

The Policy for Prescribing, Dispensing and Administration of Intravenous Vinca Alkaloid Chemotherapy

To be read in conjunction with:

- *'Surrey West Sussex and Hampshire Cancer Network Policy and Guidelines for the Safe Prescribing, Handling and Administration of Cytotoxic Drugs'*
- *'Operational Policy for the Provision of Chemotherapy Services at St Luke's Cancer Centre'*
- *National Patient Safety (NPSA) Rapid Response Report NPSA/2008/RRR004 'Using Vinca Alkaloid Minibags (Adult/Adolescent Units)'*

Date Agreed: April 2017
Version Number: 7
Operational Review Date: March 2019

Reason for Update: Routine review		Page 1 of 7
Valid from: April 2017	Review date: March 2019	Distribution: Master ITC folder, St Luke's Cancer Alliance Website
Version: 07	Supersedes version: 06	

INTRODUCTION

Accidental administration of vinca alkaloid chemotherapy into the cerebrospinal fluid can result in death. This policy has been drawn up to ensure the safe administration of vinca alkaloids by the intravenous route. It addresses the prescribing, dispensing and administration of vinca alkaloid chemotherapy within the Royal Surrey County Hospital (RSCH).

The following drugs are in the class of drugs referred to as vinca alkaloids:

- Vincristine
- Vinblastine
- Vindesine
- Vinorelbine
- Vinflunine

Vinca alkaloids are only supplied to the adult chemotherapy service in the form of minibags. This includes adolescent patients treated by the adult oncology/haemato-oncology teams.

Children are not treated with vinca alkaloids in the adult chemotherapy service clinical areas.

Vinca alkaloids are supplied to the children's chemotherapy service in syringes.

PRESCRIBING

- All prescriptions for vinca alkaloids will be written on the standard blue chemotherapy chart, via the electronic chemotherapy electronic prescribing system (ARIA) or dedicated paediatric chemotherapy prescription chart.
- As for other chemotherapy drugs vinca alkaloids will be prescribed only by an adult or paediatric Haematology/Oncology Consultant, Associate Specialist, Staff Grade, ST3 Grade or above. Qualified non-medical prescribers may prescribe within their competence once they have completed the local Chemotherapy Prescribing Training Programme.

DISPENSING

- The chemotherapy will be dispensed within the Pharmacy Aseptic Services Department on receipt of a fully confirmed prescription that has been checked by a clinical pharmacist. Outpatient chemotherapy may be pre-ordered by the St Luke's satellite pharmacy in advance of a confirmed prescription. The drugs will be released to the outpatient nursing team once a confirmed prescription is received and the prescription has been checked by a clinical pharmacist.
- Pharmacy will not commence processing or preparation of any prescription unless it is written on the appropriate prescription form, the route is specified, the doses are in accordance with the patient's protocol, unless dose modification has been clearly identified, and in all other respects the prescription is clear and unambiguous.

Reason for Update: Routine review		Page 2 of 7
Valid from: April 2017	Review date: March 2019	Distribution: Master ITC folder, St Luke's Cancer Alliance Website
Version: 07	Supersedes version: 06	

- Doses of vinca alkaloid chemotherapy supplied by the RSCH Pharmacy Aseptic Services Department (for both RSCH patients and external chemotherapy services) will be diluted as follows:
 - Adults (including adolescent patients treated by the adult team): all vinca alkaloids in 50ml minibag of sodium chloride 0.9% with the exception of vinflunine which is added to 100ml of sodium chloride 0.9%
 - Children: the vinca alkaloid is added to 20ml sodium chloride 0.9% in an appropriate sized syringe
- In addition to standard labelling requirements for injections, i.e. patient's name, patient's number, name of product, dose and route of administration, all doses of vinca alkaloids will have an additional label affixed to the minibag or syringe. This will be a red label with black print stating:

FOR INTRAVENOUS USE ONLY
Fatal if administered by other routes

All injections of vinca alkaloids will be supplied in a sealed 'vinca alkaloid transport bag'. This is a yellow bag pre-printed with the following text to differentiate the contents from other minibag infusions:

WARNING
VINCA ALKALOIDS
CYTOTOXIC
FOR INTRAVENOUS USE ONLY
FATAL IF GIVEN BY
ANY OTHER ROUTE

An additional label will be fixed to the 'vinca alkaloid transport bag'. This will be a red label with black print stating:

Do not remove this outer covering until the moment of injection
FOR INTRAVENOUS USE ONLY
Fatal if administered by other routes

A copy of the Pharmacy dispensing label containing the patient details and dose details will also be affixed to the 'vinca alkaloid transport bag'. The 'vinca alkaloid transport bag' will be delivered to the clinical areas in a chemotherapy delivery box.

