

Our ref: MMT/AdvisoryNote/Savings

Date April 2019

To: Practice Prescribing Leads
Practice Managers

Town Hall
York House
St Nicholas Street
Scarborough
YO11 2HG

Re: Treatment of Hay fever

Dear Colleague,

As it will shortly be the hay fever season, the CCG’s Medicines Management Team would like to highlight that many preparations for the treatment of this condition can be purchased by patients from pharmacies and supermarkets without a prescription. We are keen to promote the option that appropriate patients are encouraged to visit their community pharmacy for advice and to purchase treatments, rather than make an appointment to see a GP and obtain a prescription.

Medicines for the treatment of hay fever

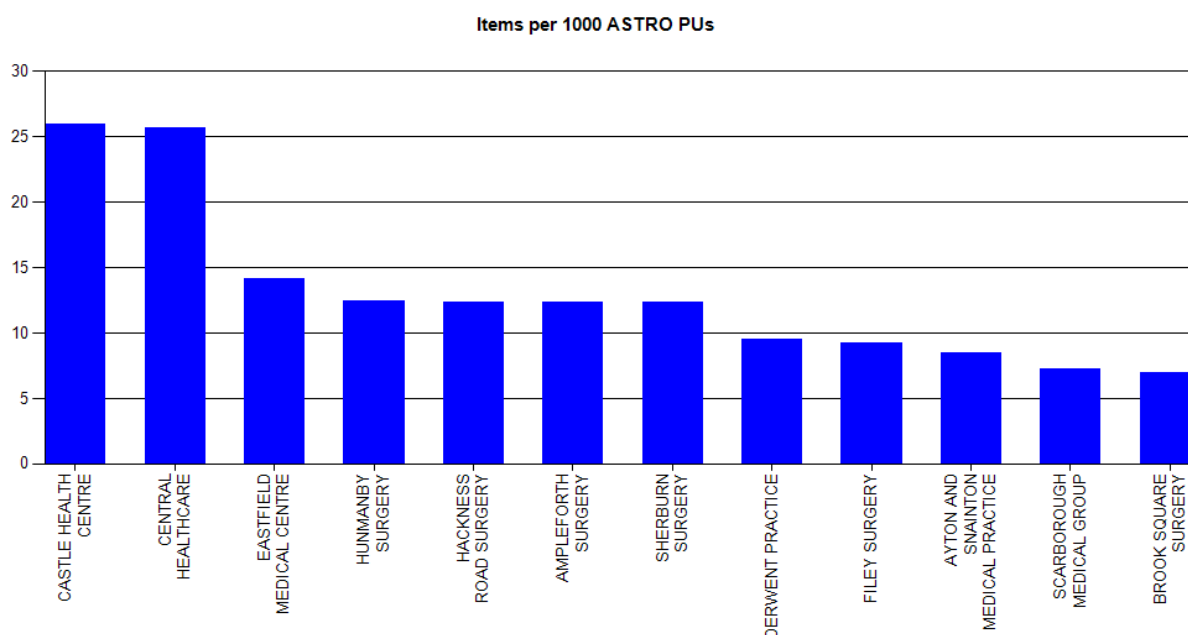
During the period April to September last year 16,530 items for antihistamines were issued in this period at a total cost of £30,719.

During the same period 10,498 items for nasal corticosteroid sprays were issued at a cost of £44,659.

