

Anticipatory End of Life Prescribing for Care Home Residents

Overview

Patients with a life-limiting illness often experience new or worsening symptoms as their condition deteriorates at the end of life. During the last days of life, when patients can no longer swallow their oral medication, delays in accessing appropriate non-oral medications can cause undue distress to both the patient and their carer(s).

Prompt access to palliative care medications and proactive management of symptom control are essential to minimise this distress. Anticipatory prescribing is a key component of the NW End of Life Care Model and the Liverpool Care Pathway for the Dying Patient. The four core drugs across the Fylde Coast are Diamorphine 10mg, Levomepromazine 25mg/ml, Glycopyrronium 200mcg/ml and Midazolam 5mg/ml.

Aim of the scheme

The aim of the Just in Case Four Core drugs (JiC4CD) Scheme across the Fylde Coast is to ensure anticipatory prescribing is available in advance, so that a supply of the four core end of life medications can be stored securely in a tamper-evident bag in the patient's home 'just in case', ready for when it is needed in the last days of life.

The JiC4CD Scheme Policy, Procedure, Prescription & authorisation booklet and associated Patient information leaflet has been revised by a cross-organisational (NHS Blackpool, NHS North Lancs, Blackpool Teaching Hospitals and Trinity Hospice) and multi-professional (Doctors, Nurses and Pharmacists) team of experts, to ensure standardised practice across all healthcare settings (Community, Hospital and Hospice).

All patients thought to be within the last four weeks of life should have the anticipatory parenteral end of life drugs (JiC4CD) prescribed, along with the JiC4CD Prescription and Administration Record (JiC4CD SPAR).

This should usually be done by the patient's GP, but can be done by a hospital doctor (in line with the rapid discharge pathway) or a hospice doctor as part of the discharge prescription. These drugs can also be prescribed by an out-of-hours doctor, but this should only be required in an emergency as supply of the medications should have been considered and planned in advance.

Obtaining supplies in care homes – no need for sealed bag

Patients residing in care home establishments do not need the medications to be supplied in a tamper-evident bag due to Misuse of Drugs Act storage and recording requirements.

Anticipatory just in case core drugs can still be prescribed and put in place ready for the patient but are to be supplied as per normal dispensing supply from any community pharmacy.

Care homes are advised to obtain the palliative care medicines from their usual pharmacy and to make the following required records:

- Controlled drugs register to record stock in/out for Misuse of Drugs Act requirements
- JiC4CD Prescription and Administration Record (JiC4CD SPAR) to record the authorisation to administer and the administration – this will be used either by the registered nurse in nursing homes or district nurse for a residential care home
- Care home patient's Medication Administration Record (MAR) chart to keep an accurate record of all the medications the patient is taking and to record the stock as received for that patient. It will also need to be completed to record the administration by the registered nurse in nursing home. This is required in addition to JiC4CD SPAR as the care home will require to keep this for their records for 7 years as per usual procedure with residents' MAR charts. The JiC4CD SPAR record will go with the patient if they are admitted into hospital or hospice and will be retained with the patient's notes within the care setting that they die for the period specified in Records Management NHS Code of Practice Part 2 (2nd Edition) 2009. When the district nurse is administering the medication in residential homes, they will complete the JiC4CD SPAR record and stock still needs to be recorded as received on the MAR chart. The care home manager can annotate the MAR chart to read 'DN administering as per JiC4CD SPAR record'

Domiciliary care

For patients living in their own homes, the JiC4CD drugs should be supplied from a community pharmacy that is participating in the JiC4CD Scheme. A list of the participating community pharmacies can be found on the back page of the JiC4CD SPAR. The end of life drugs dispensed as part of the JiC4CD Scheme will be provided in a tamper-evident sealed bag which can be stored securely in the patient's home ready for when it is needed. The drugs can also be dispensed by the Hospital and Hospice Pharmacies, if forming part of a discharge prescription. Prescriptions for ongoing supplies of palliative care medicines once treatment has been started can be dispensed from any community pharmacy.