



## Primary Care Shared Connection

July 2023

### Sertraline Prescribing – Regulation 28 Learning

The ICB supports practices by analysing themes from Significant Events. On some occasions, themes or single events are identified that require prompt sharing to all Primary Care practices to enable learning.

#### Particular Interest

All Staff    Practice Managers    GP's    Nursing    AHP    Clerical    Other

#### Summary

- Following a young male who died by suicide, a prevention of future deaths order has highlighted learning applicable to Primary Care
- The patient contacted his GP reporting depression and was prescribed Sertraline
- Two weeks later a further consultation took place, where the dose of Sertraline was increased. Following this, the patient began to have suicidal thoughts
- Less than one week later the patient took his own life.

#### Impact

- No discussion with the patient took place regarding the risk of suicidal ideation associated with commencing or increasing the dose of Sertraline
- The British National Formulary (BNF) was relied upon which does not identify suicidal ideation as a risk of prescribing Sertraline
- The coroner was concerned by the inconsistency between the literature provided by the manufacturers of Sertraline within the patient information leaflet (PIL) and the BNF as the information relating to suicidal ideation is different in both.

#### Identified learning

- There is a risk that prescribing practitioners consulting only the BNF with a view to determining dosage and treatment specifically with Sertraline, may be unaware of the potential risk of the onset of suicidal behaviour and/or would not consider it necessary to discuss that risk with the patient.

#### Suggested actions

- To be discussed in governance/team meetings with clinical staff to raise awareness
- Ensure all prescribing practitioners and dispensing pharmacists are aware of the potential risk/ side effect of Sertraline
- For safety and defensible decision making, risks should be discussed with patients prescribed Sertraline and documented in their records
- Consider running a search for patients newly prescribed Sertraline & review risks regularly with them
- Report to the BNF any suspected unwanted or unexpected adverse reactions via the [yellow card scheme](#)
- Additional reading - prevention of future deaths report which can be found [here](#)

#### For further information and support contact:

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