



Risk of cutaneous amyloidosis with Insulin-containing medicines

The HPRA Drug Safety Newsletter in September of 2020, 99th Edition, contained a safety update on the risk of cutaneous amyloidosis (a build-up of the protein amyloid under the skin) associated with insulin-containing medicines.

The SPC and package leaflet for insulin-containing medicines have long recommended that the patient rotates the injection site to reduce the risk of lipohypertrophy. Lipohypertrophy is a lump under the skin caused by accumulation of extra fat at the site of many subcutaneous injections of insulin. The European Medicines Agency's Pharmacovigilance Risk Assessment Committee (PRAC) recently completed a review of the risk of cutaneous amyloidosis and concluded that the evidence supported a causal

relationship between insulin-containing medicines and cutaneous amyloidosis. Patients will need to be counselled on the importance of injection site rotation due to the risk of developing lipodystrophy, as well as the risk of developing cutaneous amyloidosis.

The SPCs are being updated for all insulin-containing medicines with the following advice for healthcare professionals:

- Patients must be instructed to perform continuous rotation of the injection site to reduce the risk of developing lipodystrophy and cutaneous amyloidosis;
- There is a potential risk of delayed insulin absorption and worsened glycaemic control following insulin injections at sites with these reactions;
- A sudden change in the injection site to an unaffected area has been reported to result in hypoglycaemia; and
- Blood glucose monitoring is recommended after the change in the injection site, and dose adjustment of anti-diabetic medications may be considered.

The package leaflets will be updated with the following wording: If you inject insulin too often at the same place, the fatty tissue may either shrink (lipoatrophy) or thicken (lipohypertrophy). Lumps under the skin may also be caused by build-up of a protein called amyloid (cutaneous amyloidosis). The insulin may not work very well if you inject into a lumpy area. Change the injection site with each injection to help prevent these skin changes.