Lost in Space: Navigating the SATURN trial without IMP

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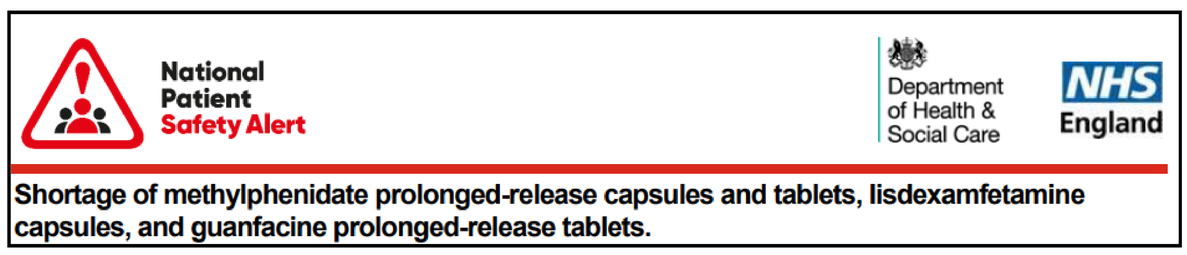
SATURN Study

Aim: to evaluate the clinical and cost-effectiveness of stimulant (methylphenidate) vs non-stimulant (guanfacine) medication for children and young people with co-existing ADHD and tics

- Recruitment is through child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) and paediatric outpatient clinics
- Sites refer patients into central "hubs" who conduct all research activity aside from participant identification
- Medications are dispensed in the community using routine stock
- Recruitment began in March 2023

Background


National Patient Safety Alert

Department of Health & Social Care

NHS England

Shortage of methylphenidate prolonged-release capsules and tablets, lisdexamfetamine capsules, and guanfacine prolonged-release tablets.

- 27th September 2023 a National Public Safety Alert (NPSA) was published by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and NHS England
- It notified all healthcare providers that were involved with prescribing many modified/extended-release ADHD medications, including those use in the SATURN trial, of a global shortage
- The alert required several actions to be followed including Action 1 "not to initiate new patients on products affected by the shortage"
- This was a significant blow for the study as patients could not be randomised under the actions of the NPSA

Response

- Pausing the study completely for an indefinite amount of time would have resulted in severe consequences for the the study's continuation
- It was agreed by the Trial Management Group (TMG), Sponsor, Trial Steering Committee (TSC) and Data Monitoring Committee (DMC) to:
  a. Continue to identify and approach patients holding them at the point of randomisation
  b. Approach the DHSC for an exemption to part of the NPSA
  c. Approach local trust hospitals to ask them to agree to prescribe for SATURN patients
  d. Approach the IMP manufacturers to secure trial specific supply or similar

Response Timeline

27th September 2023

> NPSA released by the DHSC and NHS England
> All sites instructed to pause randomisations

11th October 2023

> TMG meeting with sponsor representative present
> Joint meeting of the TSC and DMC
- Agreed with the pro-active approach as the shortage would last for an unknown amount of time and affected numbers of participants was low (likely <25 individuals)

31st October 2023

> Met with senior representatives of the medication working group who published the NPSA to:
- Explain the potential risk of not completing the study
- Request an exemption to action 1 of the NPSA
- Layout the plan for ensuring sufficient stock was in place to reach randomised participants

10th November 2023

> Support for plan granted by REC chair

15th November 2023

> Waiver to Action 1 of the NPSA granted
> Met with manufacturer and NHSE to discuss stock

Nov 2023 -Feb 2024

> Discussions with hospitals to discuss practicalities of implementing waiver and ringfenced stock distribution

Outcome

Due to close working and planning with the TMG, TSC, DMC, Sponsor and DHSC the trial was only paused to randomisation briefly whilst we secured the NPSA exemption and established ringfenced stock at central pharmacies through working with the manufacturers.

Randomisations were able to resume sooner than expected (Feb 2024) on a case-by-case basis. Site recruitment activity to identify potential participants continued during the shortage resulting in a bank of participants ready to be randomised quickly when stock became available.

The study now has a mechanism in place to secure stock for participants if future shortages occur.

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