

# Are Your Girls Safe? PREVENT

## Introduction

Since 2017 The MHRA and EMC have issued warnings regarding the cautious use of Sodium Valproate for Epilepsy in women and girls of child bearing age; this is secondary to the association of teratogenicity, long term neuro-developmental and neurological effects on the unborn child (3).

RCPCH, BPNA and ILAE have issued guidance including algorithms to choose age appropriate anti-epileptic medication in girls, how to safely convert to an alternative AED and the criteria where Valproate may continue (1, 2). Pregnancy prevention programme (PREVENT) should be utilised by all specialists managing Epilepsy. PREVENT advocates annual education of patients/families and general practitioners regarding the potential risks of Sodium Valproate use (4).

In Croydon University Trust we have a cohort of over 300 children with Epilepsy and complex needs. Therefore, we conducted a quality improvement project to explore compliance with PREVENT guidance.

## Aims

- To analyse whether Epilepsy and Neurodisability clinicians within the South West Thames Epilepsy Specialist Interest Group were compliant with PREVENT guidance for use of Sodium Valproate in girls over the age of ten.
- To educate PREVENT guidance within the paediatric department at Croydon University Trust, South Thames Epilepsy Specialist Interest Group and to mitigate further risk of harm.

## Methodology

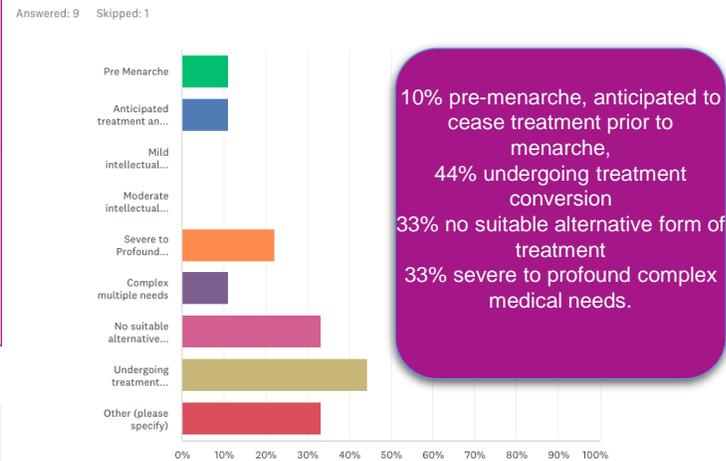
This study was conducted utilising a prospective qualitative questionnaire on Survey Monkey across the South West Thames Epilepsy Specialist Interest group over 2 month period.

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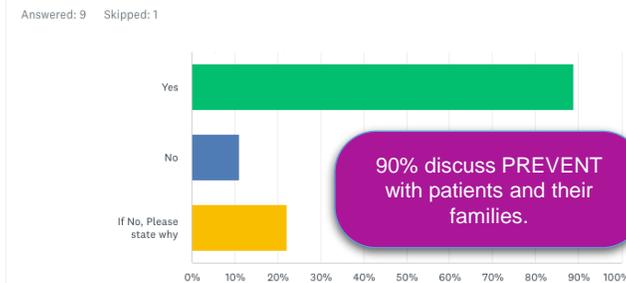
## Results

80% of the South West Thames Epilepsy Specialist Interest Group female patients above the age of ten are on Sodium Valproate.

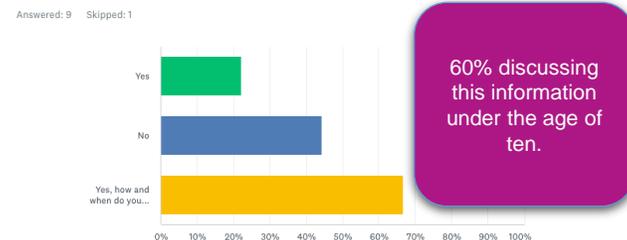
Why did you choose to continue Sodium Valproate?



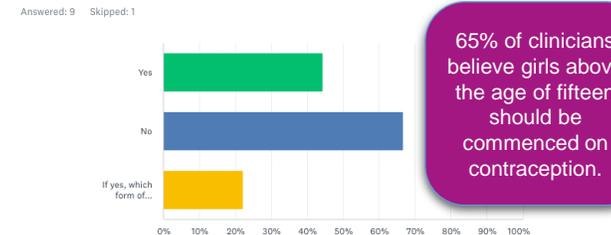
Did you discuss PREVENT with each of these patients and their families?



Do you offer contraception to patients treated with Sodium Valproate? If so how and when do you initiate this discussion?



Do you think all girls over 15 years and above on Sodium Valproate should be on highly effective contraception?



## Limitations

- Only ten clinicians responded from the South Thames Specialist Interest Group.
- Questionnaire sent out for responses over a limited period of 2 months which coincided with festive period and pandemic.
- The questionnaire did not facilitate clinicians to specify their trust to allow direct comparison of patient groups and did not allow free text to enable disclosure if did not use PREVENT guidance.

## Conclusions

In conclusion, the quality improvement project confirmed that Sodium Valproate use in girls ten and above grossly meets European and International PREVENT guidance.

All clinicians within the South West Thames Epilepsy Specialist Interest Group were compliant with recommended reviews of patient management and completed relevant paperwork in timely manner.

The data also demonstrated that Valproate continues to be prescribed in those pre Menarche if treatment and remission was anticipated before puberty. The exceptions to this included acknowledged exclusion criteria, such as severe epileptic encephalopathies, severe to profound Learning Disability, parental choice or lack of suitable alternatives.