BNF + BNFC

Ian Wade KC
H.M. Coroners Office
Reading Town Hall
Blagrave Street, Reading
RG1 1QH

14th September 2026

Dear Mr Wade,

We were made aware that British National Formulary (BNF) had been mentioned in a Prevention of Future Deaths Report (Alexander Warrick Mulroney, published 7th August 2026). We have not yet received the official report, however, a copy of the report has been shared with us.

We are sorry to hear the sad circumstances surrounding this case.

We have considered the matters of concern highlighted in your report and we have responded to those in order below.

- Information on the harms or risk of harms associated with ofloxacin and its drug class fluoroquinolones (quinolones) in BNF:

    - BNF includes safety alerts issued by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Authority (MHRA) within *Important Safety Information* sections of drug monographs. If a drug (or class of drugs) has multiple safety alerts, these appear in chronological order. Consistent placement of this information enables BNF users to quickly access the latest safety alerts. The MHRA has issued a number of safety alerts for the quinolones drug class. These are included in the ofloxacin drug monograph in online versions of BNF and the BNF and BNFC app, and in the quinolones drug class monograph, which is signposted to from the ofloxacin drug monograph, in print editions of BNF. BNF reflects MHRA advice – safety alerts are not explicitly expressed in terms of severity warnings.

    - BNF drug (or drug class) monographs include *Patient and carer advice* sections if a drug (or drug class) has a special need for counselling. These sections provide health professionals with advice to share with patients and/or their carers. The *Patient and carer advice* section associated with ofloxacin includes advice to stop treatment at the first signs of a serious musculoskeletal, neurological or psychiatric side-effect, and links to a patient advice sheet produced by the MHRA which provides details on these side-effects.

    - *Side-Effects* sections of BNF drug (or drug class) monographs include information on side-effects that have been associated with the use of the drug or drug class. This information is primarily based on licensed product information. The *Side-effects* section in the quinolones drug class monograph includes 'suicidal behaviours' as a 'rare or very rare' side-effect. The *Side-effects, further information* section recommends discontinuing use if psychiatric reactions occur.

Additionally, the ofloxacin drug monograph contains ‘self-endangering behaviour' as a ‘frequency not known’ side-effect.

- Warnings within software applications:

Information to support the safe and effective prescribing of drugs, such as ofloxacin, is included in BNF content. Third party system developers may use this information to create a hierarchy of warnings within software applications used by health professionals; however, this is not determined by BNF.

We understand your concern that the current approach to publishing warnings of possible harm fails to adequately inform prescribers and patients of danger. We work closely with the MHRA on drug safety issues. We will reach out to the MHRA to discuss ways of further highlighting the warnings around the use of ofloxacin and the quinolones drug class to prescribers and patients.

We trust that this addresses this important issue.

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]
Head of Content (BNF + BNFC)