

Shortage of Phenzelzine (Nardil®) 15mg tablets

Updated: 18th June 2020

Description of product affected

- Phenzelzine is a monoamine-oxidase inhibitor (MAOI) licensed for the treatment of depression.¹ It has been found to be effective in patients clinically characterised as 'atypical', 'non endogenous', 'neurotic' or where treatment with other antidepressants has failed.
- NICE supports the use of phenzelzine as an antidepressant and as an option in the treatment of social anxiety disorder.^{2,3} Phenzelzine is also used in patients with mixed depression and generalised anxiety disorder, panic disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder.⁴
- The recommended starting dose is 15mg three times daily which can be increased to four times a day if necessary.⁵ Doses of up to 30mg three times a day can be used in hospitalised patients. Once a satisfactory response has been achieved the dose can be reduced gradually to the lowest suitable maintenance dose.
- Phenzelzine 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 or longer if withdrawal symptoms emerge. Withdrawal over 6 months is recommended when patients have been taking it as a long-term treatment.
- When switching to an alternative antidepressant, it is advised to leave a 14-day washout period between stopping the phenzelzine and initiating the new treatment.^{4,6}

Background

- Kyowa Kirin are the sole supplier of phenzelzine tablets in the UK.
- **They are currently unable to advise a resupply date.**
- Restrictions on global imported supplies mean that there is also a national shortage of unlicensed imported phenzelzine 15mg tablets from importers currently, but this situation should be improving over the next weeks.

Alternative agents and management options

- Phenzelzine tends to only be used in difficult to treat patients and many of these have been stabilised on this treatment for a long time.
- Given the difficulties in withdrawing treatment and initiating new treatments in patients stabilized on phenzelzine it would seem 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.

Urgent Action

For GP practices:

- **GP practices should urgently identify patients prescribed phenelzine 15mg tablets (including the brand Nardil) to determine the quantity of stock that patients have remaining and prior to the patient running out of their supplies.**
- Where patients have supplies of less than 4 weeks remaining, practices should liaise with their local pharmacies directly to ascertain their stock levels as different pharmacies use a range of wholesalers and specialist importers.
- Where, local pharmacies do not have supplies we would ask you to alert our team directly regarding individual patients using our prescribing partnership mailbox CAPCCG.prescribingpartnership@nhs.net.
- The Medicines Optimisation Team are monitoring the situation closely and are collating where stocks are available from community pharmacies and dispensing practices locally in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area to support patients until unlicensed importers are available again, potentially end of June to the beginning of July 2020.

For Community Pharmacies and Dispensing Practices:

- We have received information from the following specialist importers that they may be able to support with obtaining supplies for patients (see table below).
- **Please may I ask pharmacies/dispensing practices who dispense phenelzine 15mg tablets (brand name Nardil) to patients, who do not have an account setup with the specialist importers listed to contact the relevant importer(s) urgently to setup an account and place an order for the phenelzine 15mg tablets that are either available or will be available shortly in the next 2 – 3 weeks.**
- If you require further information or support from the Medicines Optimisation Team on this matter, please do not hesitate to contact us via our prescribing partnership mailbox: CAPCCG.prescribingpartnership@nhs.net.

Update from specialist importers (as of 18/06/2020):

<i>Importer</i>	<i>Telephone number</i>	<i>Phenelzine availability</i>
Clinigen	01932 824100	Pharmacies should place a back order. Small amount of supplies due in w/c 22 nd June 2020. Priority booking so once arrives Clinigen hope to get to Community Pharmacies within 48 hours once it has been approved by their quality checks. Community Pharmacies must have an account with this importer and have placed a back order.
Target	0845 618 0036	Stocks expected in the next 3 weeks. Community Pharmacies must have an account with this importer and have placed a back order. Target have a next day delivery service for this product to their Community Pharmacies.
Alium	020 8238 6770	Expecting update to supply at the start of July 2020.

Mawdsleys	01302 553000	UK manufactured special being brought in within the next 2 weeks. It can take 2 days to setup an account so Community Pharmacies should do this ASAP and place a backorder. Next day delivery is available for Community Pharmacies with an account.
Durbin	020 8869 6555	Received stock today (18/06/2020). Community Pharmacies should receive stock next week if they have an account already setup and have placed an order. New accounts can be setup but take time to arrange so should be done ASAP.
Waymade	01268 535200	No date on will be available again.
WEP Clinical	0208 004 7318	Supplies expected beginning of July. Community Pharmacies must setup account to place a back-order and this should be done ASAP.

All of the above was personal correspondence between MOT and the specialist importers.

*An URGENT referral should be made to the patient's mental health specialist for advice **ONLY IF** imported phenelzine cannot be obtained within a sufficient timeframe within Primary Care.*

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. NICE. Depression in adults: recognition and management. Clinical guideline [CG90] Published date: October 2009, last updated: April 2018. Available: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg90>
3. NICE. Social anxiety disorder: recognition, assessment and treatment Clinical guideline [CG159] Published date: May 2013. Available: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg159>
4. Taylor DM et al. The Maudsley Prescribing Guidelines in Psychiatry 13th edition. Published 2018. John Wiley & Sons Ltd.
5. British National Formulary. Phenelzine monograph. Accessed via Medicines Complete, last updated 11 June 2019. Available: <https://doi.org/10.18578/BNF.762962594>
6. 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>

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