

BNF Publications

bnf.org

**Mr Oliver
H.M. Coroners Office
P.O. Box 282
Bishop Auckland
Co. Durham
DL14 4FY**

26th March 2024

Dear Mr Oliver,

We write in response to your letter to dated 15th February 2024 (CRAWFORD S B 18122020). We are sorry to hear the sad circumstances surrounding this case.

We have considered the matters of concern highlighted in your report, together with additional points raised during a discussion with one of Mr Crawford's family members. We understand from that discussion that Mr Crawford was prescribed pregabalin in addition to clozapine; severe respiratory depression has been reported with the use of pregabalin, with a higher risk in those taking other CNS depressants. This warning is included in the important safety section of the BNF's pregabalin monograph and reflects a safety alert from the MHRA issued in 2021.

The BNF includes information on pharmacodynamic interactions, that is interactions between drugs which have similar or antagonistic pharmacological effects or side-effects. This information is present within interaction messages of relevant drug monographs in online versions of the BNF and the BNF app. The same information is presented in tables in print editions of the BNF but, at the time of this death, these tables were not present in online versions of the BNF or in the BNF + BNFC app.

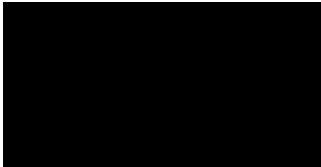
To address the concerns raised in your report, we plan to review the wording around the use of drugs that cause sedation (including clozapine and alcohol) and drugs with CNS depressant effects (including alcohol) within the pharmacodynamic interaction messages and in the tables. This will further highlight that concurrent use of two or more drugs that can cause sedation and / or CNS depression might increase the risk of CNS depressant effects, such as sedation, unconsciousness, coma, respiratory depression, and cardiovascular depression, and / or enhance the effects of drugs with CNS depressant effects. In addition, the pharmacodynamic interaction tables have now been added to the online versions of the BNF and BNFC ensuring this content is more accessible to users.

As alcohol is not a medicine, the BNF includes very limited information on alcohol, other than the information on its potential pharmacodynamic interactions. However, the BNF does include warnings on the use of medicines with alcohol where safety information is available. As mentioned in your report, where there are particular risks with the use of certain medicines with alcohol, such as with clozapine, the BNF recommends that cautionary and advisory labels should be added to dispensed medications. We acknowledge that these labels are concise, as is necessary for dispensing labels, however, the label provides information to the patient and should also prompt health professionals to counsel patients where appropriate.

We are aware that your report has also been sent to the MHRA. We have been in touch with the MHRA, and we will work together to ensure that any updates from the MHRA are reflected in the BNF where appropriate.

We trust that this addresses this important issue.

Yours sincerely,



Content Director (BNF Publications)

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