

**Via Email to attached
distribution list.**

13 May 2014

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Dear Colleague

Raising awareness about the newer oral anticoagulant medicines

Medication incidents have been reported with the newer oral anticoagulants. The three medicines in this class licensed for use in the United Kingdom are:

- Apixaban (Eliquis[®])
- Dabigatran (Pradaxa[®])
- Rivaroxaban (Xarelto[®])

The incidents have included:

- Concomitant treatment with contraindicated medicines which resulted in increased bleeding risk
- Failure to order repeat prescriptions for the medicine following hospital discharge resulting in treatment failure.

Root cause analysis of the incidents has identified that:

- Health care professionals did not recognise these medicines as being potent anticoagulants
- Patients did not receive adequate counselling when these medicines were commenced.

Learning from the incidents:

1. Prescribers should be aware that the following must be considered before a newer oral anticoagulant is prescribed*;
 - Licensed indications
 - Contra-indications including those medicines that should not be prescribed with these agents e.g. LMWH, warfarin
 - Drug Interactions
 - Patient risk factors for bleeding.

2. The prescriber is responsible for ensuring that a patient commenced on a newer oral anticoagulant receives appropriate verbal and written information*.
3. Effective communication mechanisms must be in place between healthcare providers to:
 - Inform the patient's General Practitioner when the patient is commenced on a newer oral anticoagulant.
 - Inform the patient and their General Practitioner when the patient needs to stop taking their newer oral anticoagulant prior to undergoing a procedure.

A poster has been developed to raise awareness about the prescribing characteristics and properties of the newer oral anticoagulant agents (see Appendix 1). The chart is also available to download from the Medicines Governance website: www.medicinesgovernance.hscni.net

Action:

- Please distribute the poster to all clinical staff including locums and agency staff
- RQIA should send this to relevant independent sector providers
- Display the poster in relevant clinical areas.

If you have any queries, please contact your Medicines Management Adviser or Medicines Governance Pharmacist.

Yours sincerely



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*For full prescribing and patient information refer to BNF, Electronic Medicines Compendium www.medicines.org.uk See also [NICE Guideline](#)