NHS Circular:
MSAN (2021) 34

Chief Medical Officer Directorate
Pharmacy and Medicines Division

Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
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Medicine Supply Alert Notice

Tocilizumab (RoActemra®) 162mg/0.9ml solution for injection pre-filled syringes and pre-filled pens – Non Covid-19 indications

Priority: Level 3*
Valid until: January 2022

Issue

1. Tocilizumab (RoActemra®) 162mg/0.9ml solution for injection **pre-filled syringes** and **pre-filled pens** are in limited supply until January 2022 due to increased global demand on the active pharmaceutical ingredient.
2. Prescribers should urgently review their Rheumatoid Arthritis guidelines and amend in line with the advice in the clinical prioritisation section of this Medicine Supply Alert Notice (MSAN)
3. Remaining stock should be prioritised for patients already established on these formulations and new patients, as outlined in the clinical prioritisation advice below.
4. Tocilizumab (RoActemra®) solution for infusion **vials,** which are also used in Covid-19 patients, are **not** covered by this MSAN but supply remains constrained.
5. Sarilumab (Kevzara®) solution for injection **pre-filled pens** should be considered the first line agent for treatment of Rheumatoid Arthritis when an IL-6 antagonist is indicated and can support an increase in demand. Sarilumab (Kevzara®) solution for injection **pre-filled syringes** are **unable** to support an uplift in demand.
6. Sarilumab (Kevzara®) nurse injection training and initiation at patient's home is not funded by Sanofi and the initiatingBoard will need to ensure that appropriate training is available, either on site or in patient's homes.

Advice and Actions

7. All secondary care specialist clinical teams who prescribe, administer or supply tocilizumab **pre-filled syringes** and **pre-filled pens** should take the following actions.

8. **For all existing patients who are currently prescribed subcutaneous tocilizumab prefilled syringes or pre-filled pens as part of routine patient reviews:**
    - Inform patients that they will receive their medication deliveries at a reduced frequency of once every four weeks until further notice. Patients will get all the medication they require but in smaller quantities that are delivered more frequently.
    - Reassure patients they will continue to receive supplies and advise them to continue treatment as prescribed.

9. **Local Rheumatoid Arthritis guidelines should be reviewed and amended in line with clinical prioritisation and advice as below. New patients should be initiated on treatment as per amended guidelines which signpost to alternative agents**

***https://nhsnss.org/media/3874/medicine-supply-alert-notices-definitions-of-classifications-21-october-2019.docx**

Additional Information

Advice on clinical prioritisation

10. Tocilizumab (RoActemra®) **pre-filled syringes** and **pre-filled pens** are used in the treatment of juvenile idiopathic arthritis (JIA), rheumatoid arthritis (RA), giant cell arteritis (GCA) as well as some other off-label indications such as Adult Onset Still's Disease (AOSD) and Takayasu arteritis.
11. The following sections summarise prescribing advice that has been issued by the Department of Health and Social Care to support the management of available supply of tocilizumab; links to SMC advice have been added where relevant.

12. For patients being considered for initiation of subcutaneous tocilizimab, clinicians should consider the following in conjunction with the patient:

Rheumatoid Arthritis

13. **New patients**: Avoid starting tocilizumab: if an anti-IL-6 agent is considered the most appropriate option, prescribe sarilumab solution for injection pre-filled pens. Please note SMC advice on sarilumab (SMC1314/18).

Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis

14. **New patients**: Avoid starting tocilizumab and use alternative indicated agents https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta373. Please consider SMC advice for possible alternative medicines.

Adult Onset Still's Disease

15. **New patients**: Consider prescribing Anakinra (Kineret®) solution for injection pre-filled syringes as an alternative according to the NICE Technology Appraisal (685) Anakinra for treating Still's disease https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta685. Please note SMC advice for anakinra (SMC2104).

Giant Cell Arteritis

16. **New patients**: Where tocilizumab is indicated, initiate patients on tocilizumab prefilled syringes or prefilled pens. Prescribing should be initiated according to NICE TA518 https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta518 and the rapid policy statement on Tocilizumab for giant cell arthritis (GCA) during the COVID-19 pandemic. Please note SMC advice for tocilizumab (SMC2014).

Takayasu Arteritis

17. **New patients**: There is no current relevant SMC advice. Where tocilizumab is indicated, there is sufficient supply to support the initiation of patients on tocilizumab prefilled syringes or prefilled pens.

18. In all cases where a treatment plan is initiated, there should be clear communication with the patient/carer under the principles of shared decision-making. The clinical effects of medication should be monitored in line with established practices, and patients should have access to a local rheumatology advice line in case of flare up or concern.
19. The patient's general practitioner should be informed of all new prescriptions as soon as possible.

Enquiries

20. Enquiries from Health Boards or healthcare professionals should be directed in the first instance to PharmacyTeam@gov.scot (primary care) or NSS.NHSSMedicineShortages@nhs.scot (secondary care).