

19 December 1960.

## CLINICAL SERVICES LETTER NO. 18

TO ALL MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS:

(Copy for information to chemists)

Dear Sir/Madam,

### PRESCRIPTIONS RISING IN COST

Since the beginning of the year the average cost of prescriptions has been rising steadily. In October it reached 9s. 5d., an all-time high, which may be compared with 7s. 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. in January last, and 8s. 2d. in October 1959.

The number of prescriptions issued in October was somewhat below last year's level, but the net result was a rise in expenditure of 12 per cent.

It is clear that this rise in cost is due to the increased issue of Extended Supplies. If this tendency persists, or grows, the estimates for the year will be greatly exceeded. Last year, as you will recall, a similar situation led to the imposition of restrictions of a kind which none of us want to see again.

We appeal for your cooperation:

*Do not order more than is needed.*

*Seven days' supply (or less) if that will do.*

*Give Extended Supplies only when actually required.*

### A Cheaper Diuretic

Bendrofluazide (benzhydroflumethiazide) appears to be as effective a diuretic as any of the other thiazides. It is substantially cheaper, is longer acting than the earlier preparations such as chlorothiazide, and is available in 2.5 mg and 5 mg tablets.

Bendrofluazide will become a charge on the Fund as from 1 January and practitioners are recommended to prescribe it in preference to the other preparations unless there are particular reasons for not doing so.

Further comments on these new diuretics will be published from time to time.

	Tablet Size mg	Approx. Retail Cost per Tablet s. d.
Bendrofluazide (Aprinox, Neo NaClex, Pluryle-Leo)	5	0 5 $\frac{3}{4}$
Hydroflumethiazide (Di-Ademil, Hydrenox, NaClex, Rontyl)	50	0 7
Hydrochlorothiazide (Dichlotride, Direma, Esidrex)	50	1 0
Chlorothiazide (Chlotride)	500	1 0
		0 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ *

\*From 1 February.

P.T.O.

### *Supplementary Benefits: Section 101*

Requests for special supplies of drugs under Section 101 must be sent direct by the practitioner to the Director of this Division, giving details of the case. A prescription should be enclosed for endorsement. The majority of these prescriptions will be authorised to be dispensed by a hospital dispensary.

Please write these and any other hospital prescriptions on a form separate from that used for ordinary drugs.

### *Medical Practitioners Supply Orders*

The use of these orders is restricted to drugs for use in an emergency and drugs for personal administration to patients, e.g., injections. Reasonable quantities of drugs are, of necessity, supplied by the doctor to his patient in an emergency, but it is not intended that normal supplies of medicines should be dispensed from the doctor's bag. Dangerous drugs should be ordered on a separate form.

### *Mercurochrome*

It has been shown that mercurochrome has little effect in destroying the resistant staphylococcus and, in fact, this substance has been used in laboratories for the isolation of the resistant staph. in culture. More useful antiseptics are available, e.g., Chlorhexidine (Hibitane) or Savlon (a combination of chlorhexidine with cetrimide).

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Greetings and Best Wishes

for

Christmas and the New Year

