

'Lord Carter's plans for saving the NHS £5bn a year'

BBC

'Hospitals could save billions by improving procurement and staff management'
OnMedica

'NHS could save billions with more effective spending'

Nottingham Post

'Efficient NHS 'could save £5bn''
BT

'NHS can save £5bn by cutting waste – report'
Sky News

'Carter Review sets out plan to save NHS £5bn a year'
Health Service Journal (HSJ)

'NHS efficiency review identifies £5bn in savings'
Public Finance

Feature article

Valproate treatment: risks and precautions

The Carter Review

Includes specific recommendations for NHS hospital pharmacies

And more

- Joanna - a face to the name
- A new free app for safe lithium treatment
- Clinical guidelines
- E-learning reducing antimicrobial resistance
- Enhancing our range of medical supplies

A welcome from the editor

Welcome to the April issue of Ashtons Pharmacy News.

Our feature article is on valproate treatment and covers the risks and necessary precautions when treating female patients. This is an extremely important subject, as there are still pregnant patients being prescribed valproate when there may be other options available. This article looks at the serious risks of using valproate during pregnancy and offers recommended precautions.

The recent Carter Review is still very much on people's minds, so we have an in-depth look at what it means for the healthcare sector, including specific recommendations for NHS pharmacies. Ashtons has already put into place the recommendations, so our hospital clients can be assured that we are providing the most cost effective pharmacy services.

Starting this month we have added two new sections to our newsletter, so we can keep you up-to-date with changes and improvements to our overall service. We now have a specialised sales manager in medical supplies who will be striving to offer you the best possible price on all your hospital's needs. The medical supplies section is at the back of the newsletter and this quarter we look at infection control and diabetes, and how we can help your hospital with that. Also we have added a section welcoming our new customers.

Finally, if you or any of your colleagues would like to subscribe free of charge to Ashtons Pharmacy News so that you don't miss out, please provide us with your email address and we will ensure you receive your own electronic copy every quarter.



Kind regards,

**Martin
England,
Editor**



Ashtons people A face to the name - Joanna Sowden

If you have ever telephoned Ashtons, the chances are you have spoken to Joanna. Joanna is one of the longest-serving members of our team here at Ashtons, racking up an incredible 23 years' service and she helps our clients every day.

Joanna's previous roles

When you work somewhere for 23 years, you are more than likely to have completed a couple of different roles while at the company. When Joanna started she was the Dispensary Manager for residential care homes and nursing homes. However, after Ashtons changed direction to focus primarily on hospitals and hospices, Joanna moved to help our dispensary team at Dyke Road Mews with labelling named patient medication and assisting our customers over the phone. This is where she shined, and the rest, you could say, was history.

It's not every day you get an employee dedicating so many years to a company, so we thought we'd catch up with Joanna to put a face to the voice and ask the following questions:

What do you currently do for Ashtons and what does that entail?

"I am currently Principle Pharmacy Technician, generally helping our customers, working with named patient queries and helping with the clozapine side of the operation."

What's the most enjoyable part of your job?

"I really do enjoy speaking to a variety of people on the phone. You can sometimes feel shut away in an office but the human interaction side of this job is great! Over the years that I've been here I've built up good rapport with customers and know most of their hospitals well. I think that this builds up trust as clients don't have to explain themselves over and over again to lots of different people and they know that I know their concerns because I've dealt with them before. Building these relationships with my clients is the highlight of my working day."

What made you want to focus on customer services at Ashtons?

"I love talking, so being on the phone to customers was second nature and I thoroughly enjoy it. Solving customers' problems is also quite a fulfilling part of the job as it keeps me on my toes, and gives the job a bit of variety, as you don't know what the next customer query will be. I've seen Ashtons grow so much over the 23 years I've been here, and I feel proud to have been a part of it."

Finally, what do you like doing outside of the office?

"I love to read! I find it extremely relaxing and you won't catch me anywhere without my kindle. I also love to go out for dinners and have different cuisines but I equally like staying in and cooking a meal with my husband."

If you would like to contact Joanna or any of our Customer Services Team, then please call **0845 222 3550**.

