

Paracetamol – Monitoring risk factors for hepatotoxicity in patients during treatment

Healthcare professionals are reminded that hepatotoxicity in association with paracetamol may occur even at doses within the normal therapeutic range in patients who are at increased risk. It is important to maintain awareness of any emerging or changing risk factors during treatment with paracetamol.

Patients at an increased risk of hepatotoxicity include those who are underweight, of low body mass index, malnourished, dehydrated, chronic alcoholism or with co-existing renal or hepatic impairment. Those with conditions that may predispose to glutathione deficiency or depletion and those concomitantly taking hepatotoxic drugs are also considered at risk.

Healthcare professionals should take into consideration any emerging or changing risk factors (e.g. malnourishment, weight loss, dehydration) and maintain awareness over the course of treatment to any dose adjustment that may be warranted when prescribing or administering paracetamol.

For some patients considered to be at higher risk of hepatotoxicity, a lower starting dose, a reduction in dose and/or a reduced frequency of dosing may be appropriate. Healthcare professionals are advised to refer to the product information for the relevant paracetamol formulation.

For full information, refer to the relevant SmPC available at www.hpra.ie.

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