

April 2017

Alert No: 28

## Antimicrobial stewardship: importance of following local prescribing guidance

### Incident

A patient on an ELFT ward developed symptoms of a urinary tract infection (UTI), and was prescribed the broad-spectrum antimicrobial, co-amoxiclav. According to the relevant local antimicrobial prescribing guidance, co-amoxiclav was not the recommended treatment for a UTI in this case, and should not have been used. The patient later developed a *Clostridium difficile* infection (CDI), which may have been related to the use of the antimicrobial.

### Learning points

#### 1) Always follow antimicrobial prescribing guidance

- Poor antimicrobial stewardship can result in CDI, as well as in the development of bacterial resistance.
- A key way to improve stewardship is to ensure antimicrobial prescribing is in-line with relevant local guidance.
- When antimicrobials are prescribed in ELFT, local prescribing guidance MUST be consulted.
- Prescribing outside the guidance should only be considered after consultation with a microbiologist.
- The table below shows the local antimicrobial prescribing guidance that should be followed at each of the Trust's inpatient sites (outpatients requiring antimicrobials should be referred to their GP):

ELFT locality	Antimicrobial guidance to follow (click link to access)
Bedfordshire & Luton	<a href="#">Bedfordshire CCG &amp; Luton CCG Antimicrobial Prescribing Guidelines</a>
City & Hackney	<a href="#">Homerton University Hospital Antimicrobial Guide*</a>
Newham (inc. CHN) & Tower Hamlets	<a href="#">Barts Health NHS Trust Antimicrobial Guide*</a>

\*These guides can also be accessed through the *Antibiotics Database* icon on your Trust computer desktop:



#### 2) Things to **remember** when prescribing an antimicrobial

- Antimicrobials should not be used unless there is clear clinical evidence of bacterial infection.
- If empirical antimicrobial treatment is to be initiated, seek to obtain microbiological samples before the first dose is given, then review treatment when the results are available.
- If prescribing an antimicrobial, ensure the shortest effective course and most appropriate dose is used.
- Check if the patient has any drug allergies before starting a medication.

#### 3) Things to **document** when prescribing an antimicrobial

- Document the clinical diagnosis (including symptoms) in the patient's medical notes.
- Ensure the antimicrobial prescription is endorsed with:
  - a) Indication (reason for use)
  - b) Dose & route of administration
  - c) Duration and/or review date

For further information about antimicrobial stewardship, including learning resources and toolkits, see the national safety alert; [Addressing antimicrobial resistance through implementation of an antimicrobial stewardship programme.](#)

#### References:

- NICE Evidence summary[ESMPB1], March 2015: [Clostridium difficile infection: risk with broad-spectrum antibiotics.](#)
- NICE guideline [NG15], August 2015: [Antimicrobial stewardship: systems and processes for effective antimicrobial medicine use.](#)
- Barts Health NHS Trust: [Adult Antimicrobial Guide, Version 4.9](#) (accessed 15<sup>th</sup> February 2017)