



Cost effective use of venlafaxine

Background

- Venlafaxine is available as standard release tablets (given twice daily), or XL (modified-release) tablets and capsules (given once daily).
- All preparations have similar bioavailability, with XL (modified-release) products reaching a lower maximum concentration than standard release.
- Nausea tends to be more common at the start of treatment, and the incidence decreases over the first few weeks, with modified release capsules showing slightly less nausea at week one. By 12 weeks the side-effect incidence for nausea is similar for all presentations.

Finance & usage data

- The Arden Cluster spends around £764,000 per year on venlafaxine. 44% of prescriptions are for venlafaxine standard release tablets.
- Venlafaxine standard release tablets (twice daily) are 91% cheaper than the most expensive once daily venlafaxine modified-release brand (Efexor[®]), and 3-to-5% cheaper than the cheapest once daily venlafaxine modified-release brand.
- Venlafaxine modified release capsules have reduced in price by ~89%.

Potential drug cost savings for Arden Cluster, per year based on 2016/17 prescribing

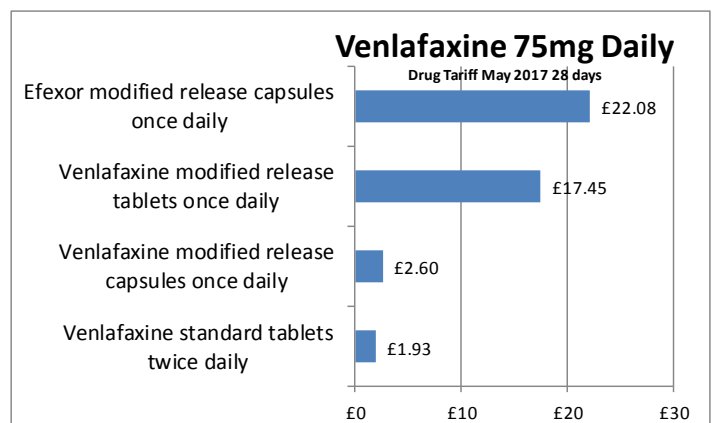
- All modified release prescribed as venlafaxine modified release capsules; £372,000
- All existing products converted to standard release; £624,000

Proposed action across primary and secondary care

- **New patients: To initiate new patients on standard release twice daily tablets. If known compliance problems or unacceptable side effects prescribe venlafaxine modified release capsules – once daily**
- **Existing patients: To consider switching suitable patients from any venlafaxine modified release products to venlafaxine standard release tablets (twice daily)**
- **If a once daily modified release product is required, prescribe generically as venlafaxine modified release capsules, otherwise the saving is not realised**.**
- [**NB The Drug Tariff price is based on Vensir[®] modified release capsules, so currently these prescriptions are also lower in cost].
- **For all existing patients, assess need for continuing treatment and cardiovascular risk.**