Feature article

Valproate treatment



Valproate treatment: risks and precautions

In February 2016, the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) sent out a Drug Safety Update reminding prescribers of the risks associated with prescribing valproate based-medicines to female patients, such as Epilim®, Depakote® and generic non-brand equivalents. Although these risks are well known, there is concern that valproate is still prescribed without adequate information being given to the patient. Several communication aids have been developed to support the discussion with the patient.

“Children exposed to valproate in the womb are at high risk of serious developmental disorders (occurs in up to 30% to 40% of cases) and congenital malformations (approximately 10% of cases).”

The risk of valproate to a foetus

Children exposed to valproate in the womb are at high risk of serious developmental disorders (occurs in up to 30 to 40% of cases) and congenital malformations (approximately 10% of cases).

It is vital that female patients receive full details of the risks of treatment with valproate and specifically the potential adverse effects to the foetus. A written consent form is recommended.

Recommended precautions:

- Do not prescribe valproate to girls, female adolescents, women of child-bearing age, or pregnant women unless all other treatments are ineffective
- Valproate must be started and supervised by a doctor experienced in managing epilepsy or bipolar disorder
- Review annually
- All girls and women of child-bearing age must be informed and understand:
 1. The risks associated with taking valproate during pregnancy
 2. The need to use effective contraception
 3. The need for regular treatment review

4. The need to speak to a doctor urgently if she is planning a pregnancy or has become pregnant

Prescribers should use the checklist provided by the MHRA and document this in the notes.

The safety information and checklists for prescribers and the educational materials for patients that have been developed are available via <http://tinyurl.com/ha6334z>

These include a:

- Booklet for healthcare professionals
- Checklist for healthcare professionals
- Valproate patient guide
- Valproate patient card

These resources are also available direct from Sanofi by telephoning **0845 372 7101** or email UK-Medicalinformation@sanofi.com.

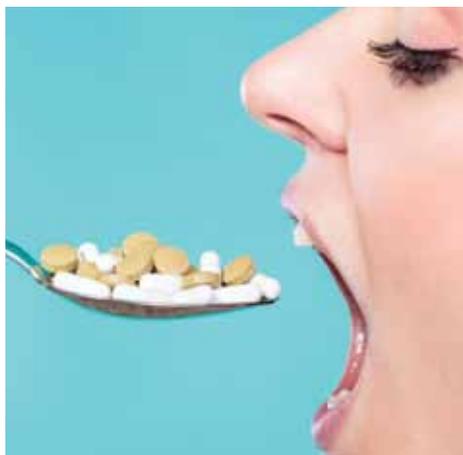


Written by

Mary Wild
Clinical Pharmacist

Clinical guidelines

NICE guidance and quality standards



NHS England launches national programme to combat antibiotic overusage

Antibiotic resistance has been a growing problem in recent years and now the NHS has launched the world's largest healthcare incentive scheme for hospitals, family doctors and other health service providers to help prevent this.

Antibiotics save lives every day, and if the growing resistance against them continues, it will pose a serious threat to patient safety, as a simple infection could soon be life threatening. The World Health Organization estimate that antimicrobial-resistant infections cause at least 50,000 deaths across the US and Europe, with that number estimated to grow to ten million deaths worldwide in the coming decades.

Overusing antibiotics and inappropriate prescribing are blamed for causing this and now the NHS has acted. Funding is now available to hospitals and other providers to reduce the use of antibiotics.

Their new programme goes live in April 2016 and NHS England reports that incentives will be made available via the Commissioning for Quality and Innovation (CQUIN) and through clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) to support expert pharmacists and clinicians to review and reduce inappropriate prescribing.

For more information, please visit:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/2016/03/antibiotic-overusage/>



CG185: Bipolar disorder: assessment and management

This NICE guideline was updated in February 2016 to link it to the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency's (MHRA) valproate toolkit to ensure female patients are better informed about the risks of taking valproate during pregnancy. Healthcare professionals are advised to use this guideline in conjunction with the latest MHRA advice and resources.

