

NPSA Patient Safety Alert 20, Promoting safer use of injectable medicines

The NI Regional working group on Alert 20 was established in November 2007. It is a multi-professional group with representation from across each of the Trusts, primary care and NICPPET.

The working group ran a half-day workshop in February 2008 to make healthcare professions aware of the Alert. The workshop was well-attended. Una Lavery, the governance pharmacist from the Leeds Teaching Hospitals' Trust, ran a practical session on how to carry out a risk assessment and shared her learning from the approach taken in Leeds. Their risk assessments were submitted in January 2008.

The recommendations of the working group area as follows:

- 1. Undertake a risk assessment of injectable medicine procedures and products in all clinical areas to identify high risks, and develop an action plan to minimise them.**

Following the training session at the multidisciplinary workshop in February 2008, each Trust's Head of Pharmacy and Medicines Management has been asked to lead an initial risk assessment of injectable medicinal products in all the Trusts' clinical areas and to highlight ways of minimizing high risks.

The NPSA risk assessment questionnaire is available in electronic format and has been circulated to all Trust Pharmacy Managers.

A risk assessment questionnaire has been produced by the primary care group – one for general practice and one for dental practice. GP practices should complete this online if possible by the end of June 2008.

The working group is meeting on 23rd July to review progress with initial risk assessments, identify high risks and discuss associated action plans to minimise them.

- 2. Ensure there are up-to-date protocols and procedures for prescribing, preparing and administering injectable medicines in all clinical areas.**

A sub-group of the Regional working group has been meeting to produce standardized protocols and procedures based on the templates used by the NPSA.

Sub-group members are:

- Ms Angela Diamond
- Mr Ewan McGrattan
- Dr Cormac McLoughlin
- Ms Mary McElroy

3. Ensure essential technical information on injectable medicines is available and accessible to healthcare staff in clinical areas at the point of use.

Dr Eilish Smith and the medicines information network have had input into the production of the newly updated Hammersmith Guidelines for Intravenous Medicines. The Regional working group recommends that all Trusts should make this book easily accessible at ward level and is exploring the need for the availability of the book in primary care. This will become clear following the initial risk assessment process. These books have been purchased for use in all Trusts in NI.

4. Implement a 'purchasing for safety' policy to promote procurement of injectable medicines with inherent safety features.

A small sub-group of the Regional working group has met to produce a draft NI Regional Purchasing for Safety policy. This draft policy will be brought to the Pharmaceutical Contracting Executive Group for discussion and approval at its next meeting in September 2008.

The sub-group members are:

- Dr Tracey Boyce
- Ms Anne Friel
- Dr Jill Mairs
- Mrs Angela Carrington

5. Provide training for, and supervision of, all healthcare staff involved in prescribing, administering and monitoring injectable medicines.

The Regional working group has been discussing the development of distance learning packages for healthcare staff involved in these processes. This could be made available through the NICPPET website as part of the work being carried out in medicines governance. We understand that there is national work being carried out on such on-line training and would recommend that Northern Ireland is part of the roll-out of this work.

6. As part of the annual medicines management audit programme, healthcare organisations should include an audit of medication practice with injectable medicines

This recommendation is self-explanatory.

Appendix 1

Membership of the Regional working group on NPSA Alert 20

NAME	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE / E-MAIL
Dr Tracey Boyce Director of Pharmaceutical Services Southern Health & Social Care Trust	Pharmacy Department Craigavon Area Hospital 68 Lurgan Road Portadown BT63 5QQ	
Ms Anne Friel Director of Pharmaceutical Services Western Health & Social Care Trust	Pharmacy Department Altnagelvin Area Hospital Glenshane Road Londonderry	
Ms Angela Diamond Principal Pharmacist Aseptics	Pharmacy Department Altnagelvin Area Hospital Glenshane Road Londonderry	
Dr Cormac McLoughlin Consultant Anaesthetist	Belfast City Hospital Lisburn Road Belfast	
Mr Ewan McGrattan Aseptics Pharmacist	Pharmacy Department Antrim Area Hospital	
Mr James Taggart Interface Pharmacist - Specialist Medicines	Pharmacy Department Belfast City Hospital Lisburn Road Belfast	
Dr Jill Mairs Regional Procurement Pharmacist	Pharmacy Department Whiteabbey Hospital	

NAME	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE / E-MAIL
Ms Eilish Smith	Regional Medicines and Poisons Information Centre Royal Victoria Hospital Belfast	
Mrs Angela Carrington Medicines Governance Team Leader (Maternity Leave covered by:)	Pharmacy Department Royal Victoria Hospital Belfast	
Ms Lisa Smith Medicines Governance Pharmacist South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust	Pharmacy Department Ulster Hospital Dundonald	
Mary McElroy Senior Nursing Manager Belfast Health & Social Care Trust	Mater Hospital Crumlin Road Belfast	
Ms Nan Simpson Aseptic Pharmacist	Pharmacy Department Royal Victoria Hospital	
Mr Danny McLaughlin Radiography Manager Western Health & Social Care Trust	Altnagelvin Area Hospital Glenshane Road Londonderry	
Barbara Money Penny	Childrens Hospital Royal Victoria Hospital Belfast	
Dr Colin Adair Director NICPET	School of Pharmacy Queens University Belfast	
Mrs Colette McBride Deputy Director of Pharmacy Belfast Health & Social Care Trust	Pharmacy Department Royal Victoria Hospital Belfast	
Ms Wendy Cross Senior Nurse	Western Health & Social Care Trust	