Workforce competence statement

Anticoagulant competence 3:

Managing anticoagulants in patients requiring dental surgery

Summary
This proposed workforce competence is directly applicable to healthcare professionals who undertake the prescribing and monitoring of anticoagulant therapy in patients who require dental surgical procedures. It includes identifying patients who are unsuitable for dental surgical procedures in primary care. It also includes communicating the proposed treatment plan to the patient team responsible for the dental surgery and other healthcare professionals involved in the routine care of the patient.

Not all aspects of this competence statement will apply equally to all healthcare professionals. Individual elements should be applied as appropriate to each healthcare professional's role within the patient care pathway.

Indicative links to KSF Dimension and Level

| Health and wellbeing HWB6: Assessment and treatment planning |
| Level 4: Assess physiological and psychological functioning when there are complex and/or undifferentiated abnormalities, diseases and disorders, and develop, monitor and review related treatment plans. |

Origin
This is a new workforce competence proposed and developed by the National Patient Safety Agency.

Activity scope
Key words and concepts:

Anticoagulant
Any medicine used to prevent the formation of blood clots. Includes oral vitamin K antagonist anticoagulants and parenterally administered heparins.

Prescription
The document that describes the medication determined by a properly authorised individual for an individually named patient. It includes the medication to be used, the dose, dilution, mode of delivery and time period for delivery.

Communication with professional colleagues
Includes communication within and between appropriate members of teams.

This workforce competence covers the prescribing and monitoring of anticoagulant therapy in patients who require dental surgical procedures. It includes identifying patients who are unsuitable for dental surgical procedures in primary care and advising the specialist dental surgery team on anticoagulation. It also includes communicating the proposed treatment plan to the patient, the team responsible for the dental surgery and other healthcare professionals involved in the routine care of the patient, such as the GP and community pharmacist.

Performance criteria
You need to:

1. Read the patient’s notes and prescription, and identify any special instructions, investigations (including abnormal blood test results) or issues for which you need to seek advice.

2. Assess the patient’s suitability for primary care dental surgery according to current national* and local guidelines.
3. Arrange for an INR measurement within 72 hours of surgery.

4. Review the patient’s history of anticoagulant treatment and INR results.

5. Assess whether the patient’s INR is adequately controlled or whether dosage adjustments are necessary before surgery in accordance with national and local guidelines.

6. Explain the planned treatment and its risks and benefits to the patient and/or carer together with any potential side effects and their management, and accurately answer any questions at a pace and level that is appropriate to:
   - their emotional state;
   - their level of understanding;
   - their culture and background;
   - their preferred ways of communicating;
   - their needs.

7. Advise on suitable post-operative analgesics in accordance with local and national guidelines.

8. Explain any lifestyle changes that will be needed in order to ensure good anticoagulant control during the preoperative period.

9. Check that the patient and/or carer understand the treatment plan together with the risks and benefits.

10. Ensure that the patient receives verbal and written information concerning the way in which their anticoagulant therapy is to be continued.

11. Update the patient-held record of anticoagulant treatment.

12. Record and report your findings, recommendations, patient and/or carer’s response and issues to be addressed, in the patient’s record according to local guidelines.

13. Recognise when you need help and seek advice and support from an appropriate source when the needs of the individual and the complexity of the case are beyond your competence and capability.

14. An in-depth understanding of the side effects of anticoagulant drugs, how to recognise them and the appropriate treatment regimens.

15. An in-depth understanding of diagnosis, care plan, protocol and guidelines.

16. An in-depth understanding of the mode of action and side effects of anticoagulants.

17. A working understanding of relevant peer reviewed literature.

Procedures and patient management

18. A factual knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of other team members.

19. A working understanding of the limits of one’s own knowledge and experience and the importance of not operating beyond these.

20. A working understanding of the guidelines relevant to your own and others’ roles and your own and others’ responsibilities, accountability and duties.
**National guidance**  
Guidance produced nationally includes:


National Patient Safety Agency. *Managing patients who are taking warfarin and undergoing minor oral surgery or dental extractions*. Available at: [www.npsa.nhs.uk/health/alerts](http://www.npsa.nhs.uk/health/alerts)


British National Formulary. 52nd and subsequent editions.