From the Deputy Chief Medical Officer
Dr Paddy Woods

Chief Pharmaceutical Officer
Dr Mark Timoney

Department of Health
www.health-ni.gov.uk

Patient Safety Alert

Subject:

Risk of patient harm from an interaction between miconazole and coumarin anticoagulants

Circular Reference: HSC (SQSD) 38/16

Date of Issue: 17 June 2016

Chief Executives, HSC Trusts for cascade to:
- *Medical Directors*
- *Directors of Acute Hospital Services*
- *Directors of Nursing*

Chief Executive, NIMDTA
Chief Executive, RQIA
Chief Executive, HSCB

For Information to:

Chief Executive, NIAS
Chief Executive, Public Health Agency
Director of Public Health/Medical Director, PHA
Director of Nursing, PHA
Dir of Performance Management & Service Improvement, HSCB
Safety & Quality Alerts Team, HSC Board
Prof. Sam Porter, Head of Nursing & Midwifery, QUB
Prof.Pascal McKeown, Head of Medical School, QUB
Prof. Donald Burden, Head of School of Dentistry, QUB
Professor Carmel Hughes, Head of School of Pharmacy QUB
Dr Owen Barr, Head of School of Nursing, UU
Prof. Paul McCarron, Head of Pharmacy School, UU
Post Graduate Dean, NIMDTA
Post Graduate Dental Dean, NIMDTA
Staff Tutor of Nursing, Open University
Director, Safety Forum
Lead, NI Medicines Governance Team
NI Medicines Information Service
NI Centre for Pharmacy Learning and Development
Clinical Education Centre
NI Royal College of Nursing

Related documents

Patient Safety Notice PSN 032 May 2016 available at:
http://www.patientsafety.wales.nhs.uk/news/41541

Summary of Contents:

The purpose of this circular is to highlight the risk of patient harm from an interaction between miconazole and coumarin anticoagulants

Superseded documents

N/A

Enquiries:

Any enquiries about the content of this circular should be addressed to:

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Mark.Timoney@health-ni.gov.uk

Implementation

Immediate

Dear Colleagues.

Risk of patient harm from an interaction between miconazole and coumarin anticoagulants

Coroner's Report

A Regulation 28 Report was issued by HM Coroner to Welsh Government on 7 March 2016 regarding the death of a patient from intracerebral haemorrhage (stroke). In this particular incident, the patient was regularly prescribed warfarin for treatment of atrial fibrillation and was concomitantly prescribed miconazole oral gel for the treatment of oral thrush by a dentist. On admission to hospital the patient was found to have a significantly raised International Normalised Ratio (INR) and subsequently died from an intracerebral haemorrhage. The coroner considered that the combined use of warfarin and miconazole may have been a contributory factor in the death of this patient.

The coroner is concerned that:

- There appears to be a lack of knowledge of the interaction of warfarin and miconazole amongst health professionals; and/or
- It is not clear which sources of information health professionals should use to check possible interactions.

A Patient Safety Notice (PSN) has been issued by the Welsh Government to ensure that health professionals who prescribe and supply medicines in Wales are aware of the potential for interactions to occur between miconazole, including topical preparations, and coumarin anticoagulants (warfarin, acenocoumarol, phenindione); and to highlight readily accessible sources of information regarding drug-drug interactions. A copy of the PSN is available from: http://www.patientsafety.wales.nhs.uk/news/41541

Yours sincerely

Dr Paddy Woods
Deputy Chief Medical Officer

Dr Mark Timoney
Chief Pharmaceutical Officer

Action Required

Chief Executives of HSC Trusts should:

- Circulate this notice to all medical, dental, nursing, pharmacy and non-medical prescribing staff.
- Identify if the co-prescribing of miconazole containing products and coumarin anticoagulants has or could occur in your organisation.
- Consider if immediate action needs to be taken locally and ensure that an action plan is put in place, if required, to minimise the risks of these incidents occurring.
- Before prescribing any miconazole containing products, ensure that prescribers check the patient's medical and drug history (using electronic records and/or questioning the patient/relatives), in particular the current use of coumarin anticoagulants.
- Before dispensing miconazole containing products, pharmacy staff must check the patient's medical and drug history (using electronic records and/or questioning the patient/relatives), in particular the current use of coumarin anticoagulants.
- Ensure that healthcare professionals prescribing, supplying and administering miconazole containing products must check for drug interactions using an appropriate resource (e.g. British National Formulary, electronic Medicines Compendium) and take appropriate action to ensure patient safety.

Chief Executive, RQIA should:

- Disseminate this alert to all relevant independent sector providers.

Chief Executive, HSCB should**:**

- Disseminate this alert to community pharmacies, General Medical Practitioners, General Dental Practitioners and community nurses.

- Share any learning from local investigations or locally developed good practice resources via the medicines governance network.

Chief Executive, NIMDTA should:

- Disseminate this alert to doctors and dentists in training in all relevant specialities.