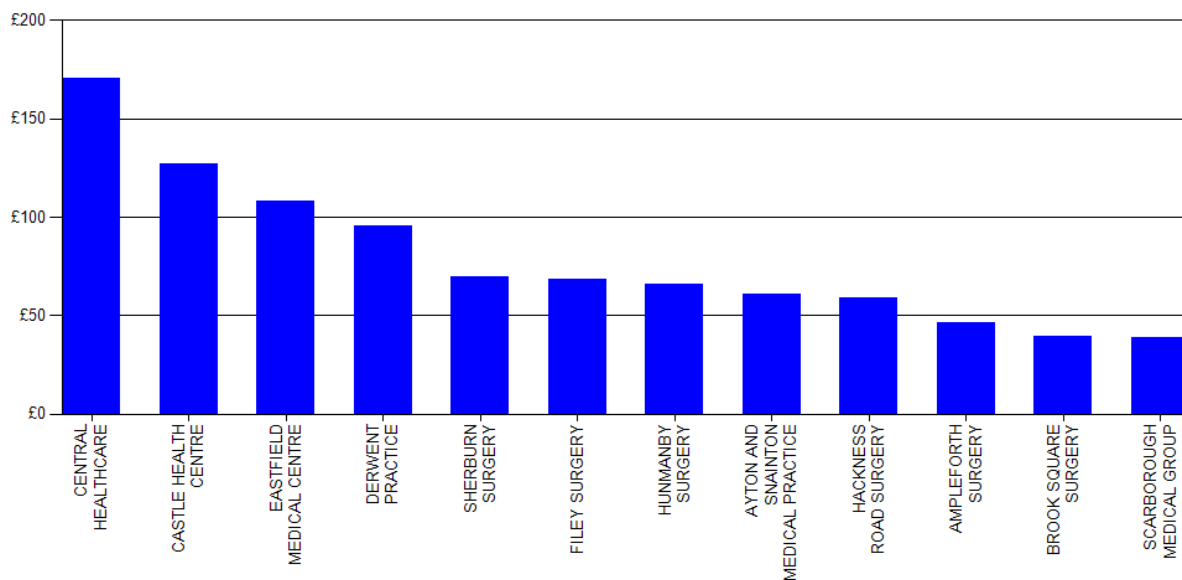
Whilst some of these items would have been for long term conditions, it is thought that a large proportion would have been for minor ailments.

Antihistamines

April to September 2018



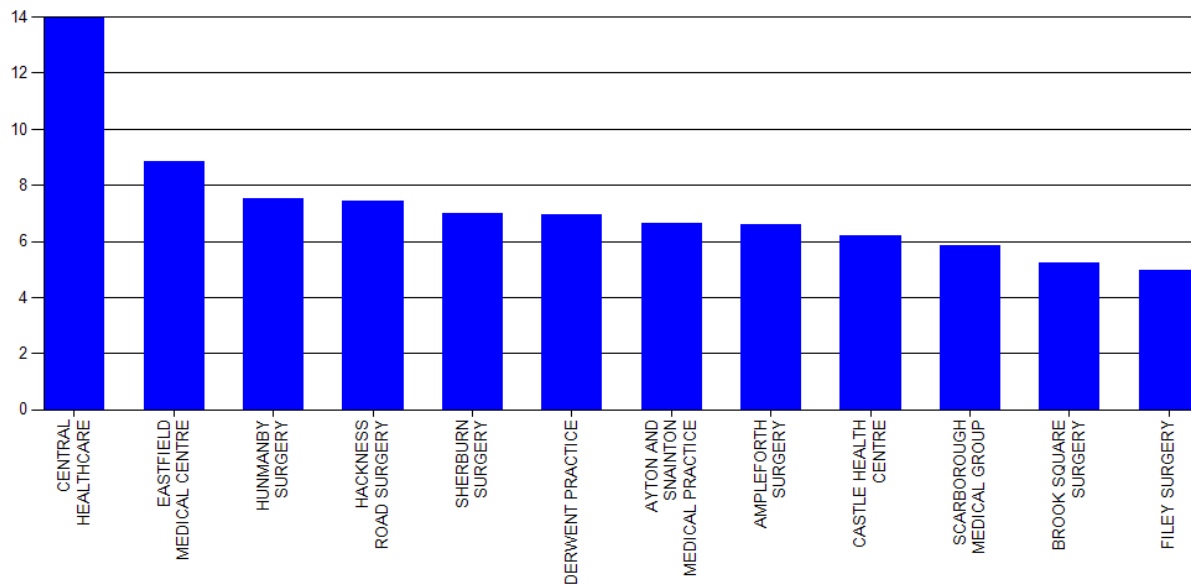
Total Actual Cost per 1000 ASTRO PUs



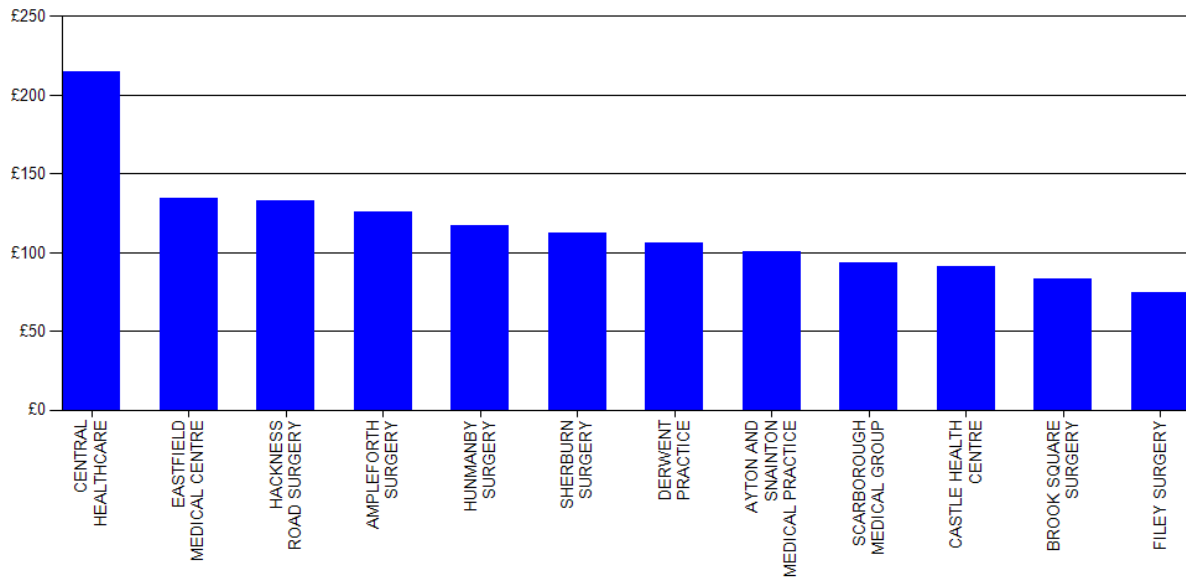
Nasal corticosteroids

April to September 2018

Items per 1000 ASTRO PUs



Total Actual Cost per 1000 ASTRO PUs



Actions for nasal corticosteroids and anti-histamines

Search for patients with anti-histamines and / or steroid nasal sprays on repeat. If they are prescribed for the treatment of mild to moderate hay fever then consider removing the item from the repeat list and writing to the patient advising them to purchase supplies for the hay fever season from pharmacies or supermarkets.

Examples of hay fever treatments that can be purchased include:

- Antihistamine tablets and syrup, e.g.; chlorphenamine, cetirizine, loratadine acrivastine
- Antihistamine nasal sprays, e.g. Rhinolast
- Steroid nasal sprays, e.g. Beconase and Flixonase
- Eye drops, e.g. Hay-Crom, Opticrom and Alomide Allergy
- Decongestants, e.g. Sinutab

There is also great value in providing general advice to patients to help avoid triggers. The following suggestions are included in the accompanying leaflet:

- Keep the windows shut in the house and the car especially when pollen counts are high
- Avoid cutting the grass, grassy areas, woodland, pollutants and car fumes
- Wear wrap-around sunglasses
- When you get indoors wash your hands, face, hair, rinse your eyes and change your clothes
- If possible stay indoors when the pollen count is high
- Use petroleum jelly inside your nose to block inhalation of pollen
- Keep your house clean and wear a mask and glasses when doing house work
- Don't dry washing outside to avoid pollen sticking to your clothes
- You could buy a pollen filter for the air vents in the car.

Patients should be advised to see their GP

- if they are experiencing wheezing, breathlessness or tightness in their chest
- If they are pregnant or breastfeeding
- If their symptoms are not relieved by over the counter treatments in combination with measures to reduce exposure to pollen.

Letter from NHS England

NHSE has issued a letter to provide assurance that practices will not be at risk of breaching their contract when following OTC prescribing guidance. The letter can be read here:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/letter-to-gp-practices-routine-prescribing-of-medicines-which-are-available-over-the-counter/>

Link to the bulletin: <http://www.harrogateandruraldistrictccg.nhs.uk/data/uploads/medicines-management/guidelines/presgipp-over-the-counter-items-restrictions.pdf>

Link to patient information letter:

<http://www.scarboroughryedaleccg.nhs.uk/policies-and-protocols/self-care-and-minor-ailments-prescribing-guidance/>

Please share the information in this letter with all members of staff in the practice who are involved in the prescribing of medicines or the issuing of prescriptions.

Our Prescribing Support Team is available to help practices with all the topics in this letter if required.

Yours sincerely,

The Medicines Management Team.