

17 April 1963.

Clinical Services Letter No. 33

TO MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS:

Dear Doctor,

DRUG TARIFF AMENDMENT NO. 6, EFFECTIVE 1 MAY

A list of new additions with their proprietary names may be found on the last page of the enclosed Drug Tariff Amendment.

Important alterations:

- (a) Amitriptyline (Laroxyl, Tryptanol), Ethosuximide (Zarontin), Metformin (Glucophage), Metharbital (Gemonil), and Phenformin (Insoral) may now be dispensed by retail chemists.
- (b) It is no longer necessary to endorse prescriptions for broad spectrum antibiotics with the words "Approved Condition".
- (c) Long-term treatment with broad spectrum antibiotics may be prescribed in cases for which this is regarded as treatment of choice by authoritative medical opinion. Normally, however, the restriction of 16 capsules or tablets (or doses) per prescription continues to apply.

RESERPINE TABLETS

From 1 May the cost to the Fund of reserpine tablets will be considerably reduced. The present retail price of 0.25mg tablets is about 60s. for 500. The new price will be about 22s. Most proprietary forms of reserpine, including Serpasil, will, therefore, carry an extra charge to the patient. To avoid extra charges, doctors are requested to prescribe this drug by the official name.

SUPPLEMENTARY BENEFITS - SECTION 101 PRESCRIPTIONS

In order to avoid confusion Section 101 prescriptions should be marked "(Hosp.)" or "(Chem.)" after the code number, e.g., C. 428 (Hosp.). This will serve as a reminder to the chemist (and patient) of the nature of the approval, i.e., whether for dispensing by hospital or chemist, and should help to obviate errors.

METRIC SYSTEM

On the recommendation of the Metric System Committee of the Board of Health it has been decided to introduce the Metric System into this country on 1 November. It is hoped that most tablets, capsules, etc., will be available in metric sizes on or soon after this date, but there will be a transitional period while old stocks are being used up. Further details will be given later.

P.T.O.

In the meantime, however, it would be helpful if doctors would avoid using the Metric System when prescribing mixtures. Prescriptions are at present priced on the apothecary's system, and prescriptions written in metric must be converted into this system, either by the chemist or a pricing officer, before payment can be made.

A copy of the Report of the Metric System Committee is enclosed. Your comments or suggestions would be appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

A. W. S. Thompson

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Director,

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QUESTIONNAIRE ON SMOKING HABITS

About 2,000 replies have come to hand. If you have not yet returned your form (issued 7 March) it would be appreciated if you would kindly do so as soon as possible.