



Department of Health,
P.O. Box 5013,
Wellington.

19 March 1976.

CLINICAL SERVICES LETTER NO. 158

TO MEDICAL AND DENTAL PRACTITIONERS

(Copy to Proprietors of Retail Pharmacies)

DRUG TARIFF 1974, AMENDMENT NO. 6: EFFECTIVE 1 APRIL 1976

1. To be available from a retail pharmacy:

Additions to the Tariff

Benzoyl peroxide.

Chlortetracycline hydrochloride proprietary ointment (Aureomycin ointment).

Fenoterol hydrobromide aerosol inhaler (Berotec aerosol inhaler).

Halcinonide cream (Halciderm cream).

Lorazepam tablets (Ativan tablets).

Miconazole nitrate external cream (Daktarin cream).

Ortho-tolidine, compound, diagnostic sticks (Hemastix).

2. To be available from a retail pharmacy on the prescription or recommendation of a specialist:

Amyl dimethylaminobenzoate lotion (Block Out).

3. To be available from a retail pharmacy on a practitioner's supply order or on a bulk supply order:

Ornipressin (Por 8 Sandoz)

4. To be available from a hospital pharmacy on the prescription or recommendation of a specialist:

Disopyramide (Rythmodan).

Methoxsalen (Oxsoralen).

5. The following have been deleted from the Drug Tariff:

Doxycycline hydrochloride capsules exceeding a strength of 100 mg.

Ethinylloestradiol tablets with ethinylloestradiol and megestrol acetate tablets for cyclic treatment.

Ethinylloestradiol with megestrol acetate.

Fruusemide preparations when extemporaneously compounded.
Nikethamide solution (Coramine liquid).

6. Clause 24 (5) of the Drug Tariff dealing with the provisions for supplies sufficient for from 6 to 30 days' treatment has been amended so that payment may be made for prescriptions endorsed with the words "extended supply" and either the quantity or the period of supply.

Practitioners are reminded that copies of the Drug Tariff and this latest amendment are available from medical officers of health if required.

This Clinical Services Letter will be the only record most will have of the present changes to the tariff. As it is not a cumulative list it is suggested that this letter, along with Clinical Services Letter No. 155, should be retained for reference purposes.

A full list of medicines with restricted availability under the Drug Tariff will be provided annually.

Lorazepam

Lorazepam has been described as one of the more potent of the benzodiazepines. It is available as tablets of 1 mg and 2.5 mg.

Lorazepam 1 mg is claimed to be therapeutically equivalent to—

chlordiazepoxide	.....	.....	.....	.....	20 mg
diazepam	.....	.....	.....	.....	5 mg
oxazepam	.....	.....	.....	.....	20 mg

Supplementary Benefits: Approval for Special Foods

Apart from the patient's name, brief clinical details, and a statement that it would be unreasonable to expect the patient to pay for the required food, doctors are reminded that free supplies of a special food can only be authorised when recommended by an appropriate specialist, whose name should be included in the application.

Refusal to Enter Hospital

New life styles bring with them new medical problems; the commune is no exception. Several cases have been reported recently where patients living in communes have refused to enter hospital for treatment, including obstetric care. Most tragic of all have been refusals to be admitted for essential treatment of mother and baby for the management of Rhesus afflicted babies.

It is clear that in such circumstances it is an ethical responsibility of a practitioner to place the welfare of his patient above other considerations and provide medical care as far as he is able. If alternative care is not available or unlikely to be sought it would be unethical to refuse his services on the grounds that his advice is not followed.

There is little in law that is of help to the practitioner in the case of an adult refusing to enter hospital. If a patient is considered to be destitute and living in insanitary conditions or without proper care or attention, the

medical officer of health may be persuaded to approach a Magistrate's Court for an order committing the patient to a hospital. Section 126 of the Health Act 1956 enables this to be done, although under current conditions this section applies in the main to aged, infirm, or incurable persons. The Department of Social Welfare has certain powers to act under the Children and Young Persons Act 1974. If there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that a child is being ill-treated or neglected in a manner likely to cause unnecessary suffering, or living in an environment injurious to health, then that department should be consulted. A magistrate may issue a warrant enabling a search, and the child may be removed if seriously at risk.

It should also be pointed out that section 52 of the Nurses Act 1971 makes it an offence for unqualified persons to carry out obstetric nursing. This does not apply to midwives or maternity nurses when a medical practitioner has undertaken responsibility for the patient, but applies generally when no practitioner is involved. Of course, anyone may assist in case of an emergency without committing an offence under this section.

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