The recommendations included in this guideline are:

- Care for patients across all phases of bipolar disorder
- Recognising and managing bipolar disorder in adults in primary care
- Assessing and managing suspected bipolar disorder in adults in secondary care
- Managing crisis, risk and behaviour
- Managing mania or hypomania in adults in secondary care
- Managing bipolar in adults in the longer term in secondary care
- Monitoring physical health in secondary care
- Promoting recovery and return to primary care
- How to use medication
- Recognising, diagnosing and managing bipolar young people

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg185>



QS114: Irritable bowel syndrome in adults

Irritable bowel syndrome is a chronic, relapsing and often life-long disorder. It is characterised by abdominal pain or discomfort, which may be relieved by defaecation or accompanied by a change in bowel habit. Symptoms may include constipation or diarrhoea or both, and abdominal distension, usually referred to as bloating.

This NICE quality standard covers the diagnosis and management of irritable bowel syndrome.

This NICE quality standard is expected to contribute to improvements in the following outcomes:

- Undiagnosed irritable bowel syndrome in adults
- Quality of life for adults with irritable bowel syndrome
- Satisfaction with care received for irritable bowel syndrome
- Unnecessary hospital attendances for symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome
- Inappropriate investigations

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/qs114>



NG43: Transition from children's to adults' services

This NICE guideline covers the period before, during and after a young person moves from children's services to adults' services. It aims to help young people and their carers have a better experience of transition by improving the way it's planned and carried out. It covers both health and social care.

Service users have a right to be involved in their care, which should be appropriate for their needs.

The recommendations for the guidance include:

- Overarching principles for good transition
- Planning transition
- Support before and after transfer
- The supporting infrastructure for transition

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng43>



NG31: Care of dying adults in the last days of life

This NICE guideline provides recommendations on symptom management (pain, breathlessness, nausea and vomiting, anxiety, delirium, agitation and noisy respiratory secretions) and maintaining hydration in adult patients receiving palliative care during the last two to three days of life.

The recommendations included in this guideline include:

- Recognising when people are entering the last few days of life
- Communicating and share decision making
- Clinically assisted hydration
- Medicines for symptom management
- Anticipatory prescribing

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng31>



NG34: Sunlight exposure: risks and benefits

This NICE guideline covers how to communicate the risks and benefits of natural sunlight exposure (specifically, the ultraviolet rays UVA and UVB) to help people understand why they may need to modify their behaviour to reduce their risk of skin cancer and vitamin D deficiency.

The recommendations included in this guideline include:

- At risk groups
- Communicating consistent balanced messages
- Mass media campaigns to raise awareness of the risks and benefits
- Local strategies to raise awareness among at-risk groups

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng34>

Training for healthcare teams

E-learning reducing antimicrobial resistance

Antimicrobial resistance is a major threat because if antibiotics lose their effectiveness in preventing and treating infections then patients' lives will be at risk. This will affect many routine treatments, such as setting broken bones, and basic surgical operations, as well as treating people with infections. All healthcare professionals, carers and the general public have a significant role in preventing infections and in the proper use of antibiotics.

An e-learning programme has been developed by Health Education England in collaboration with Public Health

England and NHS England on reducing antimicrobial resistance.

The programme is a single e-learning module entitled 'Reducing Antimicrobial Resistance: An Introduction' and the package aims to support staff in understanding the threats posed by antimicrobial resistance.

This e-learning provides the key facts about antimicrobial resistance, how to tackle antimicrobial resistance, and describes the important role everyone working in a health and social care environment has in tackling it.

You can access this e-learning course via: <http://tinyurl.com/zb362g5>



The Carter Review

Carter Review includes specific recommendations for NHS hospital pharmacies



The final recommendations of Lord Carter's review on improving productivity and performance of the NHS in England set out a blueprint for the 'model hospital', and includes challenging improvements for pharmacy departments to address. With the NHS bill for medicines standing at £6.7 billion, improvements in medicines management will deliver significant savings, reduced errors and improved patient care.

One of the main aims is to allow pharmacists and pharmacy technicians to spend more time on front-line, patient-facing activities to improve medicines optimisation. By April 2017, each NHS Trust should have undertaken a Hospital Pharmacy Transformation Programme (HPTP) to develop plans to increase pharmacist prescribers, electronic prescribing and administration, accurate cost coding of medicines, and consolidate stock holding by April 2020.

