

Antimicrobial Pharmacy Message of the Month – Oct 2018

Sepsis – ‘pink slips’ and supplies



Sepsis kills! Where the body has become overwhelmed by infection, it is likely to go into total shut down. **The risk of death at this point is incredibly high**, and one of the most important actions that saves lives is to **give IV antibiotics within 60 minutes**.

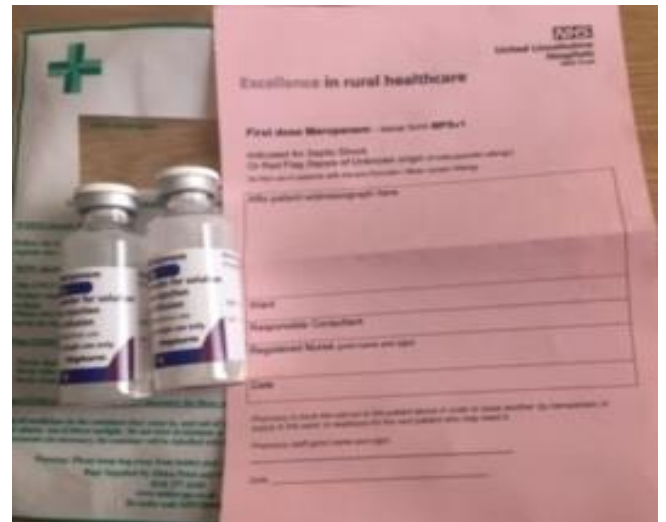
This is a very tight timeframe, but research shows that every hour of delay increases the risk of death by a further 10%. The **most common IV antibiotic treatments for sepsis** include co-amoxiclav, piperacillin/tazobactam and meropenem.

Problem: Piperacillin/tazobactam and meropenem are highly restricted drugs and there are many problems in controlling use of them when released as general ward stock. However, keeping them in pharmacy or high risk areas alone is making it difficult for nurses to administer within an hour as much of this time is also taken doing other action, including getting the dose prescribed, etc.

Proposed solution: We are going for a compromise. Where not suitable for these drugs to be held as general ward stock, we will allocate a one dose only approach, accompanied by a ‘pink slip’ for the relevant drug, all contained in a clear plastic bag. The dose can be stored with other ward stock antibiotics. When it is needed urgently for first dose in sepsis, it can be used, but supply will only be replenished when the pink slip is completed so that we can trace it to a patient. Instructions for nurses and pharmacists are given on the back of the slip to make the process clear.

What do you need to know:

- 1) Be **aware** of this new process – it is being rolled out over the next month
- 2) Replenish pink slip and replace supply as a **priority**
- 3) Any **requests for more doses** for the same patient should be dispensed against prescription chart. If this is out of hours, the usual process should be followed (out of hours’ cupboard).
- 4) This **supplements the existing arrangements** we have. The supply can be used inside or outside of pharmacy hours. The usual process of obtaining drugs should be followed through pharmacy or OOH cupboard, if more supplies are needed (i.e., for a new patient)
- 5) **Only pharmacy** staff will be replenishing the pink slip and supply - via ward pharmacy teams, or dispensary. We do not need to keep in OOH as the drug is already stocked there!
- 6) This will **not form part of the top up service**, although top up assistant may facilitate replenishment on receipt of completed pink slip.



For further information:

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