

Re: Lidocaine 5% medicated plaster (VERSATIS®)

04 August 2017

Dear Colleagues,

Lidocaine 5% medicated plaster (Versatis®) is licensed for **the symptomatic relief of neuropathic pain associated with previous herpes zoster infection** known as post-herpetic neuralgia (PHN) in adults. It is a local anaesthetic agent which is applied directly to the affected area after the healing of herpes zoster (shingles) infection.

The Medicines Management Programmes (MMP) recently published a Prescribing and Cost Guidance report which highlighted that the clinical evidence to support the use of lidocaine 5% medicated plaster for PHN is limited due to lack of comparative data and its value is uncertain for all other types of pain.

Despite the limited clinical evidence, utilisation of this medication has increased over the last 5 years and there were over 25,000 patients in receipt of this medication at the end of 2016 with total expenditure exceeding €30 million.

The MMP recommends that the prescribing of lidocaine 5% medicated plaster should be restricted to patients with a diagnosis of PHN to ensure evidence based use of this medication.

Following the MMP review and based on best practice recommendations, the Primary Care Reimbursement Service (PCRS) are introducing changes to the reimbursement of lidocaine 5% medicated plaster from 1 September 2017. This process will support appropriate use of this medication while ensuring those with an indication of PHN continue to have access to this treatment.

The MMP has prepared “Tips and Tools” (attached) to guide appropriate use and offer topical treatment alternatives for both PHN and other types of pain. Further information including the full evaluation report, a summary report and information for healthcare professionals and patients are also available on the MMP website (www.hse.ie/yourmedicines).

We welcome your on-going feedback and support for our prescribing initiatives.

With best wishes,



Prof Michael Barry,
National Clinical Lead, Medicines Management Programme