

Equality and Diversity Statement for Pharmacy Policies, Procedures and Guidelines

Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust are committed to actively recognising and promoting Equality and Diversity. The trust identifies that Equality and Diversity is a key element of the Trust's business, service provision and employment.

When Pharmacy's Policies and Procedures are produced it is essential that they are compiled with the perspectives of different groups of people in mind. There are nine protected characteristics and they must be considered together and individually; Race, Gender, Disability, Sexual Orientation, Religion or Belief, Age, Gender Reassignment, Pregnancy and Maternity and Marriage and Civil Partnership. It is essential to consider the impact of the policy or guidance on people with different protected characteristics.

Taking each group in turn:

Race – Genetic differences between different ethnic and racial groups may effect the metabolism, efficacy and side effect profile of many drugs. Benign ethnic neutropenia (BEN) is more prevalent in in people of Afro-Caribbean or African origin than in Caucasians, leading to a lower apparent white cell count in the former. This is important for patients taking clozapine. Chinese people with the HLA B1502 gene have experienced Stevens-Johnson syndrome after taking carbamazepine, and allopurinol.

Gender – Biologic differences exist between men and women that can result in differences in responses to drugs. Both pharmacokinetic and pharmacodynamic differences between the sexes exist. On average, men are larger than women. Body size differences results in larger distribution volumes and faster total clearance of most medications in men compared to women.

Disability – Many people have learning, physical or mental health disabilities which have a 'substantial' and long term negative effect on normal daily activities. Psychotropic prescribing and administration should be adapted for this group of patients. There are printable leaflets on all commonly used psychotropic medication in easy to read and extra large print on the [Choice and Medication](#) website. For patients who do not speak English the leaflets are translated into 13 different languages.

Sexual Orientation – Individuals with HIV/AIDs which is more prevalent in homosexual men may experience symptoms of mental illness either as a direct consequence or (organic origin), a reaction to or in addition to their underlying infection. It is thought that HIV infected individuals may be more sensitive to higher doses, adverse side effects and interactions. Patient with low CD4 counts and high viral loads are more likely to have exaggerated adverse drug reaction to psychotropic medications.

Religion or Belief – Religions and beliefs are extremely important to many people. Several religions, including Hinduism, Judaism, and Islam, prohibit the consumption of swine and bovine products. More than 1000 medications contain inactive ingredients derived from these sources. There is advice in English and other translations for patients taking medicines during Ramadan on the [Choice and Medication](#) website. The excipients and active ingredients in some medicines will need to be checked carefully to accommodate vegetarians.

Age – Increased sensitivity occurs due to age-related changes in pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics. These changes in drug handling and action must be taken into account if treatment is to be effective and adverse effects minimised. The elderly often have a number of concurrent illnesses and may require treatment with several drugs. This leads to a greater chance of problems arising because of drug interactions and to a higher rate of drug induced problems.

Gender Reassignment – Patients who are considering and undergoing gender reassignment should be a full participant in decisions about their healthcare and wellbeing and be given any information or support that they need in order to do so.

Pregnancy and Maternity – Although drugs account for a small proportion of abnormalities (approximately 5%) potential risks include major malformations. Potential risks of drugs include major malformations (first trimester exposure), neonatal toxicity (first trimester exposure), longer term neurobehavioural effects and increased risk of physical health problems in adult life.

Marriage and Civil Partnership – There is a need to protect individuals to prevent unlawful discrimination.

Useful websites

British National Formulary	www.medicinescomplete.com/mc/bnf/current/
Medicines Questions and Answers	www.sps.nhs.uk
Medicines for Children	http://www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk/
BUMPS – Best Use of Medicines In Pregnancy	www.medicinesinpregnancy.org
Electronic Medicines Compendium	www.medicines.org.uk/emc/
Choice and Medication	www.choiceandmedication.org/tees-esk-and-wear-valleys/

References

Maudsley Prescribing Guidelines in Psychiatry 12th Edition 2015

Bazire S. Psychotropic Drug Directory 2016

[NHS Choices Stevens-Johnson Syndrome, accessed 10/5/2017](#)

Schwartz JB. [The influence of sex on pharmacokinetics. Schwartz JB. Clinical Pharmacokinetics 2003;42\(2\):107-21](#)

[Gender reassignment Protocol – The Scottish Government 2012](#)