

Policy Statement; Co-amoxiclav is not supported for long term use in lower back pain

Mid-Essex Clinical Commissioning Group does not support the prescribing of co-amoxiclav for long term treatment in lower back pain.

The prescribing of co-amoxiclav for 100 days is not supported due to limited evidence to support safety and efficacy. There have been requests for this treatment following the publication of a paper from a group in Denmark concerning the treatment with antibiotics of a highly selected group of patients with low back pain. The group performed a randomised controlled trial and found significant improvement with a 100 day course of antibiotics (amoxicillin / clavulanate, 500mg/125 mg).

However, it must be recognised that a single trial does not produce sufficient weight of evidence to change current practice.

The trial was undertaken in a very specific group of patients as follows:

- Lumbar intervertebral disc prolapse proven on MRI and treated either conservatively or surgically within the previous six to twenty four months.
- Significant low back pain of at least six months duration initiated or significantly exacerbated following the disc prolapse.
- The presence of modic type I changes adjacent to the involved disc (high intensity T2, low intensity T1).

Such a prolonged course of broad spectrum antibiotics carries risk of complications in the individual and risk of antibiotic resistance in the community. The evidence at present is insufficiently strong to recommend long term course of antibiotics in patients fulfilling these criteria. Further research is required.

Co-amoxiclav is reserved for limited indications as per antibiotic guidelines. It is rarely a first line choice for common infections. See [Indication for use of cephalosporins, quinolones and co-amoxiclav - Quick reference guide](#) (link)
No patient who does not fulfil all of the criteria should be given antibiotic therapy.

Careful consideration should be given to the potential for low-grade infection in patients in this group being considered for back pain surgery.

Providers commissioned to provide services on behalf of Mid-Essex CCG are reminded that they are required to follow the Mid-Essex CCG formulary and prescribing guidance as detailed in their contract (Medicines Management Service Specification).

See Mid-Essex CCG website – Medicines Optimisation for all prescribing guidance.
<http://midessexccg.nhs.uk/your-health-services/medicines-optimisation>

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N/A	New policy statement