Trimipramine – Information for Patients

NHS guidance states that some medicines should not routinely be prescribed. This is because the medicines are:

- Not as safe as other medicines OR
- Not as good (effective) as other medicines OR
- More expensive than other medicines that do the same thing.

One of these medicines is trimipramine.

This document will explain why the changes are happening and where you can get more information and support.

Why does the NHS want to reduce the prescribing of trimipramine?

Trimipramine belongs to a group of medicines used to treat depression called “tricyclics”.

In its guidance on depression, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) recommends that a different type of antidepressants called “SSRIs” should be the first choice of treatment, rather than tricyclics. SSRIs do not have as many side effects as tricyclics.

If SSRIs do not work and a tricyclic antidepressant is needed, then there are alternatives that are far less expensive than trimipramine. The price of trimipramine has increased greatly so it is not good value for money.

Trimipramine is also used as a painkiller for a very small number of patients. However, it is no longer recommended for this use and there are other newer medications available. If you are taking trimipramine long term for pain relief, it is important that your pain management is reviewed regularly to ensure that the treatment you are taking is right for you.

What options are available instead of trimipramine?

You can talk to your prescriber about the options available so that you can come to a joint decision about what is best for you.

There are now many alternative antidepressants to trimipramine. It is also possible that you will no longer need to take an antidepressant at all.

You may suffer side effects if you stop taking trimipramine suddenly. Your prescriber will support you to gradually reduce your dose of trimipramine before you stop and slowly introduce a new medicine (if you are to be prescribed one).

Where can I find more information and support?

- You can speak to your local pharmacist, GP practice team or the person who prescribed the medication to you.
- MIND provide information and support for depression: https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/depression/about-depression/
- The NICE information for patients can be found at: https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng222
- The Patients Association can also offer support and advice: www.patients-association.org.uk/ or call 0800 345 7115
- Healthwatch: www.healthwatch.co.uk
- Find out more about the medicines that are being stopped or reduced: https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/items-which-should-not-routinely-be-prescribed-in-primary-care-policy-guidance/