

From the Deputy Chief Medical Officer
Dr Sloan Harper



Department of
**Health, Social Services
and Public Safety**

www.dhsspsni.gov.uk

AN ROINN

**Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta
agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí**

MÁNNYSTRIE O

**Poustie, Resydènter Heisin
an Fowk Siccar**

Circular HSC (SQSD) (NICE) 41/09 TA 158

**Subject: Technology Appraisal No 158 –
Amantadine, Oseltamivir, and Zanamivir for
Influenza Prophylaxis**

For action by:

Chief Executives of HSC Board – **for distribution to:**

Directors of Public Health
Directors of Nursing
Directors of Pharmaceutical Services
Directors of Primary Care – for cascade to prescribing and
GP Advisors

Chief Executives of HSC Trusts – **for distribution to:**

Medical Directors – for cascade to relevant staff
Directors of Nursing – for cascade to relevant staff
Directors of Pharmaceutical Services – for cascade to
relevant staff

General Practitioners

HSC Clinical and Social Governance Leads

Chief Executives of HSC Special Agencies and NDPBs

For Information to:

Chair of HSC Board
Chief Executive Public Health Agency
Director of Public Health, Public Health Agency
Director of Nursing, Public Health Agency
Chairs of HSC Trusts
Chief Executive, Regulation & Quality Improvement Authority
Chief Officers HSC Councils
Chief Executive/Postgraduate Dean, NIMDTA
Chief Executive, NICPLD
Chief Executive, NIPEC
Chief Executive, RMSC

Summary of Contents:

This guidance relates to the use of amantadine, oseltamivir and
zanamivir for the prophylaxis of influenza.

Enquiries:

Any enquiries about the content of this Circular should be addressed
to:

Standards & Guidelines Unit
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SGU-NICEGuidance@dhsspsni.gov.uk

Circular Reference: HSC (SQSD) (NICE) 41/2009

Date of Issue: 29 July 2009

Related documents:

See bullet point 9 below

Superseded documents

This appraisal includes an update of technology appraisal No 67 on
Flu Prevention – Amantadine and Oseltamivir, produced by NICE in
September 2003

Status of Contents:

Action

Implementation:

Put plans in place within 3 months

Additional copies:

Available to download from

<http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/phealth/sqs/sqsd-guidance.htm>

Dear Colleagues

Technology Appraisal No 158 – Amantadine, Oseltamivir and Zanamivir for Influenza Prophylaxis

NICE has said that its recommendations about oseltamivir and zanamivir should not reduce efforts to give vaccination (also called the flu jab) to people for whom it is recommended in national guidelines.

The guidance does not cover widespread epidemics.

Oseltamivir and zanamivir are recommended to prevent flu if **all** of the following apply:

- The amount of flu virus going around is enough that if someone has a flu-like illness it is likely that it has been caused by the flu virus
- The person is in an at-risk group (see page 4).
- The person has been in contact with someone with a flu-like illness and can start treatment within 36 hours (for zanamivir) or within 48 hours (for oseltamivir)
- The person has not been effectively protected by vaccination.

Amantadine is not recommended for the prophylaxis of influenza.

DHSSPS advises that this guidance is valid for Northern Ireland and endorses it for implementation in HSC.

The full NICE technology appraisal is available for download at:

<http://guidance.nice.org.uk/TA158>

The HSC sector also should note that;

1. This appraisal includes an update of technology appraisal No 67 on Flu Prevention – Amantadine and Oseltamivir, produced by NICE in September 2003;
2. The Department expects HSC organisations to put plans in place, within 3 months of the date of issue of this E Mail alert, to facilitate the implementation of this guidance;
3. For the purpose of this guidance, people at risk are defined as those who fall into one or more of the clinical risk groups, defined, and updated each year by the Chief Medical Officer. The current list includes people with:
 - Chronic respiratory tract infections
 - Chronic Heart disease
 - Chronic renal disease
 - Chronic liver disease
 - Chronic neurological disease
 - Immunosuppression
 - Diabets mellitus

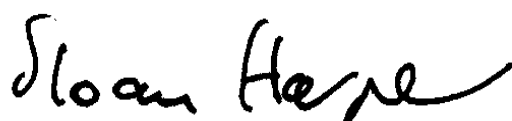
People who are aged 65 years or older are also defined as at risk for the purpose of this guidance.

4. This technology appraisal will be considered for review by NICE in September 2011;

5. Oseltamivir and zanamivir are not recommended for seasonal prophylaxis of influenza;
6. Amantadine is not recommended for the prophylaxis of influenza;
7. NICE has developed tools to help organisations implement this guidance. These are available at <http://www.nice.org.uk/Guidance/TA158> and include costing tools, implementation advice and audit criteria to monitor local practice;
8. This advice does not override or replace the individual responsibility of health professionals to make appropriate decisions in the circumstances of their individual patients, in consultation with the patient and/or guardian or carer. This would, for example, include situations where individual patients have other conditions or complications that need to be taken into account in determining whether the NICE guidance is fully appropriate in their case;
9. NICE has developed related guidance on amantadine, oseltamivir and zanamivir for the treatment of influenza (a review of NICE technology appraisal No 58, published in February 2003). This can be accessed at: <http://guidance.nice.org.uk/TA168>

All NICE guidance endorsed by the Department to date can be accessed on the DHSSPS website at: [Safety, Quality and Standards | NICE Guidance | DHSSPS\(NI\)](#)

Circular HSS (PPMD) (NICE) 01/06 issued on 30 June 2006 provides further information on the Northern Ireland process for reviewing NICE guidance and further details on the local status of the Institute's guidance. This circular can be accessed at: http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/nice_guidance_01-06.pdf



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