



Patient Safety - High Risk Medicines

INTRODUCTION

GPs, practice nurses and pharmacy teams are involved in the prescribing and dispensing of a large number of medicines for patients in their care. Admin and clerical staff also have an important role in the processes involved.

Although side effects are common for almost all medicines, some medicines have more significant adverse effects, or interactions with other medicines. These may be serious for patients, and in some cases, can be fatal. Research has drawn attention to specific adverse effects of these high risk medicines (HRMs), but despite this, patients continue to suffer unintended consequences as a result of taking (or not taking) these medicines.

This module focuses on some of the most important HRMs in primary health care: methotrexate, lithium and warfarin. In addition, the module presents “the triple whammy” - the co-prescribing of an ACE inhibitor, diuretic and an NSAID, and the resulting deleterious effect on renal function.

This module is designed to meet the learning needs of GPs, practice nurses and pharmacy teams. Primary health care teams may wish to consider inviting pharmacy teams to their groups when studying this module. As NES pharmacy has jointly produced this module, pharmacists may be invited without being ‘paid-up’ members of the group.

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