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To: All Community Pharmacies
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Dear Colleagues,

MISUSE OF HYOSCINE BUTYLBROMIDE (BUSCOPAN)

The aim of this letter is to raise awareness of the misuse potential of hyoscine butylbromide (Buscopan). Buscopan is an anticholinergic licensed for the relief of spasm of the genito-urinary tract or gastro-intestinal tract and for the symptomatic relief of Irritable Bowel Syndrome and is available both as a Prescription Only Medicine (POM) and as a Pharmacy medicine (P).¹

We are aware of increasing reports of persons crushing and smoking Buscopan. These actions may generate scopolamine, the ingestion of which may cause hallucinations (auditory, visual and tactile), amnesia, insomnia, palpitations, flushing, irritability, and inability to concentrate.^{2,3}

ACTION FOR PRESCRIBERS

It is recommended that in the light of these reports that prescribers review patients being prescribed hyoscine butylbromide and ensure the treatment is appropriate and consider prescribing an alternative if deemed necessary in instances where treatment is still indicated.

For gastrointestinal disorders, the [Northern Ireland Formulary](http://www.nifformulary.hscni.net) advises that mebeverine 135mg tablets are prescribed as the 1st line antispasmodic

1 <https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/product/891/smpc> , &
<https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/product/1775/smpc>

2 Farzad Jalali, Reza Afshari & Ali Babaei (2014) Smoking Crushed Hyoscine/Scopolamine Tablets as Drug Abuse, Substance Use & Misuse, 49:7, 793-797, DOI: 10.3109/10826084.2014.880178

3 S, Rickert A, Daldrup T, Mayatepek E. Abuse of the over-the-counter antispasmodic butylscopolamine for the home synthesis of psychoactive scopolamine. Eur J Pediatr. 2016 Jul;175(7) 1019-1021. DOI:10.1007/s00431-015-2683-5. PMID: 26691719.

4 <https://nifformulary.hscni.net/formulary/1-0-gastro-intestinal-system/1-2-antispasmodics-and-other-drugs-altering-gut-motility/>

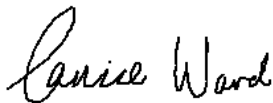
medicine with 2nd line treatment being peppermint oil capsules.⁴ This is in part due to mebeverine and peppermint oil being less likely to cause adverse anti-cholinergic effects when compared with hyoscine butylbromide.

ACTION FOR COMMUNITY PHARMACISTS

Community pharmacists are asked to maintain their usual vigilance regarding sales of Buscopan preparations and to remind staff of the legal and professional framework for sales of these products.

If you become aware of requests for such preparations at your pharmacy which you regard as unusual or excessive, please contact an Inspector.

Yours sincerely



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