

Joint Formulary News

March 2009

Effective Prescribing in the Plymouth Health Community

Fifth edition of the Plymouth Area Joint Formulary

The next edition of the Plymouth Area Joint Formulary should be reaching you during the beginning of April..

This revised edition has been produced, in consultation with primary and secondary care prescribers within the Plymouth Health Community, to support safe, evidence-based, cost-effective and up to date prescribing to improve patient care and equity.

The formulary is constantly reviewed and all of your comments received are carefully considered. The wide consultation process with healthcare professionals in both primary and secondary care is very labour intensive; but we hope you will agree results in a formulary which helps us more easily choose the best treatments for our patients and a truly **Joint Formulary** with which the vast majority can happily comply.

As changes are made through out the year the on-line formulary at www.plymouthpct.nhs.uk/professionalzone/pajf/ is updated immediately and then changed in the printed edition annually. There is also a link to the website under 'Popular Links', on the left hand side of the front page of the Plymouth HealthNET.

We do appreciate and need your feedback on either the website or the book. How easy is it to use? Can you find what you need? **Please** do let us know so the formulary can become as user friendly as possible. Our contact details are at the bottom of this newsletter.

Prograf® (tacrolimus) Brand Prescribing Recommended

Both Prograf® and Advagraf® contain the immunosuppressant tacrolimus, but are given according to different dosing schedules. Medication errors in some places have resulted in patients being dosed incorrectly. This has caused serious adverse reactions, including biopsy-confirmed acute rejection of transplanted organs and toxic effects due to overexposure. **Prograf® and Advagraf® are not interchangeable** without careful therapeutic monitoring. Particular care should be taken in prescribing and dispensing the correct brand of tacrolimus. Prescribers, pharmacists, and patients should be fully aware of the brand being prescribed and the associated dose regimen. As the patent of Prograf® is due to expire soon there may be a generic product available which will make branded prescribing even more important.

Always prescribe tacrolimus by brand.

New Additions or Changes



Exenatide was included in the formulary more than 12 months ago as a red, hospital only drug. It has now been used successfully by the Diabetes Centre and the decision has been made to change the status of exenatide to yellow, specialist initiated. This will allow prescribing to be continued by GPs. There is prescribing advice included in the formulary.

The Drugs and Therapeutics Committee has approved the oral contraceptive Yasmin® to be included in the formulary as a yellow, specialist initiated drug. The Family Planning Clinic have provided some prescribing information detailing which patients it should be considered for. This is available in the formulary.