

Administration of clozapine to inpatients

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No: 5

Issue

Clozapine is used to treat resistant schizophrenia. Patients that continue to take clozapine require regular full blood count (FBC) monitoring. This is to pick up any clozapine-induced blood dyscrasias.

Clozapine also has other serious adverse effects which requires caution when prescribing and administering.

Three recent incidents have highlighted the need to give more thought and care when administering clozapine:

Incident 1

Patient received clozapine three days after the blood test results were invalid. A repeat blood test should have been carried out before administration.

Incident 2

Patient received a dose of 400mg of clozapine instead of 175mg.

Incident 3

Patient was admitted onto a ward and restarted on clozapine titration. The clozapine was not dispensed by the Pharmacy department to start titration as a valid blood result was not available. Clozapine is issued by Pharmacy on a named-patient basis. The patient was given the dose from another patient's medication supply.

Learning Points

- If there is no clozapine on the ward with the patients name on it, the administering nurse must call the Duty Senior Nurse and the on-call Pharmacist before administering clozapine from the after-hours cupboard.
- Never borrow another patient's medication without the authorisation of the on-call Pharmacist. This authorisation should be documented in the patient's notes.
- Always check the label and the blister pack of the medication to be administered. Think - does this look right? Are the tablets what I am expecting to administer?