Guanfacine for the management of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in children and adolescents

NHS Devon

Commissioning policy

The commissioning of guanfacine is accepted in Devon for the management of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in children and adolescents aged 6 to 17 years, where previous treatment with stimulants **AND** previous treatment with atomoxetine, is ineffective **OR** not tolerated **OR** these treatments are not suitable.

Rationale for the decision

In a number of short-term clinical trials, guanfacine has been shown to be more effective than placebo at reducing the symptoms of ADHD in children and adolescents.

Direct comparative evidence for the efficacy of guanfacine against other ADHD drugs is lacking. One clinical trial included atomoxetine as a reference control arm but was not designed to allow robust statistical comparisons. Indirect comparison studies have reached conflicting conclusions. Uncertainties within the analyses for these studies mean that the degree of any difference in the efficacy of guanfacine compared to other treatments is unclear.

Guanfacine is recommended by NICE as a treatment option for patients who have not tolerated, or failed to respond to, an adequate trial of methylphenidate and lisdexamfetamine. Whilst guanfacine was recommended by NICE as an alternative option to atomoxetine in 2018, guanfacine is now substantially more expensive than atomoxetine. The lack of reliable, consistent evidence that guanfacine is more

effective than atomoxetine, and its substantially higher acquisition cost means that this treatment is considered poor value for money in comparison to the alternative.

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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