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### **A drop in haemoglobin during treatment with linezolid. More common than we thought!**

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Linezolid, a first in class oxazolidinone antibiotic, has been shown to be effective in the treatment of diabetic foot infections as reported from a randomised multicentre open labelled trial published in 2004. However this trial and other studies have suggested that adverse events are significantly more likely to occur with linezolid treatment than comparator agents. Judicious use of linezolid is useful for treating patients with multidrug-resistant infections and can avoid hospital admissions. However, the potential side-effect of bone marrow suppression is most concerning resulting in thrombocytopenia and anaemia associated particularly with prolonged use beyond 4 weeks. Our clinical experience within a multidisciplinary diabetic foot clinic suggested that diabetic patients treated with linezolid commonly experienced a drop in their haemoglobin and that this was observed even during short courses of therapy. We undertook a retrospective review of patient records from September 2010 to February 2012 for those treated with oral linezolid 600mg BD.

39 patients records were reviewed. Age, eGFR, full blood counts (baseline and follow up) and length of therapy were recorded. 9/39 or 23% of patients experienced a drop in their haemoglobin concentration whilst on treatment (range 1.0-4.3 g/l), with 4/39 or 10% experiencing a drop of greater than 2.0 g/l from baseline. The median drop in haemoglobin was 1.8 g/dl. The age range of these patients was 55-86 years (median 66), eGFR range 15-81 (median 55), baseline haemoglobin range 9.8-14 g/dl (median 12.5 g/dl), with 6/9 patients starting treatment with mild anaemia. 5/9 patients received linezolid for 2 weeks, 2/9 for 3 weeks and 2/9 for 4 weeks. Linezolid therapy was stopped in 6/9 patients as a result of the drop in haemoglobin.

These preliminary findings suggest that care is needed in the selection of patients for treatment with linezolid in diabetic foot infections.