Plot 112, International Finance Park, Gaborone
Private Bag 2, Gaborone Station, Botswana
+267 373 1727/20
Toll Free : 0800 600 216
info@bomra.co.bw
Botswana Medicines Regulatory Authority
www.bomra.co.bw

12 April 2023

Dear Healthcare Professionals,

The Botswana Medicines Regulatory Authority (BoMRA) would like to notify you of safety concern that consumption of Pholcodine increases the risk of perioperative anaphylaxis to neuromuscular blocking agents.

The following are Pholcodine containing medicines registered in Botswana:

BRAND NAME	COMPOSITION	MANUFACTURE	REGISTRATION NUMBER	SCHEDULE
Pholtex forte	Pholcodine 15mg/5ml	iNova Pharmaceuticals SA (Pty) Limited	BOT0200484	1D
Pholtex junior	Pholcodine 5mg/5ml linctus	iNova Pharmaceuticals SA (Pty) Limited	BOT9700125	1D
Tixylix	Promethazine & pholcodine	Aspen Pharmacare, RSA	B9305300	3

BoMRA has reviewed literature that associate pholcodine and perioperative anaphylaxis. Data from a multicenter case-control study (ALPHO) comparing pholcodine exposure within a year before anesthesia between patients with NMBA-related POA (cases) and control patients with uneventful aesthesia was reviewed. The ALPHO has confirmed a significant association between pholcodine consumption in the year preceding NMBA exposure and NMBA-related POA (OR adjusted=4.2 CI 95% [2.5; 6.9]). Other environmental factors, including occupational exposure to quaternary ammonium, should be considered in the risk of NMBA-related anaphylaxis, but they currently remain poorly defined. The European Commission issued a legally binding decision applicable in all EU Member States to withdraw pholcodine containing products in March 2023. Subsequent to this a number of National Regulatory Authorities have removed Pholcodine from their markets and these include United Kingdom, Australia, Malaysia and South Africa.

BoMRA is assessing the available data and considering other factors to determine if the benefit-risk balance of pholcodine remain favorable. In the meantime, the Authority would like to advise the Healthcare Professionals to;

- re-evaluate their patients and consider other treatment alternatives approved for use in Botswana.
- conduct extensive medication review for patients scheduled to undergo general anesthesia with NMBAs.
- check whether patients have used pholcodine-containing medicines in the last
- 12 months and raise awareness about potential risk of peri-anesthetic anaphylactic reaction associated with NMBAs.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr. Seima Dijeng
Chief Executive Officer (A)

For more information about any medicine/vaccine contact,
BoMRA **National Medicines Information Centre** at 373 1788/71 or email nmic@bomra.co.bw