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Introduction

The NEWT Guidelines, produced at Wrexham Maelor Hospital in Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board (BCUHB) in North Wales, aim to provide advice on medication administration via enteral tubes and in swallowing difficulties for Healthcare Professionals.

Healthcare Professionals should always check that medications such as tablets and capsules can be manipulated before administering via enteral feeding tubes; liquid preparations may be more appropriate in some circumstances due to licensing.

MyNEWT Guides have been produced by Wrexham Maelor Hospital, using information from the NEWT Guidelines, to contribute to safe administration via enteral feeding tubes for individual patients and carers following discharge from secondary care.

MyNEWT Guides can be accessed in primary and secondary care via subscription to the NEWT website.

Since June 2018, 100% of medications that can administered via enteral tubes on the NEWT website have a MyNEWT Guide available. It can be determined which MyNEWT Guides have been accessed most frequently from June 2018.

Figure 1 demonstrates reasons why NEWT and MyNEWT guides can be consulted for information on medication administration.

Aim

To determine the top ten MyNEWT Guides accessed by subscribers from June 2018 to March 2019.

Method

MyNEWT Guides are written after an existing or a new drug monograph is published and covers different formulations

A step-by-step guide is provided for each medication

MyNEWT Guides are checked by the Medicines Information department at Wrexham Maelor Hospital

MyNEWT Guides are uploaded onto the NEWT website after checking

MyNEWT Guides can be downloaded onto electronic devices. These can also be printed to aid administration in primary care

The top ten downloaded MyNEWT Guides can be determined by analysing the NEWT website server

Considerations before medication administration via enteral tubes:

Modified release or tablets should not be crushed; is there an alternative available?

Is a liquid preparation available/more appropriate?

Enteric coated/gastro resistant tablets when crushed can block tubes

Liquid formulations may contain sorbitol which can cause gastrointestinal disturbances

Some medications can interact with enteral feeds

Figure 1 – Several considerations why medications may not be suitable for administration via enteral feeding tubes

Results

Figure 2 shows the top ten MyNEWT Guides downloaded between June 2018 and March 2019.

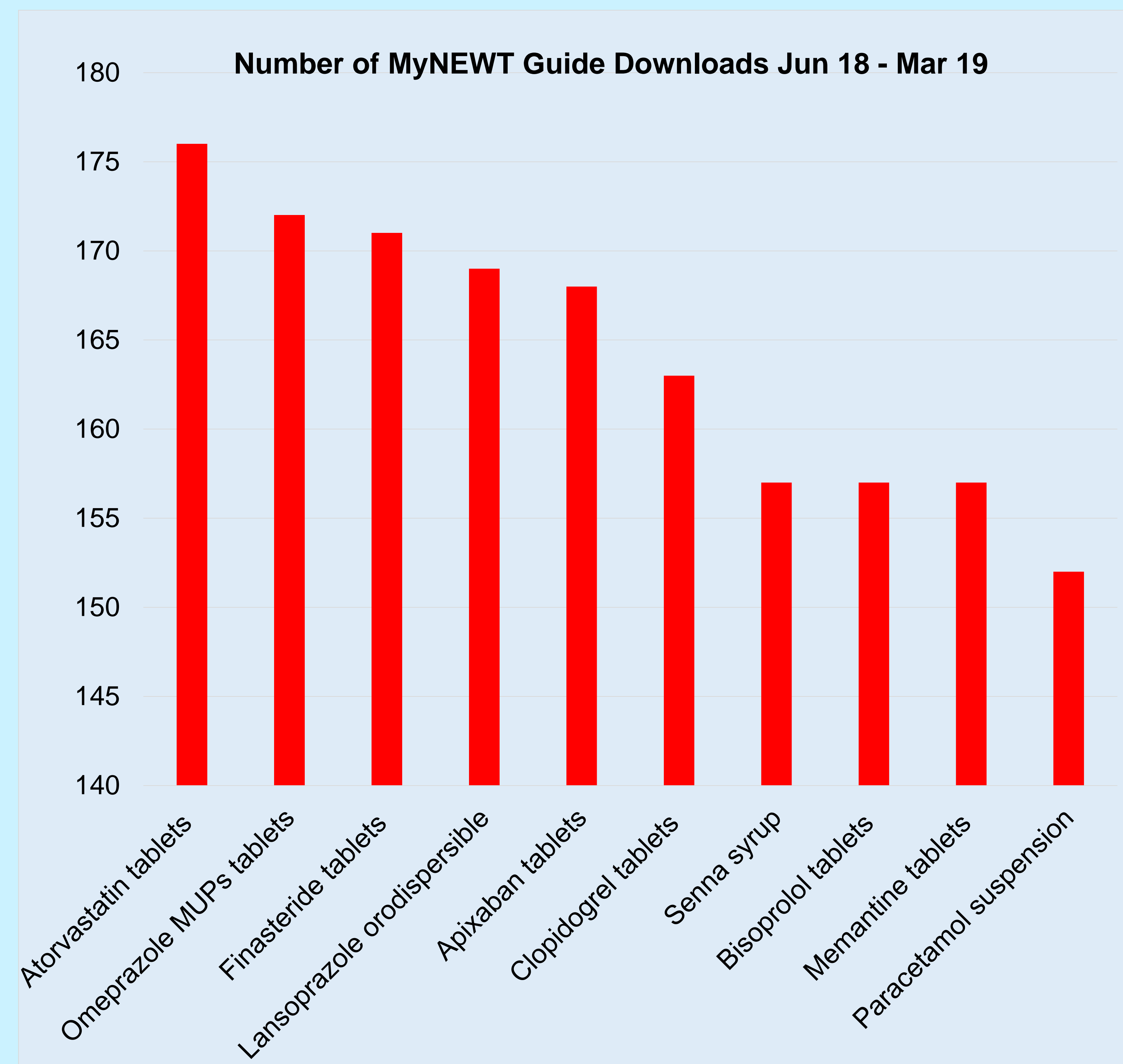


Figure 2 – The number of downloads of the top ten MyNEWT Guides.

Conclusions

- Out of the top ten medications accessed, eight were tablets and two were liquid formulations
- Where different formulations of the same medication are available, using tablets instead of liquid formulations could be cost saving to the NHS, but would be unlicensed
- Some tablet formulations are not suitable for crushing (e.g. due to film coatings) however it should not be assumed liquid formulations will be suitable for enteral tube administration, as viscosity can differ and block tubes
- Having access to the MyNEWT Guides in the community can reduce the need for district nurses to contact pharmacies outside of normal working hours for advice regarding administration via enteral tubes
- Access to the MyNEWT Guides avoids complicated dosing instructions following discharge from secondary care; therefore improves patient safety as guides can be downloaded when required

Future Work

Future work could involve:

- A satisfaction survey for users of the MyNEWT Guides for example, district nurses
- Promotion of MyNEWT Guides to new or potential subscribers
- Continue producing MyNEWT Guides for new medications based on NEWT advice