

Therapeutic drug monitoring

Therapeutic drug monitoring (TDM) is recommended for all patients to ensure effective treatment and is particularly helpful when patients are prescribed antifungal therapy where there is a known drug interaction. Check random levels at 14 days for Itraconazole, and a trough level at 14 days for Voriconazole. Earlier checks should be performed if Voriconazole has been given parenterally, as is sometimes done in very extensive disease.

Note that target serum level ranges vary between laboratories so it is important to use guidance from the specific laboratory used.

For some patients use of a liquid formulation may be useful if TDM suggests there are problems with absorption of solid oral dose forms.

To maximise absorption of Itraconazole capsules should be taken with or after food. Other suggested actions include stopping PPI or other acid lowering treatments where possible, taking the capsules with a cola drink or other acidic beverage, switching from capsules to liquid formulation. The liquid formulation should be taken on an empty stomach 1 hour before or 2 hours after food. Voriconazole is more reliably absorbed so consider switching to this if itraconazole levels remain sub-therapeutic despite the above measures.

Adverse effects

Healthcare professionals are urged to report suspected adverse drug reactions with antifungal medicines directly to the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) through the Yellow Card Scheme using the electronic form at www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard

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