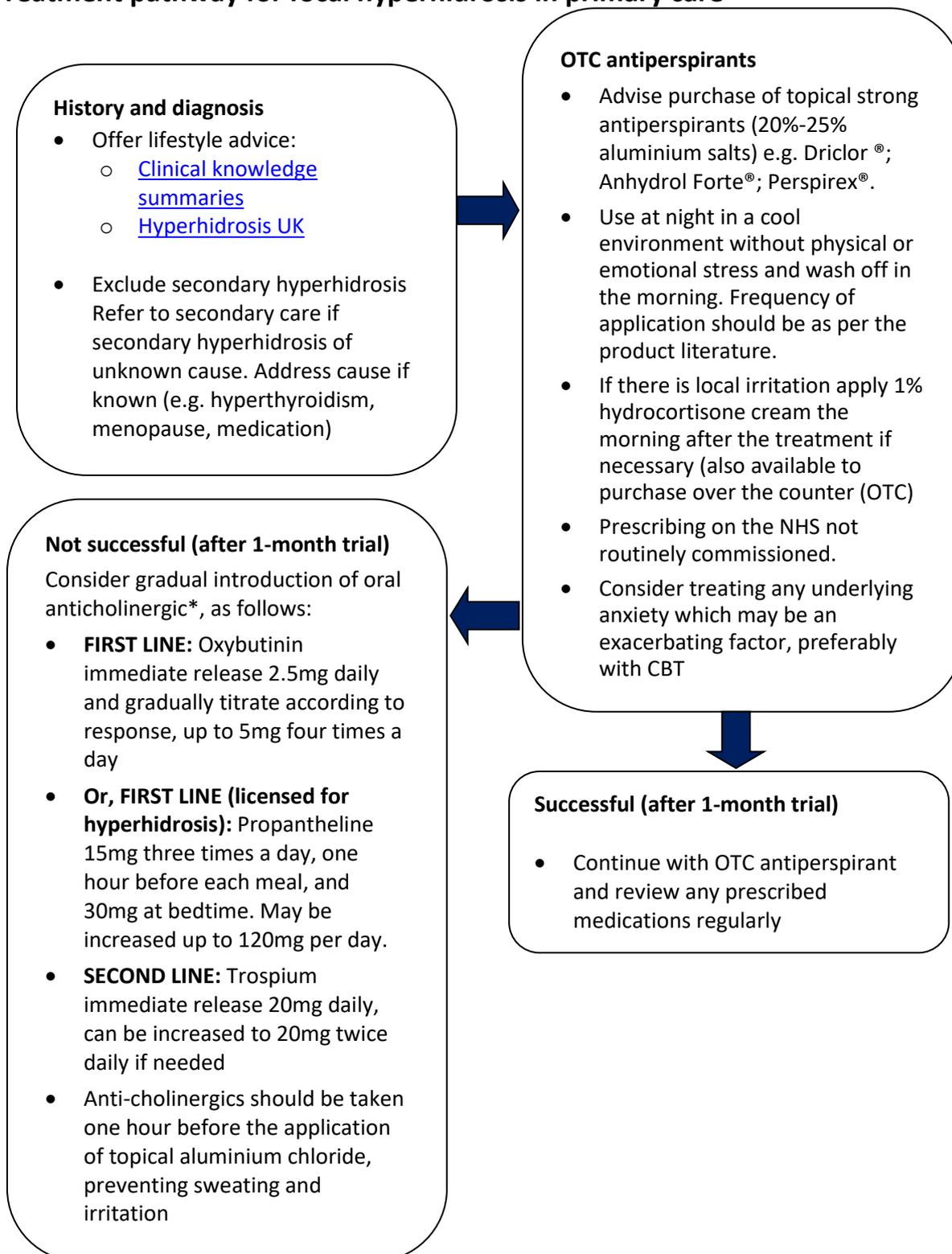
- In either pathway, **successful treatment** for hyperhidrosis can be defined as a reduction in HDSS from 3 or 4 to HDSS 1 or 2.
- For the primary care pathway, **treatment failure** can be defined as no change in HDSS score after 1 month of therapy or lack of tolerability for the treatment.
- For the secondary care pathway, **treatment failure** can be defined as no change in HDSS score after 4 weeks of therapy (3 months for surgery) or lack of tolerability for the treatment.
- With botulinum toxin A (BTX-A) injections, it is important to evaluate the treatment area: apparent failure may be due to a small area being missed. In this case, repeat treatment if the symptomatic area with a second round of BTX-A injections (at the same or higher dose) should be done before considering the treatment unsuccessful. If successful, repeat injections can be given when production of sweat is back to 50% of baseline, with a minimum treatment interval of 16 weeks.

