

Incorrect Recording of Penicillamine Allergy – *Action Required*

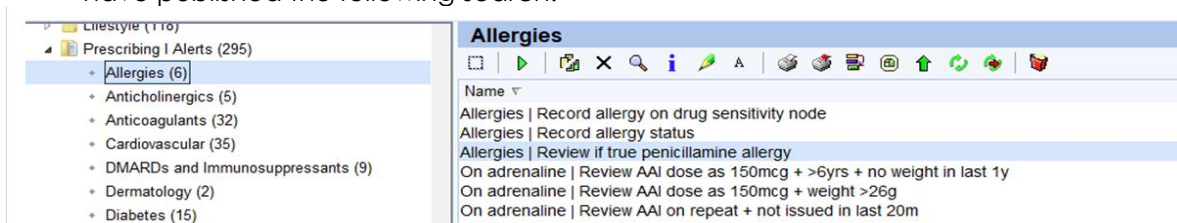
It has been identified nationally via [NPSA Alert](#) that patients may have been inadvertently recorded as having an allergy to **penicillamine** rather than an allergy to **penicillin** on the GP clinical system.

- **Across BLMK, a number of patients** are currently recorded as having an allergy to **penicillamine** but have never received a prescription for penicillamine.
- Of the patients who are likely to have been incorrectly recorded as having an allergy to **penicillamine**, **approximately 40%** do not have any form of penicillin allergy concurrently recorded, i.e. no record of allergy to penicillin or any individual penicillin-based antibiotics such as amoxicillin, phenoxymethylpenicillin, flucloxacillin.

These patients may be at risk, particularly if they have a true severe allergy to penicillin, as an allergy alert would not present if/when they are prescribed a penicillin.

ACTIONS REQUIRED:

- Circulate the alert to all relevant staff (including non-clinical staff where appropriate to their job role).
- Conduct a search for drug sensitivities and allergies, to identify patients within your practice with an allergy to **penicillamine** recorded on the GP clinical system. Ardens have published the following search:



- Review the patient's clinical record to determine whether the patient has a true allergy to **penicillamine** or if the patient has an allergy to penicillin (or neither), e.g.
 - a. when was the **penicillamine** allergy was added?
 - b. has the patient been issued **penicillamine** before?
 - c. has the patient been prescribed a penicillin antibiotic and had no allergic/adverse reactions?
 - d. is this a true allergy or a side effect (see [NICE 183](#) Signs and allergic patterns of suspected drug allergy)?
- You may need to contact identified patients to discuss and clarify their allergy status/nature of reported allergy.
- You can send this message to patients:

It has been identified nationally that patients may have been inadvertently recorded as having an allergy to penicillamine rather than an allergy to penicillin on the GP clinical system. You have a penicillamine allergy recorded.

An incorrect allergy recorded could put patients at risk. This message is being sent to you, please can reply & confirm which medication allergies you have. Thank you.

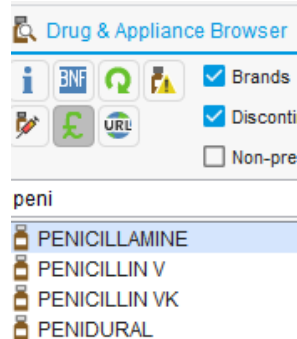
- To remove a **penicillamine** allergy label, right click on it and select "Mark in Error" rather than "End", otherwise the incorrect recording of **penicillamine** allergy will remain on the patient's record.
- If the patient has a true allergy to penicillin, add this to the patient's record if not already concurrently recorded. Please include the severity and reaction of the penicillin allergy where possible.
- Update the drug sensitivities / allergy status of the patient accordingly on the clinical record and onto the Summary Care Record.
- Enable individual profile settings on SystmOne to display drug names using Tall Man lettering to reduce look alike and sound alike errors.

- It is recommended that practices re-run the search periodically to identify any new patients who may have been incorrectly coded with a penicillamine allergy.
- CQC may ask for evidence to demonstrate compliance with the alert.

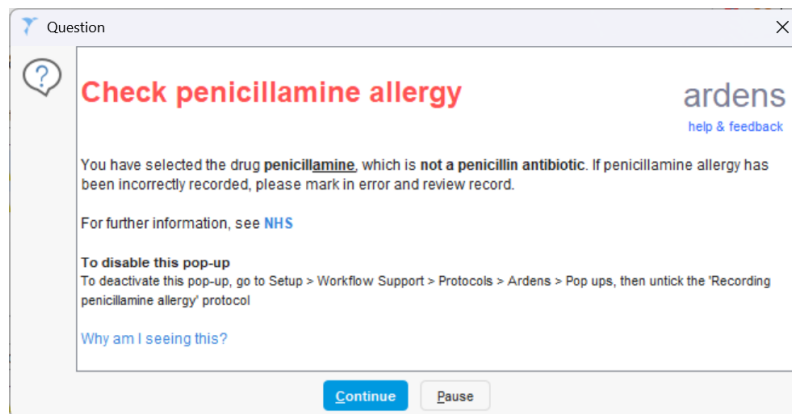
Further information and background:

What could have caused this incorrect recording of allergy?

- **Penicillamine** sits at the top of the list in alphabetical order when searching/adding an allergy to a patient's record on the system, especially if the user does not enter all the letters of the word "penicillin" which is common practice – see screenshot below.
- This poses a risk of mis-selection of drug allergy.
- Lack of knowledge of the difference between **penicillamine** and penicillin, especially if an allergy is being entered by non-clinical staff, may also be a contributory factor.



- This alert will fire when **penicillamine** is added as an allergy to the patient record.



What is Penicillamine used for and how often is it prescribed?

- **Penicillamine** is an agent used to treat rheumatoid arthritis, Wilson's disease, cystinuria and autoimmune hepatitis.
- Penicillin, however, is an antibiotic used for oral infections, sore throat and prevention of recurrent infections.
- **Penicillamine** is prescribed much less commonly in practice than penicillin, and consequently an allergy to **penicillamine** is very rare.
- To provide context, there are only 10 patients across BLMK who have been prescribed **penicillamine** in a 6 month period.