

QIPP Detail Aid

Providing support for quality in prescribing

PREDNISOLONE - USE 5mg not 25mg TABLETS

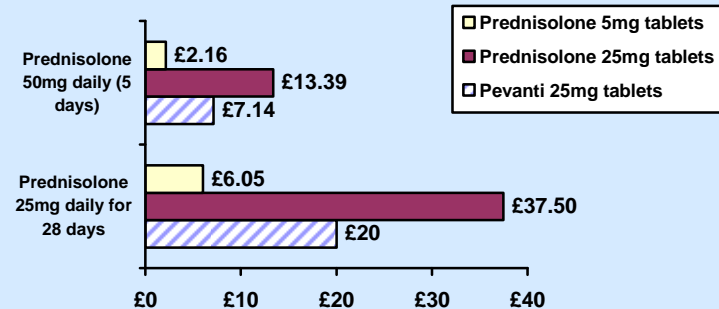
WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

- Prednisolone 5mg tablets are the most commonly encountered strength of tablet and are relatively inexpensive.
- Higher strengths of prednisolone are available but cost more, for example the 25mg strength is six times as expensive for the same dose if prescribed generically in Primary Care (see graph).
- Based on figures for the year to June 2015, Primary Care in the East Midlands spent over £10m on prednisolone 5mg and 25mg tablets. Prescriptions for prednisolone 25mg cost an average of £16 per item compared with £2 for prednisolone 5mg. The 25mg tablets accounted for a small proportion of prescriptions (0.6%), but nearly 5% of the total cost.
- If 80% of the prescriptions for high strength prednisolone had been for 5mg tablets instead, over £400,000 would be available annually in the East Midlands to spend on other treatments.
- **ADD LOCAL DATA HERE**

WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE?

- Prednisolone is used widely for short courses in inflammatory and allergic disorders and occasionally for longer term immunosuppression.
- Clinicians and patients have become used to using the 5mg strength tablets, particularly in respiratory disorders, when patients may take a high dose initially, tapering over a week or two.
- The recent introduction of several other strengths of prednisolone (brand name Pevanti[®], 10mg, 20mg and 25mg tablets), poses a potential risk of confusion over doses.
- The Pevanti[®] brand of prednisolone 25mg is less expensive than Drug Tariff price but is still much more expensive than the 5mg tablets for an equivalent dose.

WHAT ARE THE COSTS?



Primary care costs based on Drug Tariff and MIMS prices, Nov 2015

KEY MESSAGES

- **Plain 5mg prednisolone tablets are significantly cheaper than the 25mg tablets for equivalent doses and should be preferred in the majority of patients, particularly those who need to taper their dose.**
- **There is a potential risk of confusion or medication error in patients who are given higher strength prednisolone tablets.**
- **If the higher strength of tablets are prescribed, they should be accompanied by a careful explanation and possibly written back-up.**