



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

## **MEDICINES SHORTAGE ADVISORY GROUP WALES**

### **MEDICINE SHORTAGE**

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| <b>Distribution:</b>    | As Annex 1   |
| <b>From:</b>            | Andrew Evans, Chief Pharmaceutical Officer   |
| <b>Date:</b>            | 30 July 2019   |
| <b>Reference:</b>       | CPhO/MedsLet/2019/08   |
| <b>Category:</b>        | Level 3 - High impact  |
| <b>Title:</b>           | Disruption to supply of Phenelzine sulfate 15mg Tablets (Nardil™).   |
| <b>For Action by:</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All General Practitioners – please ensure this message is seen by all working in your dispensary and retain a copy in your 'locum information pack'. - Action as below.</li><li>• Dispensing General Practitioners – please ensure this message is seen by all working in your dispensary and retain a copy in your 'locum information pack'. Action as below.</li><li>• Community Pharmacists - Action as below.</li><li>• Hospital Chief Pharmacists - Action as below.</li><li>• Medical Directors of Health Boards - disseminate to relevant clinicians in secondary care setting – Action as below.</li></ul> |
| <b>Timeframe:</b>       | Action within 24 hrs   |
| <b>For Information:</b> | See Annex 1 – Distribution List  |
| <b>Key Recipients:</b>  |  |



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<https://gov.wales/topics/health/professionals/pharmaceutical/?lang=en>

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Health Board and NHS Trust Chief Pharmacists  
Health Board Prescribing Advisers  
Chief Executives of NHS Trusts  
Principal Pharmacist Welsh Quality Control  
Principal Pharmacist Welsh Medicines Information Centre  
NHS Direct

**What is this about:**

Disruption to the supply of phenelzine.

Kyowa Kirin are the sole supplier of phenelzine tablets in the UK. They will be out of stock for a period of at least three months from the beginning of August until end of October 2019.

**Description of product affected:**

Phenelzine is a monamine-oxidase inhibitor (MAOI) licensed for the treatment of depression.<sup>1</sup> It has been found to be effective in patients clinically characterised as 'atypical', 'non endogenous', 'neurotic' or where treatment with other antidepressants has failed. Phenelzine is also used in patients with anxiety disorders, panic disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder.<sup>2</sup>

Phenelzine may be associated with withdrawal effects if stopped suddenly. Although these are usually mild and self-limiting for some patients, withdrawal effects may be severe. It is advised that the dose should be reduced gradually over at least 4 weeks. Withdrawal over 6 months is recommended when patients have been taking it as a long-term treatment..<sup>2,3</sup>

**Issue & Action to be taken:****Action and alternative products**

Phenelzine tends to only be used in patients where alternative treatments have failed or are not suitable and many have been stabilised on this treatment for a long time. Given the difficulties in withdrawing treatment and initiating new treatments in patients stabilized on phenelzine it is advisable to maintain them on this treatment using imported supplies if necessary, which would need to be treated as an unlicensed medicine in line with local clinical governance procedures.

If there is potential for a patient maintained on phenelzine to run out of supply during this shortage, they should be urgently referred back to mental health specialist for advice on ongoing clinical management.

When prescribing and dispensing unlicensed preparations, prescribers and pharmacists should always ensure the following:

Use of unlicensed products should be in line with agreed local policies and guidance.

Any decision to prescribe an unlicensed medicine must take into account the relevant GMC guidance and local governance procedures. Please see link to GMC guidance: <https://www.gmc-uk.org/ethical-guidance/ethical-guidance-for-doctors/prescribing-and-managing-medicines-and-devices/prescribing-unlicensed-medicines>

### **References:**

1. Kyowa Kirin Ltd. Summary of Product Characteristics for Nardil tablets. Last updated Feb 2017. Available: <https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/product/228>
2. Taylor DM et al. The Maudsley Prescribing Guidelines in Psychiatry 13<sup>th</sup> edition. Published 2018. John Wiley & Sons Ltd.
3. UKMI Q&A. How do you switch between monoamine oxidase inhibitors and SSRI, tricyclic or related antidepressants? Published Nov 2015. Available: <https://www.sps.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/NW-QA151.5-How-do-you-switch-between-MAOIs-and-SSRIs-TCAs-or-related-antidepressants-.pdf>

### **Acknowledgements:**

- Carl Holvey, Clinical Pharmacy Services Lead, Bart's Health NHS Trust.
- Dr Anne Connolly, Principal Pharmacist, South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust.
- Peter Pratt: Head of Mental Health and Learning Disabilities Medicines Strategy, NHS England and NHS Improvement.
- UK Medicines Information (UKMI).
- Specialist Pharmacy Service.

**For all correspondence please contact:**

[Medicinesshortages@gov.wales](mailto:Medicinesshortages@gov.wales)

Please forward to listed recipients.

Yours sincerely



**Andrew Evans**

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**DISTRIBUTION LIST**

**Send to:**

Chief Executives of Health Boards  
Medical Directors of Health Boards  
Health Board Chief Pharmacists  
Hospital Chief Pharmacists  
Chief Executives of NHS Trusts  
Director of Welsh Medicines Information Centre  
NHS Wales Procurement

**NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership to forward to:**

General Practitioners  
Dispensing General Practitioners.  
Community Pharmacists.  
Independent / Private clinics, hospices and hospitals throughout Wales.

**Welsh Government:**

Chief Medical Officer  
Chief Nursing Officer  
Director General Health and Social Services Group  
Emergency Planning Adviser  
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