INSIDE/OUTSIDE THE VA

As mentioned in the last issue of this publication, ZUBSOLV sublingual tablets were approved by the FDA for maintenance treatment of opioid dependence. As with other buprenorphine/naloxone combination medicines, ZUBSOLV’s dosage indication is written for both substances. It is available in two dosing sizes: 1.4 mg buprenorphine/0.36 mg naloxone and 5.7 mg buprenorphine/1.4 mg naloxone. ZUBSOLV is currently approved in the VA formulary as it falls under the category of buprenorphine/naloxone sublingual tablets.

Possible dose confusion may occur for any provider or patient who is contemplating using ZUBSOLV in conjunction with or as a replacement for another buprenorphine medicine. Compared with similar offerings in the dosing size of 8 mg buprenorphine / 2 mg naloxone, the 5.7/1.4 mg ZUBSOLV tablets provide equivalent buprenorphine exposure but 12% lower naloxone exposure. (The difference in naloxone exposure is nominal but the buprenorphine exposure is significant.) The bioavailability of the ZUBSOLV tablet is higher than similar products.

Therefore, a provider who considers using a 5.7/1.4 mg ZUBSOLV tablet as lower overall dose increase is actually prescribing the same amount of buprenorphine as an 8/2 mg dosed medicine. The ZUBSOLV prescribing document indicates that the “tablet provides equivalent buprenorphine exposure” but it is important to note that this is equivalent to 8 mg of buprenorphine exposure. It is not appropriate to make a direct comparison on a mg basis to ZUBSOLV.

Fig 1: Proper sublingual tablet placement

MEDICATION-ASSISTED ADDICTION TREATMENT IN THE NEWS

1. FDA steamrolls over panel vote, spurns Titan’s addiction drug Probuphine
2. Painkiller addicts hit Medicaid limits

RESEARCH UPDATE


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