

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,  
P.O. BOX 5013,  
WELLINGTON.

26 March 1958

## Clinical Services Letter No. 3

TO ALL MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS:

Dear Sir/Madam,

### ENDORSEMENT: BROAD-SPECTRUM ANTIBIOTICS

From 1 April, prescriptions for the broad-spectrum antibiotics listed in clause 4 of the Fourth Schedule of the Drug Tariff will be accepted for payment without the usual endorsement. ("Certified Fourth Schedule condition.")

This arrangement applies to clause 4 items only, i.e., the tetracyclines and chloramphenicol for systemic use. Prescriptions for the materials included under the other clauses of the Fourth Schedule must still be endorsed in full.

The usual quantity restrictions still apply; but the therapeutic application of these drugs will now be left to the prescriber's judgment and discretion.

The Minister of Health has approved this relaxation of the requirements of the Drug Tariff as an experimental measure. It is believed that it will have no appreciable effect on the consumption of these drugs. They are all expensive, and the risks attending their indiscriminate use are now sufficiently well known. The Department is confident that this relaxation will win general approval, and will not be abused.

If, as is hoped, there is no indication of excessive use of these drugs as a result of this experimental measure, a formal amendment to the Drug Tariff will be gazetted in due course.

All prescribers are urged to cooperate by continuing to employ these valuable agents with due care and discrimination.

### Cost

The tetracyclines in current use include Achromycin, Achromycin V, Aureomycin, Panmycin, Steclin, Terramycin, and Tetracyn. Each 250 mg. capsule costs the Fund about 4s. 1d. Each 250 mg. capsule of chloramphenicol (Chloromycetin) costs about 2s. 7d.

(P.T.O.)

## *Indications for Chloramphenicol*

After a full discussion of the complications of therapy with chloramphenicol, Lady M. E. Florey (*The Clinical Application of Antibiotics*, Vol. III, 1957) sums up as follows:

"The drug should not be used unless there is bacteriological evidence and clinical experience to show that no other drug will be as effective in controlling the infection to be treated. In general, the use of the drug should be limited to serious conditions such as influenzal meningitis, typhoid fever, certain urinary tract conditions infected with organisms resistant to other antibiotics, and typhus when the response to the tetracycline group of antibiotics is delayed."

Yours faithfully,



Director, Division of Clinical Services.