



National Prescribing Service Limited

MEDIA ALERT

10 March 2010

Nebivolol, Methylnaltrexone reviewed in the latest edition of *RADAR*

Written by the National Prescribing Service, *RADAR* is a timely publication containing independent, evidence-based assessments of new drugs, new PBS listings and the latest research for doctors, pharmacists and other health professionals.

Information about the following PBS-listed medicines can be found in the March edition of *RADAR*:

Nebivolol (Nebilet): Nebivolol is a new selective beta₁-receptor antagonist for treating chronic heart failure. It is an alternative to bisoprolol, carvedilol, and controlled-release metoprolol but has less robust evidence of survival benefit. Although the major trial with nebivolol was conducted in older people there is no evidence it is more effective in any age group than other beta blockers used in heart failure.

Methylnaltrexone (Relistor): Methylnaltrexone injections are a new option for treating opioid-induced constipation in people receiving palliative care who have not responded to adequately titrated laxatives. Methylnaltrexone increases bowel movements without reversing analgesia. Around 50–60% of people with opioid-induced constipation experience a bowel movement within 4 hours of a single dose of methylnaltrexone. However, around 30% of people may not respond within 24 hours of a single dose. Patients should be advised that bowel movements may occur within 30 minutes of an injection.

Methylnaltrexone should only be used in addition to other therapies that prevent or treat opioid-induced constipation, and no more than once in any 24-hour period.

Other PBS-listed drugs reviewed in this edition of *RADAR* include:

- **Albendazole (Zentel)** – listing extended to treat hookworm and Strongyloidiasis
- **Terbinafine** – authority listing extended to children under 18 years

To read the full reviews go to www.nps.org.au/radar

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The National Prescribing Service Limited (NPS) is an independent, not-for-profit organisation for quality use of medicines funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing.