

GDL18

Guidance for the Managing Clozapine during in-patient stay at RWT

1.0 Procedure Statement (Purpose / Objectives of the Procedure)

The purpose of this document is to provide clear guidance for all health professionals for the management of Clozapine during in-patient stay.

2.0 Accountabilities

The pharmacy directorate is the owner of this guidance.

Professional leads and managers of medical, nursing, midwives, pharmacy and allied healthcare professionals are accountable for distributing this guidance to all relevant staff within their spheres of responsibility.

All relevant healthcare staff are accountable for their own compliance with the guidance, and for reporting any incidents of non-compliance (whether this has had an adverse effect or not).

3.0 Procedure/Guidelines Detail / Actions

See below guidance on page 2-4 for details.

Clozapine Safety Guidance

Managing Clozapine during in-patient stay at RWT

The purpose of this safety guidance is to highlight key issues to be considered when patients who are taking clozapine are admitted. Clozapine is a high-risk drug used for the management of schizophrenia in patients who are unresponsive to, or intolerant of, conventional antipsychotic drugs. It may also be used for psychoses in patients with Parkinson's disease. Clozapine requires regular FBC monitoring to ensure it remains a safe and effective treatment. The supply of Clozapine is dependent on monitoring – this monitoring and supply is carried out by a specialist clozapine monitoring service. Additional monitoring required includes checking for signs of toxicity, identifying any constipation and identify changes in the patient's smoking status.

CONTACT THE MENTAL HEALTH LIASION SERVICE TO ENSURE THAT THE TEAM IS AWARE OF THE ADMISSION – TELEPHONE: 01902 481717, BLEEP: 3933.

FOR ALL PATIENTS ADMITTED TO AN INPATIENT WARD:

ESTABLISH IF THE PATIENT IS TAKING CLOZAPINE

- Clozapine treatment may not be immediately obvious on admission. Ask the patient if they receive any treatment from other hospitals or clinics other than their GP. **Note - Clozapine may not be on the patient's GP medication list as it will be prescribed and supplied by their mental health trust. Likewise, Clozapine may have also been recently stopped but not updated/removed on the GP medication list.**
- Clozapine brand names include **Clozaril[®]**, **Denzapine[®]** or **Zaponex[®]**. The chosen brand in the RWT locality is usually Clozaril[®]. If the patient has difficulty swallowing tablets please discuss with your Ward Pharmacist, in most cases Clozaril tablets can be crushed.

FOR PATIENTS ADMITTED TO INPATIENT WARD TAKING CLOZAPINE BEFORE ADMISSION:

STOP – CHECK COMPLIANCE

- Check patient compliance with Clozapine. If a patient has missed clozapine for more than 48 hours, they will require re-titration and **MUST NOT** be prescribed clozapine at their previous dose.
- **DO NOT** re-commence clozapine after a treatment break of 48 hours or more without specialist advice and guidance from the patient's mental health trust.

ACT- CONTACT MENTAL HEALTH TRUST

- **Contact the patient's mental health trust immediately** to inform them of the patient's admission and again prior to discharge. Details of patient's compliance and whether they have taken a supply into hospital with them will be needed. Contact details for the various locality-based teams/clinics can be found on page three of this guidance.
- The mental health trust will confirm the dose, when bloods are needed immediately prior to any supply, and how that supply can be arranged.
- **Clozapine is NOT usually stocked in Acute Hospitals** – the patient's own supply should be used. If the patient transfers to a different ward, ensure that the clozapine supply moves with them.
- If you cannot obtain information from care providers or their regular pharmacy, you can contact the relevant Clozapine Monitoring Services. There is a separate service dedicated to each of the three brands available; **Clozaril**®, **Denzapine**® or **Zaponex**®. They will have up to date information on where the patient's treatment is supplied from including contact details, the patient's current blood results and when monitoring is due.

CHECK - FULL BLOOD COUNT (FBC) AND SMOKING STATUS

- **Check full blood count (FBC)** - especially white blood cell (WBC) and neutrophils (ANC) as clozapine can cause agranulocytosis as a significant side effect. This result will be needed to obtain a supply. If at any point during admission WBC count is found to be less than $3.0 \times 10^9/L$ and neutrophils less than $1.5 \times 10^9/L$ contact mental health trust for advice **immediately**.
- Check if patient is a current smoker – **stopping smoking can increase clozapine serum levels significantly**, request advice from the mental health trust as to whether their dose should be lowered. **DO NOT amend doses without advice.**

PRESCRIBING AND DOCUMENTATION

- Clozapine does not require a consultant signature for prescribing within an acute hospital, however it should be treated as a high-risk medication.
- Information specifying the dose, brand and formulation must be recorded in the patient's notes, pharmacy drug history on ePMA, and CareFlow Connect.
- Clozapine must be prescribed by brand on ePMA/paper chart for in-patient administration.

DISCHARGE PLANNING

- Arrange with patient's usual Pharmacy/Clozapine clinic how further supplies will be made to support the patient at discharge.
- Inform the relevant mental health trust's pharmacy department (and agree who will notify the responsible outpatient team) of the patient's discharge detailing remaining clozapine supplies and any alterations or concerns.
- If the patient was a smoker and has not smoked during admission - this will need to be highlighted at handover and on the discharge letter. Recommencing smoking will reduce Clozapine plasma levels.
- Discharge letter should document all information relating to Clozapine – this should include brand, dose, current supply on discharge and details of follow-ups. This will support GP practices to include details of Clozapine on the Summary Care Record.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

MHRA advice:

- **Constipation** - Clozapine has been known to cause problems with the bowel ranging from constipation (which is very common), to intestinal obstruction, faecal impaction, and paralytic ileus (which are very rare but significant). On a few occasions, cases have been fatal (*October 2017*). **Monitor via bowel chart and treat, where appropriate, for constipation.**
- **Blood Clozapine Monitoring (Plasma Level)** - Following fatal cases involving toxicity of Clozapine and other antipsychotic medicines, monitoring of blood Clozapine plasma levels for toxicity is advised in certain clinical situations (please liaise with mental health trust): (*August 2020*)
 - Patient stops smoking or switches to an e-cigarette.
 - Concomitant medicines may interact to increase blood Clozapine levels.
 - A patient has pneumonia or other serious infection.
 - Poor (reduced) Clozapine metabolism is suspected.
 - Toxicity is suspected.

