

Independent Nurse: Practical Prescribing

I am aware of the restrictions concerning controlled drugs (CD). However, is Diazepam a CD? I am involved in the care of patients with short-term anxiety who would benefit from this medicine. However, the trust in which I work restricts the prescription of Diazepam by Nurse Independent Prescribers (NIPs) to palliative care and alcohol withdrawal.

Diazepam is a CD. It appears in Schedule 4, part 1, of the list of drugs currently controlled under the misuse of drugs legislation. If you go onto the Home Office (HO) website you will find this list.

Diazepam is included in the list of CDs that NIPs can prescribe. It is indicated in this list for palliative care, treatment of 'initial or acute withdrawal symptoms caused by the withdrawal of alcohol from persons habituated to it, tonic-clonic seizures'. Therefore, unless your patient's fall within these categories, you cannot prescribe Diazepam independently. You could, however, use supplementary prescribing. As you will be aware, we are awaiting changes by the Home Office to the misuse of drugs regulations. These changes will enable NIPs to prescribe any CD for any medical condition within their area of competence. Therefore, this would enable you to prescribe Diazepam independently for any condition. These changes are expected later this year.

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