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HSS(MD)9/01

All doctors
All pharmacists
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diabetes specialist nurses)
Directors of Public Health in HSS Boards
Directors of Pharmaceutical Services of Boards
Trust Pharmacy managers
GP Advisers in HSS Boards
Prescribing Advisers in HSS Boards
Regional Medicines & Poisons Information Service
UK Diabetes (NI)

12 March 2001

Dear Colleague

DIABETES – IMMINENT PHASE OUT OF INSULIN PRODUCTS BY LILLY

Summary

This letter is a reminder of the imminent withdrawal of a number of human insulin formulations by Eli Lilly and Company Limited, who have previously communicated on this issue with relevant health professionals. The deadline for withdrawal of the affected products is 31 March 2001. Production has already ceased and stocks of one formulation are expected to run out before the end of March. You will need to ensure that all patients on these formulations are prescribed alternatives before stocks are exhausted.

Background

As part of a worldwide rationalisation programme, Lilly is simplifying its Humulin range in the UK. The changes include the phasing out of 1.5ml cartridges (except Humalog).



Since last September, Lilly has been undertaking an extensive communications programme about the rationalisation, intended to minimise the impact on the Health Service and to ensure a smooth transfer to a new insulin regime for those people affected. Lilly is offering administrative and clinical support, including a nurse support team, and has set up a **telephone helpline (0800 0850 777)**. Information about the changes is also given on the Diabetes UK website at: **www.diabetes.org.uk**.

Lilly has now expressed concern to the UK Departments of Health that some health professionals, particularly in primary care, may still be unaware of the impending change.

Action

Patients affected by the change in available insulin formulations should be switched to alternative insulin products before they require their next prescription. The choice of replacement treatment rests with the responsible clinicians, who can best assess the needs of individual patients. Lilly alternatives are available for all withdrawals. The company has sent out information to all GPs on those that it produces. Insulin formulations are also available from Novo Nordisk, CP Pharmaceuticals and Aventis. A table provided by Lilly, detailing which products are being withdrawn, is contained in the attached Annex.

All patients who are put on a new formulation should be monitored following the changeover to ensure that they have adjusted successfully to their new treatment.

Pharmacists are asked to support patients during the changeover and to provide advice as required. Patients on products being withdrawn should be referred to their GP so that their prescription can be changed.

General practitioners and other recipients of this letter are asked to ensure that all those who work with people with diabetes are made aware of the changes in insulin products available.

Conclusion

It is essential that all patients affected by these product changes are appropriately advised by a health care professional, so that they can be changed to a suitable alternative insulin treatment before supplies are exhausted.

For further information on this issue, please contact:

Medical Issues

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Pharmacy Issues

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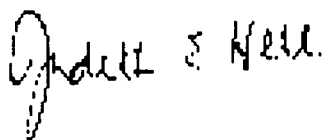
Nursing Issues

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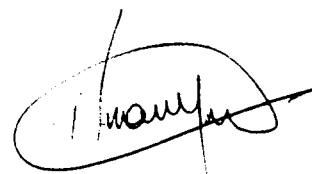
Yours sincerely



Dr Henrietta Campbell
Chief Medical Officer



Miss Judith Hill
Chief Nursing Officer



Dr Norman Morrow
Chief Pharmaceutical Officer

Annex

Changes to Humulin® Insulin Range:

| Formulation | <i>Humulin I Pre-filled pen</i> | 3.0ml cartridge | Humaject® Prefilled pen | 1.5ml cartridge | Vials |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Isophane [Humulin I] | <i>Continuing</i> | <i>Continuing</i> | Phase out | Phase out | <i>Continuing</i> |
| Soluble [Humulin S] | * | <i>Continuing</i> | <i>Continuing</i> | Phase out | <i>Continuing</i> |
| 10/90 [Humulin M1] | * | Phase out | Phase out | Phase out | Phase out |
| 20/80 [Humulin M2] | * | <i>Continuing</i> | Phase out | Phase out | Phase out |
| 30/70 [Humulin M3] | * | <i>Continuing</i> | <i>Continuing</i> | Phase out | <i>Continuing</i> |
| 40/60 [Humulin M4] | * | Phase out | Phase out | Phase out | Phase out |
| 50/50 [Humulin M5] | * | * | * | Phase out | <i>Continuing</i> |
| Lente [Humulin Lente] | * | * | * | * | <i>Continuing</i> |
| Ultralente [Humulin Zn] | * | * | * | * | <i>Continuing</i> |

* Not available in the UK

September 2000

There is no change in availability to the existing Humalog® Formulations