

May 2018

Alert No: 31

## Benzodiazepines and suicide

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In response to a coroner's report, NHS England has recently [issued a reminder](#) about the potential risk of suicide associated with benzodiazepine prescribing and withdrawal.

Prescribers should always consider the potential for dependence or other harmful effects with benzodiazepines. Although short or intermittent use of benzodiazepines would usually be considered to be best practice, for a minority of patients longer term treatment may be appropriate. However, in all cases vigilance of potential hazards is required throughout the course of treatment.

In particular, please note the following important points:

- 1) Patients who are withdrawing from benzodiazepines should be closely monitored and should receive regular medical review.
- 2) Take into consideration the particular risks associated with shorter acting benzodiazepines.
- 3) Be aware of the existence and continued relevance of the following guidance on prescribing and withdrawal of benzodiazepines:
  - NICE Clinical Knowledge Summary: "Benzodiazepine and z-drug withdrawal": <https://cks.nice.org.uk/benzodiazepine-and-z-drug-withdrawal#!scenario>
  - British Association of Psychopharmacology (BAP): "Benzodiazepines: Risks and benefits. A reconsideration.": <https://www.bap.org.uk/docdetails.php?docID=77>
  - ELFT Educational Pack: "Materials to support appropriate prescribing of hypnotics and anxiolytics across East London": <http://bit.ly/BenzoEduPack>