

Aripiprazole long-acting (depot) injection for schizophrenia

NHS Devon

Commissioning policy

The commissioning of aripiprazole long-acting (depot) injection is accepted in Devon for the treatment of patients with schizophrenia who are non-adherent to antipsychotic medication or first generation antipsychotic depot injections are not clinically appropriate.

Rationale for the decision

Aripiprazole long-acting injection was shown to be non-inferior to the oral formulation of aripiprazole in a large double-blind, double-dummy randomised controlled trial. The treatment difference between the two formulations for the primary endpoint of impending relapse rate was -0.64% (95% CI: -5.25 to 3.99). All cause-discontinuation rate was lower for the long-acting injection. There is a higher frequency of extrapyramidal symptoms for the long-acting injection compared with the oral formulation. Meta-analyses have shown that aripiprazole has a lower risk of relapse, all-cause treatment discontinuation and extrapyramidal symptoms than first generation antipsychotics.

Cost-effectiveness analyses indicate that aripiprazole long-acting injection would be expected to be value for money for the NHS. The need for an additional depot treatment option is recognised particularly in the management of high-risk patients. Aripiprazole long-acting injection is commissioned when there is a lack of insight and overt non-adherence to treatment and where avoiding covert non-adherence (whether intentional or non-intentional) to antipsychotic medication is a clinical priority within the treatment plan.

Guidance notes on exceptionality

Where the circumstances of treatment for an individual patient do not meet the criteria described above exceptional funding can be sought.

Individual cases will be reviewed by the appropriate panel of the ICB upon receipt of a completed application from the patient's GP, consultant or clinician. Applications cannot be considered from patients personally.

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