



Direct Healthcare Professional Communication

Feb 2025

Chlorhexidine-containing products: Risks of persistent corneal injury and significant visual impairment

Dear Healthcare Professional,

The General Administration for Pharmaceutical Vigilance (PVGA) at the Egyptian drug authority (EDA) would like to inform you **about risks of persistent corneal injury and significant visual impairment following accidental ocular exposure to Chlorhexidine-containing products.**

Summary

- There is a causal relationship between chlorhexidine-containing products and risks of persistent corneal injury and significant visual impairment.
 - EDA informs Healthcare professionals(HCPs) about new warning of persistent corneal injury, corneal erosion, epithelium defect and significant permanent visual impairment following accidental ocular exposure to chlorhexidine containing products.
 - Accidental ocular exposure to chlorhexidine containing products used for head and neck surgical site preparation may occur due to migration of solution beyond the intended surgical preparation area.
 - Extreme care must be taken during application to ensure that chlorhexidine does not migrate beyond its intended application site into the eyes.
 - Particular care is needed with anaesthetized patients, as they cannot immediately report ocular exposure.
 - If chlorhexidine comes into contact with the eyes, it should be wash out promptly and thoroughly with water and ophthalmologist's advice should be sought.
-



Background on the safety concern

Chlorhexidine-containing products are indicated for skin disinfection and intended for cutaneous use

Chlorhexidine has broad-spectrum antimicrobial effects are due to its ability to disrupt microbial cell membranes.

Topically, chlorhexidine is unlikely to undergo any degree of systemic absorption.

Chlorhexidine must not come into contact with the eye as persistent corneal injury, potentially requiring corneal transplant may occur following accidental ocular exposure to chlorhexidine containing products despite taking eye protective measures.

References:

HPRA: https://assets.hpra.ie/data/docs/default-source/product-updates/hpra-safety-notice/drug-safety-newsletter/hpra-drug-safety-newsletter-edition-116.pdf?sfvrsn=3ef71aa_4

Call for reporting

Healthcare professionals are asked to report any suspected adverse reactions via the Egyptian reporting system:

Name: General Administration for Pharmaceutical Vigilance

Email: pv.followup@edaegypt.gov.eg

Online reporting: <https://vigiflow-eforms.who-umc.org/eg/med>

QR Code:

PO Box: 11451

Hotline: 15301

