Guidelines for the use of Clopixol Acuphase® (zuclopenthixol acetate 50 mg in 1 ml injection)

Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS
NHS Foundation Trust

Clopixol Acuphase® is licensed for *"the initial treatment of acute psychoses including mania and exacerbation of chronic psychoses, particularly where a duration of effect of 2-3 days is desirable".* It should never be considered a first line drug for rapid tranquilisation unless there is an advanced directive in place; it should only be used after an acutely psychotic patient has required repeated injections of short-acting antipsychotics such as haloperidol, and/or sedative drugs such as lorazepam, and these have been judged ineffective (allow at least 60 minutes after each IM injection to assess response).

Dose & administration:

- **50 mg (1 ml) to 150 mg (3 ml)**, adjusted to the severity of the patient's illness; the maximum dose for an elderly patient is 100 mg (2 ml).
- Given by **deep intramuscular injection** into the upper outer buttock or lateral thigh
- Repeat if necessary after 2 - 3 days; some patients may need an additional injection 1 - 2 days after the first one – there should be an **interval of at least 24 hours between doses**.

For all patients the cumulative dose must not exceed 400 mg (or 4 injections), within a 2-week period.

Monitoring:

The patient must be carefully monitored after each injection; using the Trust **Early Warning Score (EWS) chart**.

Physical health parameters should normally be monitored at the following frequency:

- 15 minutes after injection, then:
- 30 minutes after injection, then:
- 1, 2, 4, 6, 8 and 12 hours after injection, then:
- every 6 hours for a further 36 hours

i.e. for a minimum total of 48 hours after the last injection

Onset & duration of action:

- Sedative effects usually begin to appear within 2 hours of injection & may not reach a peak for a further 24 - 36 hours.
- Significant effects may last for up to 72 hours although full elimination of the drug may not be complete for 7 days.
- Caution must be applied if consideration is being given to the administration of a short-acting psychotropic IM injection during treatment with Acuphase®, as excessive sedation and/or aggravated adverse events may occur if the patient is exposed to high plasma levels of multiple drugs.

Clopixol Acuphase ® should not be viewed as a course of treatment – each dose should be prescribed as a "once only medication" on the inpatient chart; the patient should be carefully reviewed by a consultant before each dose is prescribed / administered.

References:

Summary of Product Characteristics – Clopixol Acuphase®. Lundbeck Ltd, last updated January 2017
The Maudsley Prescribing Guidelines, 12th Edition, 2015
The Psychotropic Drug Directory 2016. Stephen Bazire.

Title	Guidelines for the use of Clopixol Acuphase® (zuclopenthixol acetate 50 mg in 1 ml injection)		
Approved by	Drug & Therapeutics Committee	Date of Approval	26th July 2018
Protocol Number	PHARM-0098-v1	Date of Review	31st July 2021