References

1. British Association of Dermatologists website. www.bad.org.uk. Accessed 20/12/18
2. Walling HW, Swick BL. Treatment Options for Hyperhidrosis. Am J Clin Dermatol 2011; 12 (5): 1-11
3. Solish N et al. A comprehensive approach to the recognition, diagnosis, and severity-based treatment of focal hyperhidrosis: recommendations of the Canadian Hyperhidrosis Advisory Committee. Dermatol Surg 2007;33(8):908-23. Available online: http://drypharmacistcom.ipage.com/uploads/2/9/5/9/2959076/chac_recommendations.pdf
4. National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. NICE Clinical Knowledge Summary - Hyperhidrosis. Last updated May 2018. Available online: <http://cks.nice.org.uk>

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Treatment pathway for focal hyperhidrosis in primary care



*Alternative anticholinergic options could be offered if effective but not well tolerated (see [NICE CG171: Management of urinary incontinence \(off-label\) for alternative anticholinergics](#)) though evidence is lacking. For more information about licensing status and doses of oral anticholinergic options, refer to [appendix 2](#). Glycopyrronium bromide (oral solutions for sialorrhoea or as an add-on therapy in the treatment of peptic ulcer are the only licensed formulations), evidence base is similar as for oxybutynin. Prescribing of oral glycopyrronium bromide is not supported except via individual funding requests, for this indication.

Treatment pathway for hyperhidrosis in community dermatology service and secondary care (for iontophoresis or botulinum for axillary hyperhidrosis)

Assess HDSS and hyperhidrosis area (use minor iodine)

- If HDSS 1-2: refer back to primary care
- Offer life-style advice and advise the purchase of topical aluminium chloride if not already tried in primary care before offering any alternative treatment.
- Community dermatology service to refer on to secondary care where iontophoresis or botulinum indicated

Axillary

Axillary iontophoresis

- Initial schedule day 1, 2, 4, 7, 10, 15, 22
- Assess after 1 month

Patients are expected to purchase their own machine for home treatment if successful

If axillary iontophoresis not successful, consider:

- Oral anticholinergic (if not already tried in primary care/community), OR
- Topical glycopyrrolate*, OR
- Botulinum toxin A (Botox®), 50 units per axilla. Repeat not less than every 16 weeks

If topical glycopyrrolate and/or botox not successful, consider:

- Sympathectomy as per [NICE interventional procedure guidance](#).
- A dermatological opinion should be ensured before surgery is considered.

Palmar / plantar

Palmar/plantar iontophoresis

- Initial schedule day 1, 2, 4, 7, 10, 15, 22
- Assess after 1 month

Patients are expected to purchase their own machine for home treatment if successful

If palmar/plantar iontophoresis not successful, consider:

- Oral anticholinergic (if not already tried in primary care/community), OR
- Topical glycopyrrolate*,

*Topical glycopyrrolate is recognised by BAD as an option for treating hyperhidrosis.

Appendix 1: Diagnosis of primary hyperhidrosis

Symptoms and signs

- Focal visible excess sweating
- Present for at least 6 months
- No apparent secondary causes
- At least 2 of the following:
 - Bilateral and symmetric
 - Impairs activities of daily life
 - At least one episode /week
 - Age of onset <25 years
 - Positive family history (in 60-80% of cases)
 - Stops during sleep

Hyperhidrosis Disease Severity Scale (HDSS)

Subjective Score	Clinical interpretation
My sweating is never noticeable and never interferes with my daily activities	1 – mild
My sweating is tolerable but sometimes interferes with my daily activities	2 – moderate
My sweating is barely tolerable and frequently interferes with my daily activities	3 – Severe
My sweating is intolerable and always interferes with my daily activities	4 – Severe

Taken from:

Solish N, Benohanian A, Kowalski JW, Canadian Dermatology Study Group on Health-Related Quality of Life in Primary Axillary Hyperhidrosis. Prospective open-label study of botulinum toxin type A in patients with axillary hyperhidrosis: effects on functional impairment and quality of life. Dermatol Surg 2005; 31: 405-13.

Appendix 2

INFORMATION ABOUT ORAL ANTICHOLINERGICS

Choice	Licensing status	Formulary status	Dose	Cost per month ¹
FIRST LINE: Oxybutinin immediate release	Not licensed for hyperhidrosis (use for this indication will be 'off-label')	Green	2.5mg daily and gradually titrate according to response up to 5mg four times a day	£1.53 - £8.62
FIRST LINE (LICENSED OPTION): Propantheline	Licensed for hyperhidrosis	Green	15mg three times a day one hour before each meal and 30mg at bedtime. May be increased up to 120mg per day.	£25.93- £41.48
SECOND LINE: Trosipium immediate release	Not licensed for hyperhidrosis (use for this indication will be 'off-label')	Green	20mg daily can be increased to 20mg twice daily if needed	£3.06 – £6.11

1. Drug Tariff Dec 2018