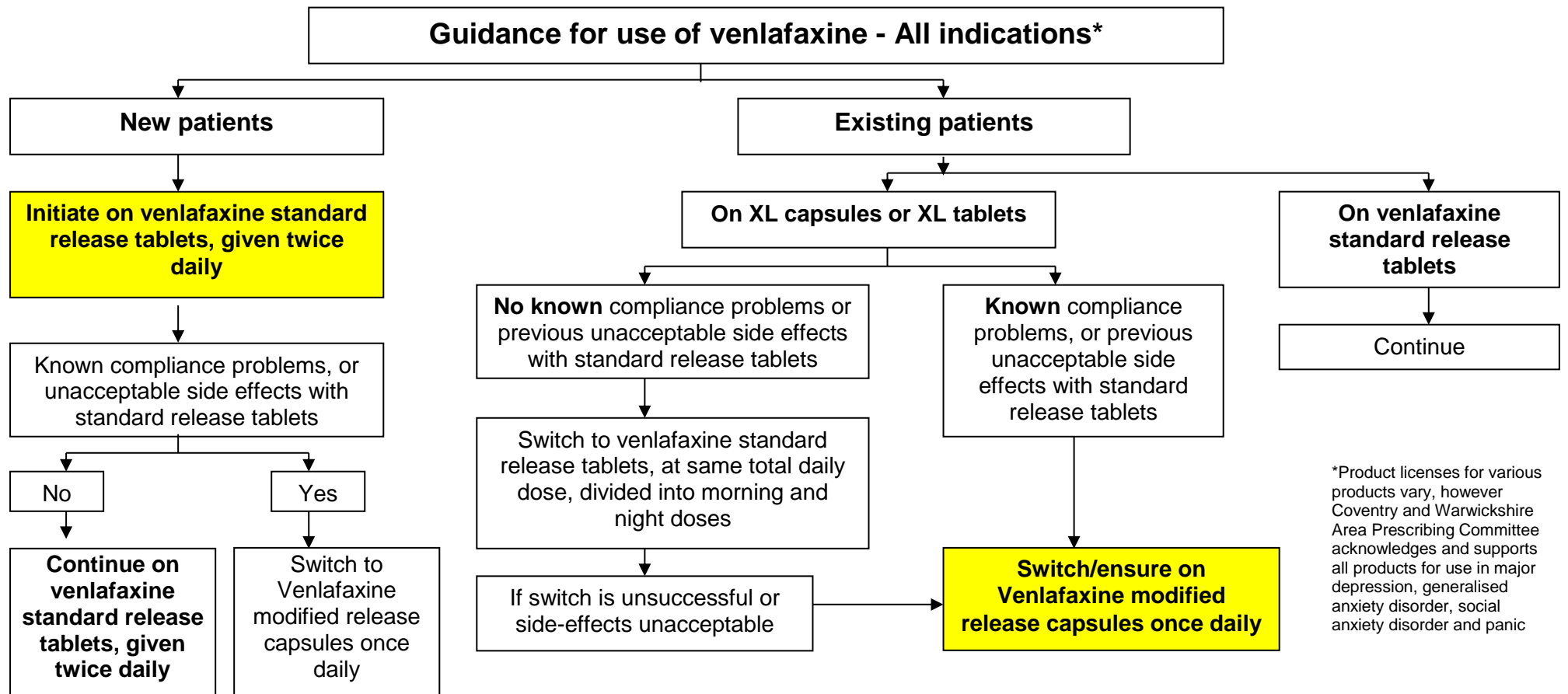
Comparison of Efficacy and side-effects^{1, 2}

Venlafaxine Formulation	Venlafaxine XL	Venlafaxine standard tablets
Dosing schedule	Once daily	Twice daily
At 75mg dose, %incidence of nausea at 1 week	27%	37%
Overall %incidence of nausea	45%	45%
Primary endpoint Efficacy at 12 weeks	Yes, significant from week 4	Yes significant from week 6



¹ Bradford District Care Trust Drugs and Therapeutics Group response to QIPP - Medicines Management - Governance Procedure Application

² Data on file, Wyeth Efx 203 & 313



Prescribing Notes

New Patients Prescribed Venlafaxine (Secondary and Primary Care)	Existing Patients Prescribed Venlafaxine
Prescribers are invited to re-assure patients that side-effects tend to diminish over time. For patients who demonstrate poor compliance or persistent side-effects, continue to prescribe Venlafaxine modified release capsules once daily (at same total daily dose).	Divide the dose of XL into two doses of standard release, prescribed twice daily. Eg. Venlafaxine modified release capsules 150mg one capsule daily will change to venlafaxine 75mg tablets one tablet twice a day. Venlafaxine modified release capsules 225mg once daily to venlafaxine 75mg tablets two each morning and one at night

- If a once daily modified release product is required, prescribe generically as venlafaxine modified release capsules, otherwise the saving is not realised**.
[**NB Drug Tariff price based on Vensir[®] modified release capsules, so currently these prescriptions are also lower in cost].