

15 November 1966.

CLINICAL SERVICES LETTER NO. 66

TO MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS

(Copy for information to chemists)

Dear Doctor,

DRUG TARIFF 1964, AMENDMENT NO. 6: EFFECTIVE 1 DECEMBER 1966

Additions and Deletions

Most additions and deletions are listed in the Explanatory Note at the back of the amendment. Alterations are marked with an asterisk in the main body of the amendment.

Solution of xylometazoline hydrochloride (Otrivine) has been included in the Drug Tariff, as a full charge when dispensed from bulk. Plastic nasal spray bottles and dropper bottles will be available, and will be supplied free of charge.

Alterations

- (a) Hydrocortisone hemisuccinate intravenous injection will be available, one ampoule at a time, on a Medical Practitioner's Supply Order.
- (b) The following will be available from chemists—
 - Indomethacin (Indocid).
 - Potassium chloride long acting tablets (Slow-K).
 - Prednisolone and its acetate as tablets.
 - Prednisone and its acetate as tablets.

PREDNISOLONE AND PREDNISONE TABLETS

The advisability of derestricting these tablets was considered by a specially convened meeting of experts. There were sharp differences of opinion amongst those present, but eventually it was agreed (with certain reservations*) to recommend to the Pharmacology and Therapeutics Committee that existing restrictions on the prescribing of these tablets be relaxed.

Other recommendations made by this Committee (and adopted by the Pharmacology and Therapeutics Committee) included—

- (a) That it be obligatory to label all supplies with the proper name. (The regulations will be amended to give effect to this recommendation.)

*Some members would have favoured some reasonable and practical curb on long-term therapy, but could not offer any practicable suggestions for achieving this.

[P.T.O.]

- (b) That doctors be strongly advised to issue a corticosteroid card to each patient.
(A copy of this card is enclosed. Further supplies may be obtained from your local Medical Officer of Health.)
- (c) That doctors be strongly advised to seek a second opinion from an experienced consultant (to be selected by the prescriber) before long-term therapy is commenced, and at least once a year during the course of treatment.
- (d) That doctors be strongly advised to avoid the use of steroids in cases in which the diagnosis is in doubt.

The Medical Assessor of the Committee on Adverse Drug Reactions has asked the Department to remind doctors of the desirability of reporting any reactions to these preparations.

Not all brands of prednisolone and prednisone tablets will be a full charge under the Drug Tariff. Prescribers can avoid difficulties by ordering supplies by the official name.

ANTIBIOTICS

There have been recent price reductions in tetracycline and erythromycin preparations. Unfortunately not all firms were able to reduce prices for all of their products, nor did they all make their prices effective from the date set.

As a result *erythromycin preparations and mysteclin-V syrup* may carry a part charge to the patient until 1 January 1967, or until such earlier dates as chemists have cleared stocks purchased at the dearer rates.

The following *tetracycline preparations* will carry a part charge—

Achromycin capsules 50 mg.

Aureomycin capsules 50 mg.

Terramycin pediatric drops.

The following dispensing packs of syrups are now available—

Erythromycin estolate 125 mg per 5 ml (Ilosone) 500 ml.

Tetracycline hydrochloride 250 mg per 5 ml (Hostacycline) 240 ml.

Tetracycline phosphate complex 125 mg per 5 ml (Hostacycline P) 480 ml.

It would be more economical and of assistance to pharmacists if these preparations were ordered by official name. This would also overcome difficulties experienced in providing a quantity to cover a specific number of days.

MATERNITY BENEFIT FEES

Under the current scale of fees, where a consultant is called in to effect delivery, the fee payable to the doctor providing the usual medical services in relation to maternity is not reduced. This now includes surgical delivery after trial labour performed by a consultant at the request of the attending doctor. (In the case of an elective Caesarian Section without trial labour, no delivery fee is payable to the usual medical attendant.)

CONTACT LENSES

Contact lenses for social security purposes are supplied through Hirst Contact Lens Ltd., under an agreement with the Minister of Health.

Amendment No. 1 to the Contact Lenses Notice 1963 provides that from 14 October 1966 any type or brand of contact lens specified by the ophthalmologist or the fitter may be supplied. The firm of Hirst Contact Lens Ltd. will continue to handle all records, orders, payment, and appointment of fitters. Should any specified lens not be available through this firm, the fitter will be authorised to order direct, the cost being credited to the fitter's account.

Yours faithfully,

A. W. S. Thompson

(A. W. S. Thompson)
Director,

T. L. Hayes

(T. L. Hayes)
Assistant Director,

Division of Clinical Services.

PRIVATE PRACTICE AVAILABLE

General practice at Reefton, West Coast, South Island, offers good opportunity for two medical practitioners to set up in partnership and take up the following part-time positions at Inangahua Hospital.

MEDICAL SUPERINTENDENT: Hours assessed at 25 weekly. Salary according to Hospital Employment (Medical Officers) Regulations is at present £1,625 p.a.

DEPUTY MEDICAL SUPERINTENDENT: Hours assessed at 12 weekly. Salary, as set out in the regulations, within the range £990/£1,135 p.a. according to qualifications and experience.

Reefton Hospital is a modern 59-bed building (38 General, 11 Maternity, and 10 beds Old Men's Home) with well equipped theatres. A new residence of three bedrooms and study, together with separate unit of surgery and waiting room, is available to rent or lease.

The Inangahua county, with Reefton as the main centre, has a population of 2,856. Situated on the West Coast side of the Lewis Pass, the district would appear to be in for a period of increased activity and, with an increase in population, a corresponding increase in medical work. Main industries are sawmilling, coal mining, and farming. A new timber-processing plant expecting to employ 60 men is ready to commence production. Good primary and secondary schools.

For further information, apply to the Medical Superintendent or the Secretary, Inangahua Hospital Board, P.O. Box 68, Reefton.