



Post-Completion Collaborative Working Project Summary: Supporting the Rheumatology Service at University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust with Pharmacist Staff

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Project description:

This collaborative working project involved funding a Band 8a Rheumatology Specialist Pharmacist for 12 months from November 2022 at University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust to enhance patient care and an overall service delivery of medicine as per the Medicines Optimisation National Opportunities 2023/24 recommendations. The aims of this project were to add value to patient care and service delivery. This project would also provide evidence at project completion to support a business case for a permanent post.

Organisations involved:

Fresenius-Kabi and University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust contributed resources to this project.

Summary of Outcomes:

The funded pharmacist performed an Adalimumab switch project, switching patients from the originator to biosimilar product. This involved:

- Linking in with a data analyst to identify patients.
- Sending out information four weeks before scheduled appointment.
- Following up with telephone call after one week.
- Based on this telephone conversation, determining whether the patient needed to discuss the switch face to face.
- If patient opted out of the switch without a discussion, they were seen in their normal clinic appointment clinic, and this was discussed.
- If the patient was in agreement with the switch, the pharmacist informed clinicians who then obtained consent.
- The pharmacist counselled and monitored the patients throughout the switch process.
- One month post switch the pharmacist telephoned the patient to determine how they are getting on, and ask about adverse effects etc.
- Depending on the patient's response, this determined whether the patient needed to be reviewed again face to face or could be followed up through review of notes.
- In addition, the pharmacist manned a helpline for patients to contact with queries.
- This work took place in clinics across different sites.

803 patients were successfully switched.

91 patients were not switched. The rationale for this is set out below.

Patients Objecting to Switch or Switched to Another Therapy	
Reason	Patient Numbers
Moved to Another Biologic - Abatacept (Orencia)	1
Moved to Another Biologic - Certolizumab Pegol (Cimzia)	6

Moved to Another Biologic - Etanercept (Benepali)	6
Moved to Another Biologic - Secukinumab (Cosentyx)	4
Moved to Another Biologic - Tocilizumab (RoActemra)	2
Moved to Another Treatment - Infliximab (Remsima)	1
Moved to Another Treatment - Baricitinib (Olumiant)	1
Did not switch	17
Switched to Amgevita	18
Switched back to Humira	35

The cost improvement programme value of the project over 12 months was £240 000

The benefits of a dedicated pharmacist for rheumatology were concluded to be as follows:

The post provided additional capacity to safely run the switch which the trust would have been unable to accommodate in regular clinics. In turn this switch enabled cost savings for the rheumatology service. It also provided a point of contact in pharmacy to field queries from patients, clinicians and homecare companies.

Value was added to the necessary homecare transition when patients were switched, and the pharmacist was able to streamline home care supplies for patients.

The project gave the UHB Pharmacy department the opportunity to work in partnership with Pharma and showcase to the directorate, by having similar posts in place, that further cost savings are achievable.

The project gave Fresenius Kabi the opportunity to work with an NHS organisation as a true partner to improve patient care in line with the company mission of Caring For Life. The project also raised the company's profile in the biosimilars space.

With investment into the expansion of the Medicines Optimisation team the Trust envisage to fund a post which will support biological switches as a permanent post.