



Date September 6, 2019
To ACP Paramedics in the Essex–Windsor and Lambton EMS Services
From Southwest Ontario Regional Base Hospital Program (SWORBHP)
Subject Amiodarone Memo for Essex–Windsor and Lambton EMS

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SWORBHP has recently learned that there is a predicted upcoming drug shortage. Some of the medications included in this shortage are utilized by SWORBHP services, including pre-filled Lidocaine syringes. Another antiarrhythmic medication, Amiodarone, will be utilized in its place. Amiodarone is an alternative antiarrhythmic that can be used as per the ALS PCS 4.6 ACP Medical Cardiac Arrest and ACP Tachydysrhythmia Directives. In order to assist with this practice change, a brief presentation has been put together by SWORBHP to familiarize yourselves with Amiodarone. This presentation is located within the Paramedic Portal for review. Here are some FAQ's about this transition:

Why is this shortage happening?

- Drug suppliers are currently having difficulty meeting the needs of their users, including Hospitals and Paramedic Services.
- Shortages are often multi-factorial including:
 - Decreased production due to shortage of raw materials
 - Decreased production due to manufacturing issues (faulty machinery, sterility issues, natural disasters etc.)
 - Increased demand for a drug
- Shortages are common and affect many types of medications
 - Spanning from over-the-counter to prescription medications
 - Include the spectrum from resuscitation medications and other life-saving formulations (i.e. chemotherapy) to everyday preventative medications (i.e. lipid-lowering medicines)

How are Lidocaine and Amiodarone different?

- Both are antiarrhythmic medications that work by slowing down the rate of firing of myocytes, in different ways
- Dosage is not based on weight
- Administration differs, please see the Amiodarone presentation on the Paramedic Portal for full details, including a video showing how to administer Amiodarone via infusion using a Buretrol

How are Lidocaine and Amiodarone similar?

- Both are options under the ACP Medical Cardiac Arrest Medical Directive and ACP Tachydysrhythmia Medical Directive
- Outcomes are similar in Out-of-Hospital Cardiac Arrest (Kudenchuk et al., 2016)

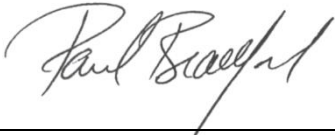
Are there other drug shortages coming?

- Given the trend of drug shortages plaguing all areas of medicine, it is likely
- As SWORBHP is notified of drug shortages we will do our best to notify, and prepare you, as soon as possible

Bottom line: With the potential drug shortage of Lidocaine pre-filled syringe, we wanted to provide education on its alternative, Amiodarone, as soon as possible, in order for you to be able to provide the best possible care to our communities. We also wanted to explain why this is happening and be available to answer any questions.

If you have any more questions, please feel free to contact us.

Regards,



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