Fear of Flying Advice Leaflet

Our concerns around using diazepam in patient who are nervous about flying are as follows:

- Diazepam is a sedative, which means it makes you sleepy, more relaxed and can significantly delay your reaction times. If there is an emergency during the flight it may impair your ability to concentrate, follow instructions and react to the situation.
- Sedative drugs can make you fall asleep, however when you do sleep it is an unnatural (non-REM) sleep. This means you won't move around as much as during natural sleep. There is concern this can cause you to be at increased risk of developing a blood clot (DVT) in the leg or even the lung which can be dangerous. This risk is greater if your flight is greater than four hours.
- Whilst most people find sedative medications like diazepam have a relaxing effect, a small number of people can actually feel more agitated or even aggressive after taking it. Diazepam can also cause disinhibition and lead you to behave in a way that you would not normally.
- Prescribing guidelines doctors follow (known as the BNF), don't recommend using benzodiazepines like diazepam in phobias. We would be acting against these guidelines if we prescribe.
- Diazepam and similar drugs are illegal in a number of countries. They may be confiscated or you may find yourself in trouble with the police if you are carrying any on arrival.
- Diazepam stays in your system for quite a while. If your job requires you to submit to random drug testing you may fail this having taken diazepam.

We appreciate that fear of flying is very real and very frightening. A lower risk approach is to tackle this properly and hopefully permanently, with a Fear of Flying course run by the airlines and we have listed a number of these below or there are also some free online courses:

- Easy Jet **www.fearlessflyer.easyjet.com** Tel: **0203 8131644**
- British Airways **www.flyingwithconfidence.com** Tel: **01252 793250**
- Virgin Tel: **01423 714900**

Good advice and techniques can be found here:
- How to manage a fear of flying and flying anxiety | Patient