Reason for Update: Routine review		Page 3 of 7
Valid from: April 2017	Review date: March 2019	Distribution: Master ITC folder, St Luke's Cancer Alliance Website
Version: 07	Supersedes version: 06	

ADMINISTRATION

- Careful consideration should be given to venous access. This should be reviewed prior to starting treatment and patients with poor venous access should be referred for insertion of a central venous catheter (CVC).
- Vinca alkaloids will be administered intravenously by nurses qualified to administer cytotoxic drugs. A second nurse will check the drug and prescription with the administering nurse according to Trust policy.
- For Day Care patients; the patient is asked to confirm their name, date of birth and first line of address. The nurses will check these details against the notes, hospital number and prescription chart prior to administration. For in-patients the patients will be asked the same identification details and will have these checked against their ID name-bands.
- Once the nurse is satisfied that all details are correct the drug should be administered as per the specific chemotherapy protocol. The administration technique used will be dependent on the preparation and the type of venous access:

MINIBAG (ADULTS AND ADOLESCENT PATIENTS TREATED BY ADULT TEAM)

- Infused intravenously over 5-10 minutes.
- All vinca alkaloids (for peripheral or central administration) will be run concurrently with 0.9% sodium chloride infusion and afterwards the vein flushed with a further 250ml sodium chloride 0.9% at a free flowing rate.

SYRINGE (PAEDIATRICS)

- The drug should be administered as a slow intravenous bolus injection over 3-5 minutes.
- The nurse should remain with the patient throughout administration and the patient should be closely monitored for signs of extravasation.
- The SWSH Cancer Network extravasation policy will be followed in the event of extravasation of a vinca alkaloid. This policy includes reporting and sharing the incident via the National Extravasation Information Service (www.extravasation.org.uk).

Reason for Update: Routine review		Page 4 of 7
Valid from: April 2017	Review date: March 2019	Distribution: Master ITC folder, St Luke's Cancer Alliance Website
Version: 07	Supersedes version: 06	

Agreed by:

Intrathecal Chemotherapy Lead at Royal Surrey County Hospital
Dr John de Vos, Consultant Haemato-Oncologist

Signature: J De Vos Date: 31.03.17.

Medical Director, Royal Surrey County Hospital
Dr Christopher Tibbs

Signature: C Tibbs Date: 07.04.17.

Deputy Chief Pharmacist, Royal Surrey County Hospital
Sally Seymour

Signature: S Seymour Date: 28.03.17.

Chair of the St Luke's Cancer Chemotherapy Working Party
Dr Agnieszka Michael, Consultant Medical Oncologist

Signature: A Michael Date: 25.04.17.

Director of Nursing and Patient Experience, Royal Surrey County Hospital
Louise Stead

Signature: L Stead Date: 06.04.17.

Chief Executive Royal Surrey County Hospital
Paula Head

Signature: P Head Date: 04.04.17.

Reason for Update: Routine review		Page 5 of 7
Valid from: April 2017	Review date: March 2019	Distribution: Master ITC folder, St Luke's Cancer Alliance Website
Version: 07	Supersedes version: 06	

Appendix I

Document History

Date of Original Preparation (Version 1)

7th March 2003

Prepared by:

Paula Deery, Chemotherapy Practice Development Sister

Carol Redfern, Lead Nurse

Carolyn Tucker, Oncology Pharmacist

Jacky Turner Lead Oncology Pharmacist

Date of 1st review (Version 2)

1st February 2005

Reviewed by:

Jacky Turner SWSH Network Pharmacist

Dr Gerry Robbins, Consultant Haemato-Oncologist

Carol Redfern, Lead Cancer Nurse, on behalf of the Chemotherapy Working Party.

Date of 2nd review (Version 3)

30th April 2007

Reviewed by:

Sally Punter, Principal Cancer Services Pharmacist

Dr Gerry Robbins, Consultant Haemato-Oncologist

Claire Palles-Clark, Lead Chemotherapy Nurse

Date of 3rd review (Version 4)

1st January 2009

Reviewed by:

Sally Seymour, Principal Cancer Services Pharmacist

Dr Gerry Robbins, Consultant Haemato-Oncologist

Victoria Mumford, Lead Chemotherapy Nurse

Date of 4th review (Version 5)

31st October 2011

Reviewed by:

Sally Seymour, Deputy Chief Pharmacist Cancer, Aseptic and Research Services (CARS)

Dr Gerry Robbins, Consultant Haemato-Oncologist

Susan Flaherty, Lead Haematology Nurse

Date of 5th review (Version 6)

23 July 2013

Reviewed by:

Man-Chie Chow, Lead pharmacist Haemato-Oncology

Rob Williams, Deputy Chief Pharmacist Cancer, Aseptic and Research Services (CARS)

Summary of changes:

- Vinflunine, a new vinca alkaloid added;
- Dispensing section amended such that method of preparation is the same for both internal and external patients according to the age of the patient;
- Prescriptions can now also be prescribed electronically.

Reason for Update: Routine review		Page 6 of 7
Valid from: April 2017	Review date: March 2019	Distribution: Master ITC folder, St Luke's Cancer Alliance Website
Version: 07	Supersedes version: 06	

Date of 6th review (Version 7)

17th January 2017

Reviewed by:

Sally Seymour, Deputy Chief Pharmacist Cancer, Aseptic and Research Services (CARS)

Paula Deery, Lead Chemotherapy Nurse

Donna Townsend, Lead Nurse and Macmillan CNS for Children and Teenagers with Cancer

Summary of changes:

- Routine update and clarification of presentations for adult patients (and adolescent patients treated by adult team) and children.

Reason for Update: Routine review		Page 7 of 7
Valid from: April 2017	Review date: March 2019	Distribution: Master ITC folder, St Luke's Cancer Alliance Website
Version: 07	Supersedes version: 06	