

Prescribing Support Document

Drug: Carvedilol for prophylaxis of variceal bleeding in portal hypertension

SPC details:

This is an unlicensed indication.

Current prescribing information is found in the SPC for the product, this includes side effects and interactions that will also be applicable to the unlicensed use, prescribers should familiarise themselves with the content:

<https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/medicine/27714>

Additional prescribing information :

Propranolol is licensed and prescribed for the prophylaxis of upper gastrointestinal bleeding in patients with portal hypertension and oesophageal varices, with a patient response rate of about 1/3. Recent trials have shown that this can be increased to 2/3 of patients responding by using carvedilol which has additional alpha-1 blocking activity. Once confident with use there will be a reduction in the need for scoping patients. 12.5mg is the optimal dose, higher doses result in increased side effects with no increase in benefits.

A clinical guideline is available.

Starting criteria:

Patients with chronic liver disease and documented portal hypertension. Specifically 2 groups: (1) those without previous bleeding who have grade 2 or 3 varices or grade 1 varices with red signs (2) those who have bled and had initial band ligation of varices without early re-bleeding.

Initial dose 6.25mg daily, increased to 12.5mg if tolerated i.e. no dizziness / other significant side effects and systolic BP > 95 mmHg systolic.

Dose titration can be undertaken by the GP; alternatively the patient can be referred back to the hospital for up titration until stable, with the resulting cost of follow up appointments until this is achieved.

Stopping criteria:

If systolic blood pressure is consistently <95mmHg.

If treatment related adverse effects do not resolve after dose reduction, treatment should be discontinued.

If there is any other clinical concern on discussion with Hepatologist.

References:

<https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/medicine/27714>

<https://www.medicinescomplete.com/mc/bnf/current/>

<http://pathways.nice.org.uk/pathways/acute-upper-gastrointestinal-bleeding#content=view-node%3Anodes-oesophageal-varices>

Initiating prescriber:

Name (please print clearly):

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Document management

Approval:

JDTC approval on 24th Feb 2015
CPJPG approval on 21st Jan 2015

**Cambridge University Hospitals Joint Drug and
Therapeutics Committee** **Date:**

**Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Joint Prescribing
Group** **Date:**

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