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Dear Colleague

Quetiapine immediate release (IR) tablets and modified release (MR) tablets are both available as generic medicines.

However, the modified release version still costs the same as the original Seroquel XL version and is likely to continue at this price for some time.

To maximise the savings offered from generic versions of quetiapine IR we have issued the attached guidance to our clinicians within SaBP.

The guidance indicates that quetiapine XL should primarily be limited to the acute care inpatient setting and that patients in the community on quetiapine XL could be safely switched to the IR preparation, unless there was a specific recommendation by a secondary care consultant to remain on the XL preparation.

Although the IR preparation is licensed as a twice daily dose in psychosis, IR quetiapine is licensed for once daily dosing for the treatment of depression in bipolar disorder up to 600mg daily. Therefore it is not unreasonable to use IR once daily for other indications, which was common clinical practice prior to the availability of the XL formulation.

The clinical experience of the prescribing committee members is that quetiapine XL can be safely transitioned to IR at the same dose and frequency for patients in the community, and many had been doing this for a number of years.

Primary care prescribers are encouraged to review their patients on quetiapine XL and consider switching to the IR preparation either as a once or twice daily regimen.

Primary care prescribers can contact their local mental health community team if they require further information and support to transition to the IR preparation.

I hope this information is useful to you.

Simon Whitfield

Chief Pharmacist