



Supply Disruption Alert-Update

SDA/2020/014U

Issued: 15/12/2020

Atracurium besilate solution for injection vials and ampoules (all strengths)

This alert contains up to date information following additional volumes of Unlicensed atracurium 50mg/5ml injection being sourced to support the anticipated intermittent supply issues and supersedes SDA_2020_014. For reference please find the original SDA here [[SDA 2020 014](#)].

Additional information relating to the updated supply picture is presented in bold below

Summary

- Supplies of non-UK licensed atracurium 50mg/5ml stock have been sourced as follows
 - **Atracurium besilate 50mg/5ml (limited stock available from Clinigen immediately)**
 - **Atracurium besilate 50mg/5ml (significant volume of US licensed stock available from Pfizer w/c 21/12/20 with additional volumes expected in January 2021)**
- National QA assessments of all products will be shared with regional/national procurement leads for dissemination over the coming days.
- Hospitals now have the option of using a non-UK licensed atracurium presentation to support mitigation of this supply issue as outlined in the SDA of 2nd December 2020. (Please see Supporting Information on using an unlicensed medicine).

Action

Trust, Health Board and hospital clinical teams should:

- work with pharmacy colleagues to review current prescribing practice of NMBAs;
- refer to the [guidance](#) issued by the Royal College of Anaesthetists and Association of Anaesthetists, to help support the local switching between neuromuscular blocking agents;
- consider which mitigation the trust will adopt when UK licensed atracurium is not available;
- brief all affected staff about this supply issue which may include preparing prescribing guidance to support clinical areas in line with the following national guidance:
 - **for theatres** - use rocuronium for both induction and maintenance of neuromuscular blockade where possible.
 - **for critical care** - use rocuronium for induction and maintenance, where possible. Where possible, bolus dosing of NMBAs, with neuromuscular blockade monitoring and adjustment according to the response, may be used instead of an infusion.

Local pharmacy teams should:

- continue to order all NMBAs in line with demand and no more than four days stock;
- work with their Medicines Use and Safety Officer to consider how they will safely manage stock within their trust;
- consider local management options to decrease waste locally for example by only drawing up what will be used. Further guidance about this can be found on the SPS website which you need a login to access.
<https://www.sps.nhs.uk/articles/minimising-wastage-of-critical-medicines-during-covid-19/>; and
- ensure all prescribers are aware of the implications in terms of professional accountability of using unlicensed stock where this is the preferred option (see supporting information).

Regional and National Procurement leads should:

- ensure trusts, health boards and hospitals are regularly reviewing local stock holding;
- work collaboratively with hospitals and suppliers/distributors to challenge excessive orders;
- identify hospitals who have stock holding beyond actual demand and work with trusts and health boards to re-distribute this stock across their region; and
- support local stock sharing between trusts, health boards and hospitals where appropriate.

Deadlines for actions

Actions initiated: on receipt of this alert
 Actions completed: 18/12/2020

Supporting Information

- Any decision to prescribe an unlicensed medicine must first consider the relevant guidance and NHS Trust or local governance procedures. Please see link below for further information:
 - [Prescribing unlicensed medicines](#), General Medical Council (GMC)
 - [The supply of unlicensed medicinal products](#), Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA)
 - [Professional Guidance for the Procurement and Supply of Specials](#), Royal Pharmaceutical Society
- Due to the use of various formulations and presentations of critical medicines that may be used during the Covid-19 outbreak, a poster has been created to highlight to clinical staff the importance of reading the product label. The poster can be found by following the attached link
<https://www.sps.nhs.uk/articles/drug-packaging-and-labelling-during-covid-19-poster-and-screensaver-for-teams/>

Distribution**Trusts (NHS boards in Scotland and Wales)**

CAS and SABS (NI) liaison officers for onward distribution to all relevant staff including:

- A&E consultants
- A&E departments
- A&E directors
- A&E nurses
- Adult intensive care units
- Anaesthesia, directors of
- Anaesthetic medical staff
- Anaesthetic nursing staff

- Anaesthetists
- Cardiologists
- Cardiology departments
- Cardiology nurses
- Cardiology, directors of
- Cardiothoracic departments
- Cardiothoracic surgeons
- Cardiothoracic surgery directors
- Chief pharmacists
- Clinical governance leads
- Clinical Procurement Specialists
- District nurses
- Hospital at home units
- Hospital pharmacies
- Hospital pharmacists
- Immunologists
- Intensive care medical staff/paediatrics
- Intensive care nursing staff (adult)
- Intensive care nursing staff (paediatric)
- Intensive care units
- Intensive care, directors of
- IV nurse specialists
- Intensive care, directors of
- Obstetricians
- Obstetrics and gynaecology departments
- Obstetrics and gynaecology directors
- Obstetrics departments
- Obstetrics nurses
- Paediatric intensive care units
- Paediatric medicine, directors of
- Palliative care teams
- Pharmaceutical advisors
- Pharmacists
- Purchasing managers
- Theatre managers
- Theatre nurses

Independent distribution

Establishments registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) (England only)

- Hospitals in the independent sector
- Independent treatment centres
- Nursing agencies
- Private medical practitioners

Enquiries

England

Enquiries from NHS Trusts in England should in the first instance be directed to you trust pharmacy team who will escalate issues to the Regional Pharmacy Procurement Specialist and national teams if required.

REGION	Full Name	Email
East Midlands	Andi Swain	andi.swain@nhs.net
East of England	James Kent	james.kent@southend.nhs.uk
London	Jackie Eastwood	jacqueline.eastwood@lpp.nhs.uk
North East	David Cook	david.cook20@nhs.net
North West	Glenn Harley	Glenn.Harley@liverpoolft.nhs.uk
South Central	Alison Ashman	Alison.Ashman@berkshire.nhs.uk
South East Coast	Richard Bateman	richard.bateman2@nhs.net
South West	Danny Palmer	Danny.Palmer@uhbw.nhs.uk
West Midlands	Diptyka Hart	Diptyka.Hart@uhb.nhs.uk
Yorkshire & Humber	David Allwood	davidallwood@nhs.net

Scotland

nss.nhssmedicineshortages@nhs.scot

Wales

MedicinesShortages@gov.wales

Northern Ireland

Noel.dunn@northerntrust.hscni.net

All other organisations should send enquiries about this notice to the DHSC Supply Resilience Team, quoting reference number **SDA/2020/014**

Email: supplyresiliencemd@dhsc.gov.uk