

Policy Statement; Prescribing of ketamine for chronic pain is not supported

Mid-Essex Clinical Commissioning Group does not support the prescribing of Ketamine in chronic pain

Ketamine is an anaesthetic that can be used orally to treat chronic pain. It is not currently licensed in any form in the UK for treating chronic pain. Ketamine is unlicensed if oral liquid preparations, prepared by 'specials' manufacturers, are used, or off-label if the solution for injection or infusion is used orally (different indication and route to the license).

Ketamine is known as being a drug of abuse. It is controlled as a class C drug under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, and as a schedule 4, part 1 drug under the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001
 The NICE Evidence Summary: Unlicensed/off-label Medicines ESUOM27: Chronic pain: oral ketamine (25 February 2014)¹ states:

“There is no good quality evidence on the use oral ketamine to treat chronic pain in adults, and no firm conclusions can be drawn on the use oral ketamine for treating chronic pain in young people.”

In view of the lack of evidence described in the NICE summary, the Mid Essex CCG Area Prescribing Committee can no longer support the prescribing of ketamine for chronic pain in new patients. Any request for GPs to prescribe should be referred back to the referring clinician.

Patients currently receiving ketamine for chronic pain should be reviewed by the pain clinic (or referred back to the pain clinic) at the earliest opportunity with a view to changing to alternative formulary analgesics.

Providers commissioned to provide services on behalf of Mid-Essex CCG are reminded that they are required to follow the Mid-Essex CCG formulary and prescribing guidance as detailed in their contract (Medicines Management Service Specification).

See Mid-Essex CCG website – Medicines Optimisation page for all prescribing guidance:

<https://midessexccg.nhs.uk/medicines-optimisation>

1) <http://publications.nice.org.uk/esuom27-chronic-pain-oral-ketamine-esuom27>

Title	Ketamine for chronic pain
Document reference	KetaminePOL201502V2.0FINAL
Author	Medicines Optimisation Team, Mid Essex CCG
Reference:	NICE Chronic Pain:oral ketamine [ESUOM27] February 2014
Approved by	Mid Essex Medicines Management Committee Chair:Donald McGeachy
Date approved	February 2015
Next review date	February 2020

Previous version	Key Changes
April 2014	Changes to format