

Email from Helen John 16 March

Something came to light at the last postgraduate meeting at Morrision (this month), which the LDC may be able to help clarify/progress for dentists in the locality and nationally.

The lecturer was Jamie Hayes and he went to some trouble to flag up the fact that there are now several new anticoagulants being used by GMP's under NICE guidance. He had great concerns that the dental profession seems unaware of them and the audience that evening confirmed those thoughts.

Unlike Warfarin, the patients are not subject to regular monitoring tests. Jamie pointed out that INR testing is inappropriate as the drugs work in a different way from Warfarin. He was also at some considerable pains to point out that in addition to there being a very low level of awareness within the dental profession of the existence and use of these drugs, we have been given no protocol for planning safe invasive dental treatment for any of our patients who may be taking them.

Before sending this email to you, I rang the BDA and spoke to Lyn Woods. I asked her what the BDA were advising us to do when faced with patients who needed invasive treatment and were taking these anticoagulants. Her response was,

“Dear Dr John

Thank you for your call recently re the increasing use of new oral anticoagulants and the issues around dental treatment.

I have asked one of my colleagues to put this to the Dental Advisory Group for their consideration.

With kind regards.

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So at the moment it would appear that there is no protocol, other than to refer to the hospital services.

Could the LDC press the “powers that be” to look at this? I am led to believe that the circulation of such protocol a few years ago, for the management in general dental practice of patients taking Warfarin, made a big difference to the confidence with which GDP's then treated them in their own surgeries.