



## PRESS RELEASE

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### Non Proven Therapies

As part of the Gibraltar Health Authority's (GHA) on-going programme of quality assurance, prescribing practices have been reviewed and compared to the National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidelines.

Several routinely prescribed medications have been identified, which are no longer approved by NICE, as the evidence for their benefit does not exist. As a healthcare provider, the GHA has a duty to only prescribe therapies that are recommended and proven to be of benefit. The GHA will therefore stop routinely prescribing the following medications as of 15th July 2018:

1) Omega-3 fatty acids (prescribed under the drug name Omacor). This dietary supplement was marketed as a therapy to reduce Coronary Vessel Disease (heart disease) by altering the fat levels in patients' blood. NICE however, have reviewed all the available evidence and found no proof of benefit. For persons who wish to take these supplements, they are available over the counter at health food shops, pharmacies and supermarkets. There are some rare conditions where these therapies may still be indicated under advice from a Consultant in a centre specialising in blood lipid (fat) disorders.

2) Glucosamine containing products. These dietary supplements were prescribed for patients with osteoarthritis, to help with joint pain. As of 2014, NICE have recommended that these should not be prescribed for this indication, as the evidence for benefit does not exist. These supplements may also be purchased over the counter at health food shops, pharmacies and supermarkets if persons wish to take them.

Persons currently taking one of these therapies who wish to discuss their condition and treatment are advised to seek an appointment with a General Practitioner or consultant, who will be able to advise them further.

There will be cases where a new (or established therapy with new evidence) could benefit patients. To ensure the GHA maintains the flexibility to deliver such therapies (that would not be available to patients in the NHS or other public systems), the GHA Drugs, Therapeutics & Medicines Risk Committee will have an appeals mechanism to evaluate the evidence on a case-by-case basis.



Dr Daniel Cassaglia, the GHA's Medical Director, said: "It is important that we constantly review our practices with regards to prescribing medications to ensure we keep in line with the latest guidelines. The Drugs, Therapeutics & Medicines Risk Committee will review individual cases should this be required."