

Commissioning guidance:

Commissioners may wish to bear the following in mind when considering ocular lubricants for the treatment of dry eye diseases:

- Treatments for dry or sore/tired eyes are included in the NHS England guidance on conditions for which over the counter (OTC) items should not be routinely prescribed in primary care.
- The NHS England guidance lists a number of general exceptions where patients should continue to have their treatments prescribed. These include (but are not limited to): the need to prescribe OTC products to treat an adverse effect or symptom of a more complex illness, use of OTC products in long-term chronic conditions, or to treat more complex forms of a minor illness, and situations where the prescriber believes that exceptional circumstances exist that warrant deviation from the recommendation to self-care.
- Self-care should form the mainstay of treatment in uncomplicated dry eye disease that does not require immediate referral to secondary care. All-Wales Medicines Strategy Group (AWMSG) guidance incorporating self-care measures is shown below.
- The systematic review evidence considered by MTRAC suggested that whilst ocular lubricants are efficacious in treating the symptoms of dry eye, there is insufficiently robust evidence to differentiate between products.
- Patients presenting with dry eyes, for whom non-pharmacological measures are insufficient, are advised to consult the local pharmacy or optometrist for assistance in selecting an appropriate OTC lubricant product. CCGs may wish to ensure that information and resources are available to surgeries to enable signposting to appropriate services.
- CCGs may wish to develop a local policy and implementation plan for the treatment of dry eyes, given the multiplicity of products available, the variations in costs of different products, and the potential population that may qualify for the exceptional circumstances quoted by NHS England.

MTRAC was asked to review ocular lubricants as a potential commissioning issue in primary care.

References

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