Assessment and non pharmacological strategies

- Exclude red flags. Assess pain and impact: DN4 & BPS pain scales
- Discuss benefits and risks of drug therapy, titration regimen and impairment to driving: Patient medication leaflet
- Agree realistic goals for treatment: 30-50% pain reduction and specific functional improvement/improvement in sleep
- Discuss non pharmacological strategies and provide signposting information

Refer at any stage including initial presentation if pain severe, pain significantly limits daily activities/sleep, underlying health condition deteriorates or significant distress - refer to West Suffolk Pain Services Single Point of Access and/or condition specific service

**KEY MESSAGES**

- **Slow titration:** elderly/frail or adverse effects with higher doses.
- **Fast titration:** younger patients
- **Further prescribing information:**
  - Seek advice on dose adjustment before prescribing to patients with renal or hepatic impairment.
  - Tramadol: 50-100 mg 4-hourly, max dose in 24 hrs is 400 mg. Only use if acute rescue therapy required and not on other opioid.
  - Long-term use only on advice of West Suffolk Pain Services.
  - Pregabalin: on advice from West Suffolk Pain Services.
  - Capsaicin 0.075% cream: use sparingly up to 3-4 times daily, not more often than every 4 hours for localised pain if oral treatments unsuitable.
- **Lidocaine 5% medicated plasters:** only for patients with post herpetic neuralgia where alternative treatment has proved ineffective or is contraindicated.
- **Carbamazepine:** only for trigeminal neuralgia.
- **Further information:** NICE CKS or SPC
  - Once dose and symptoms are stable, and no additional clinical concerns, review 3-6 monthly.

This guidance recommends certain drugs for indications for which there is no UK marketing authorisation. The prescriber should follow relevant professional guidance, provide patient information and take full responsibility for the decision. Informed consent should be documented.

References:
4. MHRA (26 October 2017) Gabapentin: risk of severe respiratory depression.

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