Clozapine blood concentration monitoring should be carried out in addition to the regular required blood tests to manage the risk of agranulocytosis.

Interactions with other medicine products:

- Review any drugs that increase the serum concentration of Clozapine or drugs that may cause/contribute to agranulocytosis.
- **Severe interactions noted with;** carbamazepine, ciprofloxacin, combined hormonal contraceptives, erythromycin, fluvoxamine, levodopa, rifampicin and ritonavir.

Note: this list is not exhaustive; please see current BNF via <https://bnf.nice.org.uk/> for a full list of Clozapine interactions. Further information may be found on <https://www.medicines.org.uk/>.

CONTACT DETAILS

For patients under the care of the **Black Country Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (BCHFT):**

- Contact BCHFT Pharmacy and Clozapine teams:
 - **Wolverhampton** - Pharmacy Team at Penn Hospital: 01902 445817
Wolverhampton Clozapine clinic at Penn Hospital: 01902 443983 or 01902 443640
 - **Walsall** - Pharmacy Team at Dorothy Pattison Hospital: 01922 608197
Walsall Clozapine Clinic at Dorothy Pattison Hospital: 01922 607490
 - **Dudley** - Pharmacy Team at Bushey Fields Hospital: 01384 324650 or 01384 325218
Dudley Clozapine clinic and Bushey Fields Hospital: 0121 803 1251
 - **Sandwell** - Pharmacy Team at Hallam Street Hospital: 0121 612 8634 or 0121 612 8609
Sandwell Clozapine Clinic at Hallam Street hospital: 0121 612 6684
- At times where the BCHFT pharmacy or Clozapine teams are not available (i.e. weekends), please contact their pharmacy supplier, Fairview Pharmacy, on 01384 465501.

For patients under the care of the **Midlands Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust:**

- This will be for patients residing in the South Staffordshire area
 - St George's Pharmacy in Stafford: 01785 783110

For patients under the care of the **Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust:**

- This will be for patients residing in the Birmingham and Solihull areas
 - Central Pharmacy: 0121 301 5160
 - Secure Care (Reaside) Pharmacy: 0121 301 3108
 - On-call Pharmacist: 0121 301 3000

4.0 Equipment Required

N/A.

5.0 Training

No specific training required.

6.0 Financial Risk Assessment

1	Does the implementation of this document require any additional Capital resources	No
2	Does the implementation of this document require additional revenue resources	No
3	Does the implementation of this document require additional manpower	No
4	Does the implementation of this document release any manpower costs through a change in practice	No
5	Are there additional staff training costs associated with implementing this document which cannot be delivered through current training programs or allocated training times for staff.	No
	Other comments	

7.0 Equality Impact Assessment

An equality analysis has been carried out and it indicates that:

Tick	Options
✓	A. There is no impact in relation to Personal Protected Characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010.
	B. There is some likely impact as identified in the equality analysis. Examples of issues identified, and the proposed actions include:

8.0 Maintenance

The pharmacy directorate is responsible for maintenance of this guidance.

9.0 Communication and Training

Via Governance meetings.

Update to be communicated by Trust-wide medication safety briefing.

Guideline to be published on Trust intranet.

10.0 Audit Process

Criterion	Lead	Monitoring method	Frequency	Evaluation
Review of Datix for incidents relating to management of clozapine	Medication Safety Pharmacist	Datix report	Annually, sooner if surge in incidents.	Medication Safety Group

11.0 References - Legal, professional or national guidelines

N/A

Part A - Document Control

Procedure/ Guidelines number and version GDL18 Version 1.0	Title of Procedure/Guidelines Guidance for Managing Clozapine during in-patient stay at RWT	Status: Final		Author: Mohammed Ali Hasan Medication Safety Pharmacist For Trust-wide Procedures and Guidelines Chief Officer Sponsor: Chief Medical Officer
Version / Amendment History	Version	Date	Author	Reason
	Version 1	April 2025	Mohammed Ali Hasan	Creation of guidance
Intended Recipients: All relevant healthcare staff.				
Consultation Group / Role Titles and Date: Medicines Management Group (MMG) – approved – 1 st April 2025				
Name and date of group where reviewed		Trust Policy Group – July 2025		
Name and date of final approval committee(if trust-wide document)/ Directorate or other locally approved committee (if local document)		Trust Policy Group – July 2025		
Date of Procedure/Guidelines issue		July 2025		
Review Date and Frequency (standard review frequency is 3 yearly unless otherwise indicated – see section 3.8.1 of Attachment 1)		July 2028 - 3 yearly review		

Training and Dissemination: Communicated as required through Trust communications and directorates as applicable.	
To be read in conjunction with: N/A	
Initial Equality Impact Assessment: N/A	
Contact for Review	Mohammed Ali Hasan
Monitoring arrangements	Local governance. Day to day practice.
Document summary/key issues covered. Appropriate management of patients on clozapine therapy.	
Key words for intranet searching purposes	Clozapine