

## **CASE STUDY**

# Reducing Prescription of Proton Pump Inhibitors

James O'Hara  
Newcastle University  
Newcastle-upon-Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

### **Case Setting**

Adult patients with persistent throat symptoms are frequently referred to secondary care for assessment. These symptoms include: a feeling of a lump in the throat (globus sensation), throat clearing, excess throat mucus, intermittent hoarse voice, cough and sore throat.

### **Intervention**

Over the last 20 years there has been a vogue to treat these symptoms as manifestations of gastroesophageal reflux, with proton-pump inhibitors (PPIs) advocated, usually based on symptoms alone. High quality clinic trials have failed to demonstrate that PPIs are effective in treating these symptoms.

The Trial of Proton Pump Inhibitors in Throat Symptoms (TOPPITS) randomised 332 participants to either twice daily 30mg Lansoprazole or match placebo for 16 weeks.

### **Measurement**

The primary outcome – the Reflux Symptoms Index (a nine-point patient reported questionnaire) demonstrated that Lansoprazole was no more effective than placebo in relieving symptoms.

TOPPITS concluded that the practice of prescribing PPIs for persistent throat symptoms should be discouraged.

## Challenges and Enablers

Primary care clinicians have no other treatment to offer patients, nor the ability to adequately examine the throat or voice box in clinic.

TOPPITS is being repeated, assessing Gaviscon Advance versus placebo.

The NIHR have published an alert suggesting PPIs should not be prescribed for these symptoms. The latest UK cough guidelines will include this work too.

## Additional Links

[Use of proton pump inhibitors to treat persistent throat symptoms: multicentre, double blind, randomised, placebo controlled trial | The BMJ](#)

[PPIs should not be prescribed for throat symptoms - NIHR Evidence](#)