

## **Shared Care Protocol for the monitoring of patients on parenteral methotrexate for Crohn's Disease**

**Indications:** Methotrexate is a drug used to induce and maintain remission of Crohn's disease in patients who are intolerant of 6-Mercaptopurine.

**Dose:** Methotrexate subcutaneous injections are given once weekly at an initial dose of 25mg/week, decreased to 15mg/week after the first 16 weeks of treatment.

**Folic acid:** Should be given at a dose of 5mg/week but NOT on the same day as the methotrexate injection. This reduces some of the side effects associated with methotrexate.

### **Monitoring:**

#### **1) Pre-treatment assessment (secondary care):**

FBC, U&E, LFT and CXR (unless CXR done within the last 6 months) should be performed at baseline. Pulmonary function tests may be necessary in selected patients.

#### **2) During treatment (primary care):**

FBC, U&E and LFT every 2 weeks until dose of methotrexate and monitoring stable for 6 weeks; thereafter three monthly throughout course of treatment.

Ask about dyspnoea, cough, fever, and presence of oral ulceration or sore throat each time the patient is seen and ask them to report it immediately if it occurs while they are taking methotrexate.

**If the dose is increased, revert to initial monitoring advice (two weekly until stable for 6 weeks).**

**In addition to absolute values for haematological indices, any rapid fall or persistent downward trend in any value should prompt caution and extra vigilance.**

### **Prescriptions:**

The patient will be consented in Clinic by the Gastroenterologist proposing treatment with parenteral methotrexate. Prescriptions will be provided by the Gastroenterologist on a three monthly basis. When the patient is established on methotrexate (normally after 3 months), prescriptions can be requested via Dr Harris' office by calling 01892 632951 or via e-mail, without the need for repeated outpatient visits.

### **Emergency Advice:**

In the event of any emergency or adverse reaction, contact the Gastroenterology department on 01892 632591 between the hours of 9am and 5pm. If out of hours, seek urgent medical advice from your GP or local Accident and Emergency Department.