Underpinning this, the review sets out some clear recommendations for hospital pharmacies. Primarily, each Trust should

nominate a main board director to work with the Chief Pharmacist in making the changes, leading to 80% of NHS pharmacist resource to focus on medicines optimisation, governance and safety.

Other recommendations include moving prescribing and administration to electronic systems and ensuring the coding of medicines is accurately recorded within NHS reference costs. NHS Improvement will publish the top ten medicines with cost saving opportunities each month and NHS drug prices should be benchmarked to ensure competitiveness.

Focusing on the medicines optimisation role will be a difficult transition for most Trusts, with upheaval from outsourcing or reconfiguration within pharmacy departments. NHS hospital management should look to how the independent sector has already delivered the improvements required. There is already a long-term trend towards outsourcing pharmacy services, which is a recommendation of the Carter Report.

Currently, in NHS hospital pharmacies,

55% of pharmacy staff time is spent on infrastructure services, including the procurement and supply of medicines. This compares to 5% in the independent hospitals we work with. Utilising non-pharmacy staff or outsourcing the supply of medication could free up the time of the hospital's pharmacy staff to focus on clinical activities.

In particular, buying and distributing medicines can be done more efficiently by non-pharmacy staff, freeing up clinical pharmacy staff to focus on promoting the best use of medication and improving medicines management.

Medicines stock holding is a key area of focus and varies between 11 and 36 days for Trusts, with 20 days being the average, compared to 18 days in many independent hospitals, based on our experience. If all NHS hospitals achieve the 20 days stock holding target, this alone could save £200 million.

The NHS faces significant challenges to improve productivity and performance. If all hospitals achieve the current average cost of medicines per patient, the NHS could save £800 million and improve patient care. The recommended practises are being put in place in NHS hospitals.

Ashtons has already implemented Carter's recommendations and works with independent hospitals to maintain and improve medicine management standards.



Written by

Martin England
Pharmacy Services
Director

Welcome to our new clients

Ashtons welcomes five new clients over the new year

Ashtons is pleased to welcome new client Cornerstone House, part of Vision Mental Healthcare, to provide a range of services to, including medicines management and the supply of medicines, as well as specific training support and assistance with CQC compliance.

The company has also added Braeburn House and Life Works, both part of the

Priory Group, to the hospitals it already provides services to in the group, as well as Optegra Central London, which joins the other Optegra group hospitals Ashtons already works with.

Dr Matthew Angel, Managing Director of Vision Mental Healthcare, said: "We chose Ashtons because it offers a unique range of services and expertise under one roof. The team really understood our business and recognised areas where their experience could help us develop our medicines management practices

and enhance patient outcomes."

Laurence Sprey, Managing Director, said: "Our growing client list is testament to the work we do to continuously innovate and improve our offering to ensure that Ashtons continues to add value and help hospitals maintain and surpass the high standards of medicines management they must adhere to."

For more information about the range of services Ashtons offers, please visit www.ashtonshospitalpharmacy.com

Clinical update

Innovative free app for safe lithium treatment

An innovative app has been created by the pharmacy services at South West London and St George's Mental Health NHS Trust to help with the safe prescribing, administering and monitoring of lithium. It will be a free service focused on lithium medicine management, but it has scope to be adapted to a variety of other medicines.

Lithium is a drug that is used most commonly to treat bipolar disorder, and patients have to be closely monitored while on a course of lithium. Lithium blood levels must be checked every 3 months, kidney and thyroid function checked every

six months and an annual health check must be carried out as well.

Research was carried out among patients and it showed that they wanted the option of recording all this information in an electronic format rather than in a book, which has been the recommended method by NICE.

The app was developed with the support of Bipolar UK members and will:

- Record lithium treatment and levels
- Set health check reminders using the calendar function
- Record health check results at recommended intervals

- Record mood and sleep using the diary function
- Email GP or specialist prescriber test results
- Store emergency information and contacts
- Have a learning section with Frequently Asked Questions, Dos and Don'ts and a section on side effects

The app is available for Android and Apple devices and it is completely free to use. It is password protected, and helps to maintain the patient's dignity, as the app is discreet and secure.

