

## BACKGROUND

DOACs (Direct oral anti-coagulants, also known as NOACs – non-vitamin K antagonist oral anticoagulants) are all absolutely contraindicated in severe renal failure. Therefore they must never be used in dialysis patients. Such patients usually have to be treated when they present with a condition needing full anticoagulation with heparin and then warfarin.

The Trust has become aware that both East Kent community and Trust prescribers have overlooked this absolute contraindication. There have been national reports of patients who have suffered serious and fatal bleeds as a consequence.

The following human factors appear likely:

- a) Failure of clinical staff to check for absolute contraindications before prescribing
- b) Prescribing based on creatinine/eGFR result alone
- c) Other short cuts in appropriate clinical and prescribing practice

## Prescribing Update

DOACs (NOACs): apixaban (Eliquis®),  
edoxaban (Lixiana®), dabigatran  
(Pradaxa®), rivaroxaban(Xarelto®)

## ACTION POINTS

For prescribers, pharmacists and those that administer the drugs:

Ensure you can recognise these drugs as anticoagulants.

Know the absolute contraindications to all these commonly prescribed, highly effective but potentially risky drugs that others may overlook. These include severe renal failure, co-administration with other anticoagulants and recent bleeding such as a subdural haematoma.

Always consider common absolute contraindications such as allergy and severe renal or hepatic disease when any medication is initiated.

Train yourself to not take behavioral short cuts that in relatively rare patients will lead to significant patient harm – consistent practice is safest, but extra care with high risk drugs helps too.

Report any serious side effect of DOACs (NOACs) or any other medicine on a [Yellow Card](#) and if a mistake has been made, as a clinical incident.

For further information please:

Discuss with your clinical pharmacist or haematology

Call Medicines Information on 723-6001

Utilise Trust formulary to access safety information on a medicine

<http://www.ekhuftformulary.nhs.uk/>

