Background

Lidocaine 5% medicated plaster (Versatis®) is licensed for the symptomatic relief of post-herpetic neuralgia (PHN) in adults.

In Palliative Medicine, it has been prescribed for localised neuropathic pain or painful bone metastases not responsive to standard treatments¹.

Due to the associated economic burden and limited clinical evidence for its use in neuropathic pain, prescribing restrictions for licensed indication only have been recommended by the Medicines Management Programmes (MMP)².

In 2016, a specialist palliative care unit (SPCU) pharmacy dispensed 2,400 plasters with a total expenditure of €7,529.

Objectives

1. Assess the quantity of patients in receipt of a Versatis® plaster at point of admission to hospice.
2. Evaluate if post herpetic neuralgia was the indication for its prescription.

Methods

• Retrospective descriptive study
• Chart review of 287 patients admitted to a SPCU between January 2016 and December 2016 identifying patients already prescribed a Versatis® plaster on admission
• Additional data obtained included:
  1. Primary diagnosis
  2. Indication for Lidocaine 5% medicated plaster (Versatis®) (post-herpetic neuralgia: yes/no)

Conclusion

None of the patients on a Versatis® plaster at point of admission to met the licensed indication for its use. These results will encourage prescribers to:

1. Review the indication, effectiveness and appropriateness of continuing with this treatment.
2. Consider more cost effective alternatives.

References

1) http://www.palliativecareguidelines.scot.nhs.uk/guidelines/medicine-information-sheets/25lidocaine