

At a glance

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DO NOT PRESCRIBE!

We have seen some cases where Gabapentin and other opioids have been initiated by a CAS clinician. Please be aware that NICE has published an update to [NG59 Low Back Pain and Sciatica](#).

The updated guideline advises healthcare professionals NOT to offer benzodiazepines, gabapentinoids or opioids for sciatica.

The evidence showed that gabapentinoids did not improve sciatica symptoms, and oral corticosteroids did not improve pain or function, but may have an impact on quality of life. Both increased the risk of adverse events in the long-term. While there was no evidence of increased risk of adverse events associated with benzodiazepines, there was evidence of poorer response than placebo in terms of pain reduction. The committee considered:

- the evidence reviewed,
- knowledge of the potential longer-term harms, and
- the reclassification of gabapentin and pregabalin as [Schedule 3 controlled drugs \(April 2019 UK Government drug safety update\)](#) because of the evidence for risk of abuse and dependence of these drugs.

The committee agreed that although the evidence about lack of effectiveness was limited, the harms would outweigh the benefits for most people with sciatica and therefore agreed to recommend against the use of gabapentinoids, oral corticosteroids and benzodiazepines for sciatica.

We will be monitoring this and feeding back to individual clinicians via Clinical Guardian.

Wigan Services Update:

Illness and Injury increased to 2 slots every 30mins - 8am-10pm

SDEC - 9am – 7pm increased to 1 slot per hour

Leigh WIC – 9am – 6pm increased to 2 slots every 30mins

Rochdale SDEC

Rochdale SDEC currently does not have an Adastra diary. Referrals are currently made via dedicated SPOA to speak to a clinician on **0300 303 5310: Option 1 for SDEC/Acute Medic Line and Option 2 rapid response/ Urgent care response team.**

Stepping Hill UTC

We have seen a significant reduction in cases being sent to Urgent treatment centre at Stepping Hill. Please remember you can directly refer into Adastra diary. They are open 10am-10pm 7 days a week, including bank holidays.

Please utilise these services as much as possible as they are great alternatives to ED.

DX 3333 Cases

DX333 calls are 111 online cases. Please note they have not received a verbal triage assessment and therefore the triage times cannot be changed in accordance with NWS OPEL levels. OPEL stands for Operational Pressures Escalation Levels which help understand demand, activity and capacity within NWS. OPEL is also used in other urgent and emergency care settings such as Hospital Trusts. DX333 calls therefore must be prioritised wherever possible.

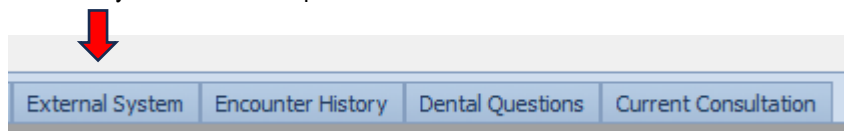
Urgent Care Response (UCR) teams update:

Sadly, we have not seen an increase in UCR referrals from CAS despite the educational event and digitalisation of 2 of these services in GM in Bolton and Tameside and Glossop using the UEC button. For all other UCRs please contact the services via telephone for a verbal handover. We will be monitoring utilisation of these services as currently we are not referring many cases and there are suitable patients that could be seen by UCRs as they will provide a 2hr response.

We are hopeful to have this function of sending direct digital referrals to 3 more UCR teams but we need to evidence we are using them.

Mental Health cases

Please ensure you look at the external system for more information on MH cases sent from NWS 999. External system is on the top tab on the consultation screen.



This tab can have valuable information about the pathways assessment and answers the person has given as this may aid your clinical decision making. Have they expressed they are feeling suicidal, do they have a plan? etc.



MERs

Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (also known as MERS or MERS-CoV) is a rare but severe respiratory illness. It can start with a fever and cough, which can develop into pneumonia and breathing difficulties. MERS was first identified in 2012 in the Middle East and is most common in that region. The risk of infection with MERS to people in the UK is very low.

Symptoms of MERS

- fever
- cough
- difficulty breathing
- diarrhoea and vomiting

Consider MERs as a possible infection especially for those with the above symptoms returning from Hajj and Umrah. Please complete a risk assessment:

- Have they had direct contact with camels?
- Have they drank camels milk or raw camel urine?
- Been in a health care setting and or been in close contact with someone who has a confirmed MERS-CoV infection?

Please follow the link below for more advice:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mers-cov-risk-assessment/phe-risk-assessment-of-mers-cov>



SAFEGUARDING REFERRALS

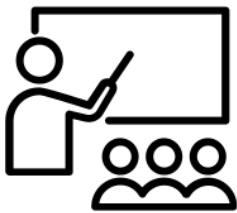
It is the **responsibility of all clinicians who identify a safeguarding concern to make a referral to the local authority** where the person lives.

Different local authorities have different processes for making a safeguarding referral and often this can be found on the specific web sites of the relevant social care department.

If you are unsure of how to make a referral, please ring the local social care team (in or out of hours) to confirm the process. **The telephone numbers have now been added to the directory of services on Adastra.**

Make sure you have confirmed any email addresses prior to sending a patient's sensitive information.

All safeguarding concerns should be recorded as per your organisation's process, such as Ulysses.



NEXT EDUCATIONAL EVENTS:

Paccs Drop in Sessions:

12th April 12pm-1pm via teams. (please contact your training department for the link to this training)

CAS Update: 25th April 2024 6.30pm-8pm via teams

If you would like to attend this event, please contact your training department for the link.

THE PUSH

There was a recent documentary on Channel 4 called The Push. The documentary followed the family of Fawziyah Javed while they prepared for her husband's murder trial. Fawziyah was a successful lawyer and 17 weeks pregnant with her first child when she plummeted from the top of Arthur's Seat in Edinburgh. In her dying moments, Fawziyah reported to eye witnesses that her husband had pushed her off the summit.

Fawziyah's family were supported at the trial by a charity called Karma Nirvana. Themes of coercive control, domestic violence and honour based violence were evident throughout her marriage. GMUPCA have organised an educational event delivered by Karma Nirvana to empower colleagues to respond in the right way to victims of Honor based Violence and make a positive difference.

The training is scheduled for 22nd May from 1-2pm via teams.

Please contact the training department, mahe.mastercalltraining@nhs.net if you would like to attend.

We hope you have found this bulletin useful. If you have any suggestions for future topics for bulletins or training events, please contact Rachael Ingram rachaelingram@nhs.net