

Therapeutic Notes have Limited Impact on Physician Prescribing Behaviours for some Drugs

Approximately half of initial prescriptions for aliskiren and sitagliptin were prescribed in a manner that did not conform to therapeutic note recommendations.

What does this mean?

- Guidance regarding appropriate and cost-effective use of prescription drugs is published in the Ontario Drug Benefit (ODB) formulary in the form of 'therapeutic notes'.
- Approximately half of patients that started either aliskiren or sitagliptin did not meet the appropriateness criteria in the formulary, and less than one-quarter of physicians consistently followed these recommendations

Clinical Implications

- ✓ Physicians should carefully consider clinical criteria listed as therapeutic notes in the ODB formulary to ensure safe and appropriate prescribing.
- ✓ Further research is needed to determine prescriber characteristics that are independently associated with non-conformance.

How do we know this?

The ODPRN conducted a serial cross-sectional study of all residents of Ontario aged 66 and older who received a new prescription for one of two drugs, aliskiren or sitagliptin, between December 1, 2008 and March 31, 2012 to determine how frequently prescribing guidance in the form of 'therapeutic notes' is followed. Non-conformance in the aliskiren cohort was defined as the absence of a prescription for both a thiazide diuretic and either an angiotensin converting enzyme inhibitor (ACEi) or an angiotensin II receptor blocker (ARB) during the 120 days prior to the aliskiren prescription. For the sitagliptin cohort, non-conformance was defined as the absence of a prescription for metformin at the maximum dose of 2,000 mg/day during the 120 days prior to the sitagliptin prescription. Overall, 11,967 (n=23,291; 51.4%) patients received prescriptions for aliskiren that did not conform to the therapeutic notes criteria; 21,308 (n= 43,196; 49.3%) patients received prescriptions for sitagliptin that did not conform to the therapeutic notes criteria. There were 3,608 physicians who initiated patients on aliskiren and 6,421 physicians who initiated patients on sitagliptin during the study period. Among these physicians, the majority were male and approximately 80% were general practitioners or family physicians. None of the observed prescriber characteristics were strongly associated with non-conformance.

Hildebrand A, Yao Z, Gomes T, Camacho X, Garg A, Juurlink D, Mamdani M, Dhalla I. Adherence to Prescribing Recommendations Made on a Provincial Formulary. *Healthcare Policy*, 9(4) May 2014:20-30

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