



T: 0131-244 2528
E: irene.fazakerley@gov.scot

1. Directors of Pharmacy
2. Medical Directors NHS Boards

12 February 2021

Dear Healthcare Professional,

COVID-19 THERAPEUTIC ALERT – COLCHICINE IN THE MANAGEMENT OF COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) POSITIVE PATIENTS – TRIAL USE ONLY

Please see the attached letter recommending colchicine should not be used in the management of COVID-19 positive patients other than in the context of a trial, or unless there is an additional licensed indication for its use. I would be grateful if you could cascade this information to relevant colleagues.

Could all Directors of Pharmacy please forward this alert to:-

- Hospital Pharmacists
- Community Pharmacists

Please could Medical Directors forward this alert to:-

- General Practitioners
- Accident & Emergency Departments
- Directors of Public Health
- Consultants in Communicable Diseases
- Directors of Nursing
- Relevant Clinics
- Chief Executives of NHS Board

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

IRENE FAZAKERLEY
Pharmacy and Medicines Division



COVID-19 Therapeutic Alert

CEM/CMO/2021/005

12 February 2021

Colchicine in the Management of COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) Positive Patients – Trial Use Only

Recommendation

It is recommended that:

Colchicine should not be used in the management of COVID-19 positive patients other than in the context of a trial, or unless there is an additional licensed indication for its use.

Supporting Evidence

A [pre-print of the Canadian COLCORONA trial](#) has now been published. In this primary care based study of 4,488 patients, 4.7% of patients in the colchicine group reached the composite primary endpoint of death or hospitalisation versus 5.8% of those in the placebo group. The publication also suggests that colchicine may reduce hospitalisation rates for patients in the early stage of COVID-19 infection (4.5% in the colchicine group vs 5.7% placebo). However, these findings were not statistically significant and full peer-reviewed findings from the trial are currently awaited.

There are currently very limited published results from other clinical trials on the effectiveness of colchicine in treating COVID-19 patients in primary or secondary care. Although the data from the COLCORONA trial is potentially promising, further evaluation of study data in both primary and secondary care (including from the RECOVERY trial) is needed before it can be determined whether colchicine is a safe and effective routine treatment for COVID-19.

Action

NHS acute trusts / health boards / hospitals are asked to:

Ensure front line medical, nursing clinical and pharmacy teams are aware of the UK-wide recommendation that colchicine should NOT be used routinely in the management of COVID-19. Teams are encouraged to continue to consider recruitment to the RECOVERY trial, which is studying colchicine in hospitalised patients.

General practices and CCG Chief Pharmacists or equivalent are asked to:

Ensure that the local primary care team is aware that colchicine should NOT be used in the management of COVID-19 within primary care, other than in the context of a trial. Use in licensed indications remains unaffected. Subject to regulatory approval, agreement has been reached to add colchicine to the [PRINCIPLE trial](#). Practices are encouraged to continue to support recruitment to this important UK platform trial, which is evaluating potential COVID therapies in primary care.

Product Details

Colchicine is licensed in the treatment of acute gout, and as short-term prophylaxis during initial therapy with allopurinol and uricosuric drugs. Colchicine is also indicated in Familial Mediterranean Fever for prophylaxis of attacks and prevention of amyloidosis (paediatric population). Product characteristics can be found [here](#).

Distribution

General Practice
Community Pharmacies
ICS /STP and Clinical Commissioning Group Pharmacy Leads
NHS Trusts (NHS boards in Scotland and Wales)
Regional Medical Directors
Regional Chief Pharmacists
Lead/Senior Pharmacists and Regional Procurement Pharmacy Leads
Trust/Hospital Medical Directors and Chief Pharmacists to circulate to medical, pharmacy and nursing staff managing COVID-19 patients

Enquiries

England

Enquiries from general practice and community pharmacy should in the first instance be directed to the local clinical commissioning group.

Enquiries from NHS trusts in England should in the first instance be directed to the trust pharmacy team who will escalate issues to the Regional Chief Pharmacist and national teams if required.

Further information can also be requested from the dedicated email address:
england.spoc-c19therapeutics@nhs.net.

Northern Ireland

Enquiries from general practice and community pharmacy should in the first instance be directed to your local HSCB office.

Enquiries from hospitals in Northern Ireland should in the first instance be directed to your hospital pharmacy team who will escalate issues to the Regional Pharmaceutical Procurement Service or Pharmaceutical Directorate at the Department of Health if required. Further information can be obtained by contacting
RPHPS.Admin@northerntrust.hscni.net

Scotland

Enquiries from Scotland should in the first instance be directed to the Health Board Director of Pharmacy who will escalate issues to either NHS National Procurement or the Scottish Government's Medicines Policy Team if required. Contact should be made using the following emails: nss.nhssmedicineshortages@nhs.scot or medicines.policy@gov.scot

Wales

Enquiries in Wales should in the first instance be directed to the health board's Chief Pharmacist who will escalate issues to the Pharmacy and Prescribing Team at Welsh Government if required. Enquiries to the Welsh Government should be directed to: COVID-19.Pharmacy.Prescribing@gov.wales.