

Amiodarone supply problem – guidance for GPs

Updated: 18/3/16

There are currently supply problems with amiodarone due to reductions in the number of manufacturers. It is hoped sufficient supplies will return in the next few weeks.

In the meantime, cardiology have advised that there are a cohort of patients who must not stop taking amiodarone, despite its very long half-life i.e. those taking it for **recurrent VT** or with **previous VF arrest**. Patients taking amiodarone for PAF should be stable without medication for up to two weeks.

Patients should NOT be switched to dronedarone without cardiology advice (or GP cardiology specialist).

In order to preserve supplies, please only prescribe amiodarone for priority patient groups and reduce the quantity per Rx (14 days is suggested). Please ensure that prescription teams are aware of this information.

Therefore, the short term action for practices is:

- Search for your patients on amiodarone
- Identify the exact indication
- Establish from Rx ordering Hx when they are likely to run out of medication
- *Identify those who need urgent action i.e.*
 - o *those taking for VT / previous VF arrest AND*
 - o *are expected to run out within the next two weeks*
- Contact the nominated pharmacies for these patients and identify if they have stock or are able to obtain stock, and then ask them if they could put aside stock for each patient
- Issue amiodarone on a separate prescription form/EPs token from other medicines to avoid cancelling whole prescription if amiodarone cannot be dispensed
- Issue 14 day quantity on prescription to ensure as many patients as possible can access a supply
- If the patient's nominated pharmacy does not have stock, they could be directed to a pharmacy you have already identified as having sufficient stock
- If there is no stock readily available, contact ESHT cardiology secretaries on:
 - o EDGH 01323 438220 or 01323 413721
 - o Conquest 01424 755255 ext 6319
- Cardiology will arrange a Rx for two weeks which will be dispensed at the hospital pharmacy; **patients will need to go to the hospital pharmacy to collect the medication.** Cardiology secretaries will advise when the Rx will be sent to the pharmacy; advise patients not to go to the hospital pharmacy until at least 2 hours after this time. The hospital pharmacies are open from 9-5.30 Mon-Fri and 9-12.30 on Sat ONLY.
- Rx requests from other patients:
 - o Contact patient / add note to Rx to advise them they may experience a delay in obtaining the medication; reassure those using for PAF that cardiology have advised that a week or two without medication is unlikely to cause a problem due to the long time that amiodarone stays in the body.
- Cardiologists who can be contacted for clinical advice:
 - o Conquest: Dr David Walker on 01424 755255 ext 6319
 - o EDGH: Dr Steve Furniss on (direct dial) 01323 438220 / Dr Rick Veasey on (direct dial) 01323 413721

This situation will be monitored over the next few weeks and further advice will be issued as necessary.