Table 2

Managing renal transplant recipients in general practice

Cardiovascular disease risk

- Cardiovascular disease is the most common cause of death, hence management of cardiovascular risk factors is vital

Cancer risk

- Malignancy is more frequent than in the general population
- Skin cancer recurs more frequently, is more aggressive and can be invasive
- Those on long-term immunosuppression should be investigated early if there are symptoms that may be causing concern

Infection

- Infection can quickly become life threatening
- Antibiotic therapy should be initiated earlier and for longer in patients on immunosuppression (even if they appear quite well)

Immunosuppressive medications

- Some of these have a narrow therapeutic window – too little risks rejection, too much risks toxicity and infection

Calcineurin inhibitors

- Calcineurin inhibitors (CNI: ciclosporin and tacrolimus) in particular can interact with other medication. A common culprit is clarithromycin. If no alternative antibiotic is available the dose of CNI must be reduced. This should be discussed with the local renal unit