

ACMD

Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs

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Lynne Featherstone MP
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17 February 2015

Dear Minister,

Re: Ketamine – Rescheduling and Patient Group Directions

In December 2013, the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) provided advice to the Government in relation to ketamine. Our report recommended that ketamine be reclassified as a Class B substance under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 and rescheduled as a Schedule II substance under the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001 (as amended), subject to a public consultation to assess the impact on health and veterinary care professionals.^[1]

Your officials have recently made the ACMD aware that if ketamine were to be listed in Schedule II as recommended, it will automatically place it outside the scope of Patient Group Directions (PGD), under which certain healthcare professionals are able to supply or offer to supply the drug for the immediate treatment of sick and injured persons without the direct supervision of a medical practitioner. This issue arises because subject to some specific exceptions, the use of controlled drugs under PGDs is limited to drugs listed in Schedule IV and V to the 2001 Regulations.

[1]

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/264677/ACMD_ketamine_report_dec13.pdf

In light of this, the ACMD would like to further recommend that legislative provisions should be introduced to ensure ketamine continues to be available under PGDs when it is rescheduled. There is already precedent under the 2001 Regulations where two Schedule II drugs (morphine and diamorphine) are authorised for use by nurses and pharmacists under a PGD.

It is the Advisory Council's view that enabling the continued use of ketamine under PGDs, subject to the additional requirements applicable to Schedule II drugs reduces any risk of diversion associated with its use in this environment.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Les Iversen', written in a cursive style.

Professor Les Iversen FRS
Chair of the ACMD