



Area Drug and Therapeutics Committee Position Statement

Prescribing of Branded Generics

1.0 Introduction

The ADTC is constituted to provide advice to NHS Lothian on Medicines Governance. Prescribing in NHS Lothian is supported by the Lothian Joint Formulary through governance by the Formulary Committee.

A generic is a pharmaceutical product that is produced when the patent on the original medicinal product has expired. It is bioequivalent to the original patented reference product and is labelled with an approved name.¹

Some generic medicines have been given a brand name by the manufacturer for marketing reasons; these products are referred to as 'branded generics'. List prices for branded generics may be lower than the list price for equivalent generics. However, these savings may be unsustainable by the manufacturer. In the long term they may not necessarily be cheaper, or in the best interests of the NHS overall, than prescribing a generic product with a more expensive reimbursement price. This is due, among other things, to the larger discount generally offered to dispensers on the average generic medicine.²

Branded prescribing of off-patent medicines where it is not clinically required, may provide a short term saving where the list price is lower than the reimbursement price however there is a significant risk that this approach will increase costs over the long term.³

ADTC confirmed in 2007⁴ that it did not endorse the prescribing of branded generics as they may be associated with associated financial and clinical risks due to potential product switching and there may be reduced prescriber and patient confidence with subsequent detrimental clinical outcomes.

Some products could be considered as an exception.

- **Multi ingredient products** for example combined oral contraceptives or emollient creams. As these products contain multiple ingredients, there is not an established way of describing them generically, and there can be variation in description of content on packaging or within prescribing literature of these preparations, there is risk in asking for them to be prescribed generically. Therefore it is advised that these are prescribed by brand name.²
- **Some drug administration devices** for example metered dose inhalers. Technique may be an important component of drug delivery, and brand name prescribing is appropriate where administration devices have different instructions for use and patient familiarity with the same product is important.²

1.1 Aim of Position Statement

To ensure that the ADTC, its subgroups and individual prescribers are aware of this position statement.

1.2 Objectives

- 1.2.1 To recommend that medicines are not prescribed using branded generic terms.
- 1.2.2 To recommend that multi ingredient products and some drug administration devices are out with this rule and should be prescribed by brand name.

1.3 Scope

This position statement applies to recommendations made in the Lothian Joint Formulary (LJF) and to individual prescribers.

2.0 Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 NHS Lothian

NHS Lothian is responsible for establishing, documenting and maintaining an effective system to manage medicines safely to meet patients' clinical needs.⁵

2.2 ADTC and its subcommittees

The ADTC, and its subgroups work together to provide advice to attain Medicine Governance. This position statement should be adhered to when reviewing proposals and making prescribing recommendations.

2.3 Individuals

Doctors, nurses, pharmacists and other healthcare professionals have a responsibility to ensure safe and effective prescribing and to support best patient care.

References

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3. NHS National Services Scotland. Risks Associated with Encouraging Prescribing of Medicines by Brand Name where it is not Clinically Required: Briefing Document (July 2017)
4. Area Drug and Therapeutics Committee Minutes. 2 February 2007. NHS Lothian.
5. Safe Use of Medicines Policy and Procedures. NHS Lothian. October 2015
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