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AUTHORITY

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To: all health workers

Disabling and potentially permanent side effects associated with quinolone and fluoroquinolone antibiotics

Fluoroquinolones and quinolones are a class of broad-spectrum antibiotics of value in certain infections, including some life-threatening ones, where alternative antibiotics are not sufficiently effective.

These drugs are associated with prolonged (up to months or years), serious, disabling and potentially irreversible drug reactions affecting several, sometimes multiple, systems, organ classes and senses. Healthcare workers should therefore take note of the following regarding quinolones and fluoroquinolones given by mouth, injection or inhalation;

- a) The serious side effects include tendonitis, tendon rupture, arthralgia, pain in extremities, gait disturbance, neuropathies associated with paraesthesia, depression, fatigue, memory impairment, sleep disorders, and impaired hearing, vision, taste and smell.
- b) Tendon damage (especially to Achilles tendon but also other tendons) can occur within 48 hours of starting fluoroquinolone treatment but the damage may be delayed several months after stopping treatment.
- c) Patients who are older, have renal impairment or have had solid organ transplantation and those being treated with a corticosteroid are at higher risk of tendon damage.
- d) Since the use of a corticosteroid with a fluoroquinolone also increases this risk, Concomitant treatment with a fluoroquinolone and a corticosteroid should be avoided.
- e) Fluoroquinolone treatment should be discontinued at the first sign of tendon pain or inflammation and patients should be advised to stop treatment with a fluoroquinolone and speak with the doctor in case of symptoms of neuropathy such as pain, burning, tingling, numbness or weakness so as to prevent development of potentially irreversible condition.
- f) Fluoroquinolones should generally not be used in patients who have had serious adverse reactions associated with the use of quinolone or fluoroquinolone medicines.
- g) National Drug Authority has received a few cases of Achilles tendinitis and we urge healthy workers to monitor and report these reactions especially in children and older patients.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Fluoroquinolone antibiotics should **not** be used:

- a) to treat infections that might get better without treatment or are not severe (such as throat infections);
- b) for preventing traveller's diarrhoea or recurring lower urinary tract infections (urine infections that do not extend beyond the bladder);
- c) to treat mild or moderate bacterial infections unless other antibacterial medicines commonly recommended for these infections cannot be used

We would like to remind all health workers of their legal obligation as stated under "section (6) of the National Drug Policy and Authority (Pharmacovigilance) regulations, 2014" to report all serious adverse drug events and any other medicine related concerns that arise during the process of providing health care. Reports can be submitted to NDA by email at druginfo@nda.or.ug or Tel 0414-255665 or Whatsapp 0791415555.

Thank you for your continued cooperation



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