COST EFFECTIVE USE OF QUETIAPINE

Background

- Quetiapine is available in immediate release (IR) and modified release (XL) formulations, which have similar bioavailability
- Quetiapine XL is licensed to be given once daily and IR is licensed to be given twice daily, and once daily for the treatment of bipolar depression
- Quetiapine XL is significantly more expensive than IR, and switching from XL to IR will maximise the cost benefits
- Quetiapine IR may be associated with a slightly higher risk of sedation and postural hypotension following the switch. If these effects are a concern, clinicians may consider giving a smaller dose in the morning and a larger dose in the evening

Cost benefits

- Quetiapine IR tablets given twice a day are about 95% cheaper than prescribing quetiapine XL in the same daily dose once daily
- Potential savings to the health economy are over £500k

Proposed action

- Switch patients stabilised on quetiapine XL to quetiapine IR – see algorithm over page
- Any potential switch to be discussed with patient and carer and monitor for side effects
- If patient has concordance and/or tolerability issues, switching may not be appropriate. The continued use of quetiapine XL must be documented and explained in correspondence with GP
- If quetiapine XL required, consider prescribing a branded generic, such as Zaluron XL, which is around half the Drug Tariff price of quetiapine XL.
GUIDANCE FOR USE OF QUETIAPINE

**New patients**

Initiate on quetiapine XL. Prescribe OD in accordance with SPC
www.medicines.org.uk/emc

After patient reaches optimal therapeutic dose (1 week) consider:

*Are there any circumstances in which for this patient a switch to quetiapine IR could be problematic?*

**Yes**
Continue on Quetiapine XL once daily

**No**
Switch to Quetiapine IR see switching guide

**Existing patients**

On quetiapine XL tablets

- No known compliance issues or previous unacceptable side effects with quetiapine IR
  - Switch to generic quetiapine IR as per guide below

- Known compliance issues and/or previous unacceptable side effects with quetiapine IR
  - Continue with quetiapine XL once daily

On generic quetiapine IR tablets

Continue

**Switching guide from quetiapine XL to quetiapine IR**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current dose quetiapine XL</th>
<th>For those tolerating quetiapine well</th>
<th>For those experiencing sedation or postural hypotension following switch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100mg XL od</td>
<td>50mg IR bd</td>
<td>25mg IR om 75mg IR on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200mg XL od</td>
<td>100mg IR bd</td>
<td>50mg IR om 150mg IR on</td>
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<tr>
<td>300mg XL od</td>
<td>150mg IR bd</td>
<td>100mg IR om 200mg IR on</td>
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<td>400mg XL od</td>
<td>200mg IR bd</td>
<td>150mg IR om 250mg IR on</td>
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<tr>
<td>600mg XL od</td>
<td>300mg IR bd</td>
<td>200mg IR OM 400mg IR on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>800mg XL od</td>
<td>400mg IR bd</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Those at increased risk of experiencing sedation or postural hypotension following the switch to quetiapine IR may include: elderly, learning disability, adolescents, concurrent cardiac medication, and concurrent CND depressants

If switch is unsuccessful or side effects unacceptable