

# Memo - Sertraline supply

To: All Trust staff  
From: Pharmacy  
Date: 7<sup>th</sup> May 2020

## Re: Sertraline 50mg and 100mg tablets

### Description of supply issue:

We are aware that some community pharmacies are reporting difficulties obtaining sertraline 50mg and 100mg tablets. It has been confirmed that there is no national shortage of sertraline tablets, therefore switching patients to an alternative treatment is not necessary and is not being advised as it could result in unnecessarily destabilising a patient's mental health.

As different pharmacies obtain medication supplies from different wholesalers, we suggest that patients experiencing this problem should try taking their prescription to a different community pharmacy.

Three out of seven generic product manufacturers have reported they are out of stock, but deliveries to replenish stock are expected in the next month. However, the majority of generic products are still available from different and multiple pharmacy manufacturers and wholesalers.

The branded version of sertraline – Lustral - is also available at some wholesalers. This is more expensive and will only be supplied if "Lustral" is specifically written on the prescription. Branded prescribing is usually not recommended, however if a patient is finding it very difficult to obtain a generic version from any of the pharmacies they have tried, it may be an option, in individual circumstances, to rewrite the prescription as Lustral. This should only be done as an exception.

### Action

- Prescribers should advise patients to take their prescriptions to a different community pharmacy if they are experiencing supply issues from one pharmacy.
- Switching patients stabilised on sertraline to alternative treatment options is not necessary and not being advised, as this unnecessarily risks relapse.
- If generic products are out of stock in multiple community pharmacies and a patient is experiencing difficulty obtaining a supply, clinicians can issue a new prescription for the branded product Lustral. This should only be done in exceptional circumstances.
- Prescribers should advise patients to call a community pharmacy about the availability of sertraline prior to visiting the pharmacy.
- Patient reassurance about the availability of sertraline may be needed.
- Prescribers can continue to start new patients on sertraline where clinically appropriate.

### Original document prepared by:

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