

## SMOKEFREE PHARMACOTHERAPY

This table compares the drug treatments that are available to support patients with their quit attempts; **please refer to individual data sheets for full prescribing information.**

|  | NRT  | Nortriptyline   | Bupropion   | Varenicline   |
|--|--|---|---|---|
| Effectiveness                            | Approx doubles the chances of long-term abstinence<br>NNT = 14   | Approx doubles the chances of long-term abstinence<br>NNT = 11  | Approx doubles the chances of long-term abstinence<br>NNT = 11                                  | Approx doubles to triples the chances of long-term abstinence<br>NNT = 8  |
| Place in therapy                         | Used first-line: safe, cost-effective, long-term experience with its use   | Should be used second-line; side effects may be troublesome   | Can be used as a first-line intervention  | Can be used as a first-line intervention  |
| Choice                                   | The choice of treatment and dosage form should be guided by the person's preference in conjunction with discussing the risks and benefits with a clinician |   |   |   |
| Initiating therapy                       | No need to start NRT before quitting. Also used concurrently with smoking to 'cut down and quit'   | Start while patient is smoking - set quit date for 10-28 days later   | Start while patient is smoking - set quit date for 8-14 days later                              | Start while patient is smoking - set quit date for 8-14 days later  |
| Dose                                     | Refer to NZ Smoking Cessation Guidelines   | Initially 25mg/day, increased gradually to 75mg as side effects allow   | Initially 150mg/day for 3 days, then 150mg twice a day from Day 4 (doses must be > 8 hrs apart) | Initially 0.5mg/day for 3 days, then 0.5mg twice a day for 4 days, then 1mg twice a day from Day 8              |
| Duration                                 | Continue for at least 8-12 weeks   | Use for 8-12 weeks; taper down to avoid withdrawal symptoms   | Use for 7-9 weeks; consider longer duration if necessary  | Initial course is 12 weeks. Patients who have stopped smoking at 12 weeks may benefit from an additional course |
| Clinically significant adverse effects   | -  | Adverse effects on cardiovascular function (e.g. arrhythmias). Dry mouth, constipation, sedation. Toxic in overdose | Increased risk of seizures (risk approximately 1 in 1000)                                       | Possibly post-marketing cases of depression, suicidal ideation, MI. Currently monitored by IMMP                 |
| Contraindications                        | -  | Acute recovery phase following an MI  | History of seizures, eating disorders, bipolar disorder. Acute alcohol withdrawal. Head injury  | -   |
| Clinically significant drug interactions | -  | MAOIs - concomitant use is contraindicated  | Drugs known to lower the seizure threshold (e.g. antipsychotics, tramadol), MAOIs               | -   |
| Use in pregnancy                         | Yes. Intermittent products are preferred, e.g. gum (lower daily dose than patches)   | Wide experience and considered safe; may be more appropriate to use NRT   | Safety not established - not recommended  | Safety not established - not recommended  |
| Use in breastfeeding                     | A risk-benefit assessment favours using NRT compared to smoking  | Excreted into milk in small quantities - not recommended  | Excreted into milk - not recommended  | Safety not established - not recommended  |
| Use in 12-18 year olds                   | Less harmful than smoking; may be considered for use   | Safety and efficacy not established - not recommended   |   |   |
| Use in people with CVD                   | Yes  | Best avoided  | Yes - use with caution  | Yes   |

**ACRONYMS:** IMMP: Intensive Medicines Monitoring Programme; MAOIs: monoamine oxidase inhibitors; MI: myocardial infarction; NNT: number needed to treat (e.g. NNT = 11: 11 people need to be treated for one person to benefit; NRT: nicotine replacement therapy).

### KEY REFERENCES

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