

# QIPP Detail Aid

Providing support for quality in prescribing

## PREDNISOLONE- USE PLAIN, NOT EC TABLETS

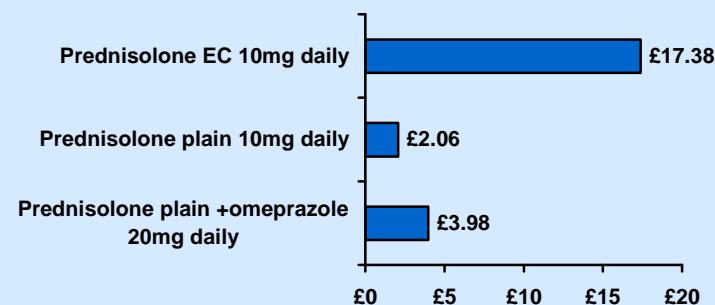
### WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

- There is no good evidence that using enteric coated (EC) prednisolone reduces the risk of causing peptic ulcers (PU) compared with plain prednisolone.
- According to the BNF, the potential advantage of EC preparations is speculative only.
- In April-June 2010 the East Midlands spent nearly £1million on enteric coated prednisolone. If this had all been prescribed as plain tablets the NHS in the East Midlands alone would have saved over £700,000 in 3 months and an estimated annual save of nearly £3million.
- **ADD LOCAL DATA HERE**

### WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE?

- Limited data suggest that corticosteroids appear to be weakly linked with PU; most relevant in patients with a history of, or diseases linked to PU. Any effect appears dependent on dose and duration.
- In 1987 the Drug and Therapeutics Bulletin concluded that uncertainty remains as to whether enteric coating decreases the tendency of steroids to cause ulcers.
- Its overall conclusion was that the use of EC prednisolone to decrease risk remains speculative and probably leads to a false sense of security.
- Since that date, small pharmacokinetics studies have noted lower and slower time-to-peak plasma concentration with EC compared with uncoated prednisolone tablets, though bioavailability was generally similar. A small number of case reports have indicated problems with disease control with use of EC or with switch to EC formulation.

### WHAT ARE THE COSTS



Costs for 28 days supply. Taken from Drug Tariff Oct 2010

### KEY MESSAGES

- **Prescribe plain prednisolone.**
- **Using EC prednisolone probably leads to a false sense of security.**
- **EC tablets may have less predictable absorption. When switching from EC to plain prednisolone, monitor disease control.**

### References:

1. UKMi Medicines Q&A Is there any evidence to support the use of enteric coated (EC) over uncoated prednisolone tablets? January 2010. Available online at: <http://www.nelm.nhs.uk/en/NeLM-Area/Evidence/Medicines-Q--A/Is-there-any-evidence-to-support-the-use-of-enteric-coated-over-uncoated-prednisolone-tablets>
2. Drug Tariff October 2010

Date of Preparation: October 2010