

Prescribing Challenges in Nutrition Support



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‘Prescribing in Nutrition Support’ was the topic of the BPNG symposium at last year’s BAPEN Conference in Edinburgh. The sessions were well received by a multidisciplinary audience.

Emma Wilkinson, Neonatal and Paediatric Gastroenterology Pharmacist, Cambridge University Hospitals, spoke about the considerations and challenges when administering medicines down enteral feeding tubes. In most cases liquid medicines or dissolvable tablets are the preferred dosage form, although due to differences in drug pharmacokinetics, dose changes may be required when switching between formulations. Sometimes, due to lack of availability, tablets may need to be crushed or capsules opened. Certain medicines may not be suitable for crushing. This includes controlled release tablets/capsules as this would damage the drug release mechanism. Antibiotics, hormones and cytotoxic medicines can present as a risk to healthcare staff, and their crushing is not recommended. Blockage of tubes by inappropriate medicine administration was addressed, with consideration to liquid viscosity, granule size and adequate tube flushing. BPNG recently launched updated resources on their website. These were produced with the input of a working party, of which Emma was a member. Full documents are available at: www.bpng.co.uk/resources/medicines--tubes.

Our second speaker was **Robbie Cord**, Clinical Pharmacist Team Lead for Surgery at NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, who presented prescribing challenges in a nil-by-mouth (NBM) surgical patient. Hospital pharmacists are often asked to provide guidance when oral medicines cannot be resumed after surgery. In some situations, medicines can be safely withheld. This may not be safe for certain medicines such as opiates, anti-epileptics, anti-parkinsonians, anticoagulants, corticosteroids, levothyroxine, insulin and oral hypoglycaemics. In these cases, it may be necessary to use an alternative route of administration such as intravenous, intramuscular, subcutaneous, rectal, topical (patch) or sublingual/buccal. Pharmacists are key at advising on appropriate drug/dose/frequency changes and have the appropriate training to understand differences in drug pharmacokinetics.

The final presentation by Priya Mistry, Consultant Pharmacist at University Hospital Southampton, provided an update on non-medical prescribing in clinical nutrition and intestinal failure. A brief overview of the timeline of events related to non-medical prescribing activities in response to key legislation was provided, and an update on profession-specific changes affecting nurses, pharmacists and dietitians. Key differences in requirements for supplementary versus independent prescribers were addressed, and the importance of a clinical management plan. In practice there are many areas of nutrition support where non-medical prescribing is practised, including parenteral nutrition, medicines for management

of high output ileostomies and managing electrolyte/micronutrient deficiencies/toxicities. Non-medical prescribing has played a significant role in the professional development of the non-medical workforce and contributed to the effective use of healthcare resources. It has also supported full multidisciplinary team working in many clinical areas.

2024 BPNG education events

The BPNG team have continued to provide educational webinars to a multidisciplinary audience on key topics. Our February webinar, organised in partnership with the International Clinical Nutrition Section of ASPEN (ICNS), brought together experts from around the globe to review the potential toxic risk of aluminium contamination in PN components and how this can be addressed in practice. Professors Kathy Gura (USA) and Stefan Muhlebach (Switzerland) discussed the background to the US FDA mandate on aluminium levels and shared experiences of US nutrition support teams in meeting the established aluminium limits. This webinar highlighted the need for greater quality control and international regulation of aluminium content in PN components. Please continue to follow our webinars. Recordings can be accessed by members via the BPNG resources page: www.bpng.co.uk/resources/bpng-webinars.

In January this year, BPNG held a very successful face-to-face advanced practitioner study day in Birmingham looking at complications of PN, such as liver/renal abnormalities, glycaemic control and addressing stock shortages. Review of patient cases raised lots of informative discussions between the expert panel and audience. We hope to make this an annual event and future dates will be available at: www.bpng.co.uk/events.

Following our successful face-to-face ‘Fundamentals in Parenteral Nutrition’ course in Leeds last year, the BPNG team are now organising this event to be held in June 2024 in London. The programme is aimed at all members of multi-disciplinary audience. Places are limited so please book soon if you want to attend. Full details available at: www.bpng.co.uk/events/home/fundamentals-in-parenteral-nutrition.

The BPNG team continue to promote the role of the pharmacist in nutrition support. We are keen to support pharmacists and other healthcare professionals in advanced roles. Membership to our group provides free access to member resources, and free BAPEN membership. Please do join our group to access these benefits. Membership details are available at: www.bpng.co.uk/ or contact us via: www.bpng.co.uk/contact is you have any questions.