<http://tinyurl.com/jfrnzf8>



Risk assessment of naloxone preparations for opiate withdrawal

Naloxone injection is used to treat an overdose of opiate drugs in emergency situations when there is immediate threat to life due to a diagnosis of respiratory depression. It is available in pre-filled syringes and also ampoules. However, there is an increased risk of naloxone overdosing with some preparations, triggering significant withdrawal symptoms which can be life-threatening in some circumstances.

UK Medicines Information (UKMi) has produced an assessment which reviews four UK licensed naloxone products

available in a pre-filled syringe preparation and summarises considerations associated with their in-use safety when used as an emergency antidote.

To reduce risk of inadvertent naloxone overdose, use of single dose ampoules or pre-filled syringes with an associated training programme is recommended.

In addition, the use of local protocols, and also standardising the naloxone products that are available, will reduce risk and increase patient safety.

For more information and to view this report visit: <http://tinyurl.com/jdyc8nh>



Medical supplies

Enhancing our range of medical supplies

Introduction to our medical supplies

Ashtons prides itself on being a one-stop-shop for all your medical supplies, so much so that we have now hired a specialist Medical Supplies Manager, Graeme Whittaker, to focus on meeting all of your medical supplies requirements.

Graeme loves his rugby and, being South African, is an avid follower of the Springboks. His real passion lies in supply chain management however, and he will strive to help simplify your ordering process for a whole range of medical supplies, helping you gain better access to more of the products you require.

If you would like to contact Graeme about any of your medical supplies requirements you can email him on graemewhittaker@ahps.co.uk or call him on 01273 224 604.

Diabetes products

3.2 million people have been diagnosed with diabetes in the UK, and this number is expected to rise to 4 million in ten years. This indicates that there is a great need for diabetes products in hospitals, coupled with the fact that diabetes is up to five times more common in those with severe mental illnesses than in the general population.

It is recommended that in-patients in mental health wards should be tested on admission and routinely during their stay because it is so prevalent, and there is

increased risk in this population. Diabetes can remain undetected for ten years or more, so it is important to screen.

The main diabetes products we stock include – blood glucose testing kits, blood glucose test strips, diabetes needles non-safety, diabetes safety pen needle, diabetes safety syringe, disposable insulin pen needles, glucose, insulin reusable pens, ketone test strips, safety insulin needle remover and single use safety lancets.

For our full range of products, please call 0845 222 3550 or visit our online ordering site: orders.ashtonshospitalpharmacy.com



Infection control

Infections can easily spread in hospitals if everyone doesn't adhere to strict infection control practices. The Royal College of Nursing has produced revised guidance in the form of the Infection Prevention and Control Commissioning Toolkit.

There must be appropriate procedures for all areas of hospital life that might cause infection to spread, including hand hygiene, safely handling sharps and wearing protective equipment, disposal of any waste and body fluids and decontamination control.

All of these areas are extremely important, as if they are not adhered to, it can lead to staff and patients being at risk to all manner of pathogens. Decontamination control encompasses a lot of infection control, as the first line of defence against infection is to try and destroy any pathogens that might be around the hospital.

With this in mind, Ashtons has decided to branch out into supplying specialised laundry products to help hospitals decontaminate their bed sheets and any other laundry in a cost-effective way.

We always pride ourselves on being a

one-stop-shop for your hospital supplies and we are now able to offer products such as specialist infection control laundry detergent, regular non-bio/bio laundry liquid, low temperature laundry destainer and fabric softener.

For further details on the range of products we will have available, please call us on 0845 222 3550 or email us at info@ahps.co.uk

If you would like more information on infection control then please visit: www.rcn.org.uk/news-and-events/news/new-toolkit-launched-to-combat-infection

SUBSCRIBE

Email us at info@ahps.co.uk to get your free quarterly subscription.

Previous issues of Ashtons Pharmacy News are also available free of charge as an electronic PDF.



ASHTONS PHARMACY NEWS

Editor:
Martin England, Pharmacy Services Director

Assistant Editor:
Graham Connolly, Marketing Co-Ordinator

Designer:
Shannen Gaffney, Graphic Design Assistant

CONTACT US

Tel: 0845 222 3550
Email: info@ahps.co.uk
Address: 4 Dyke Rd Mews, 74-76 Dyke Road, Brighton, BN1 3JD

