

**Attention all Medical Practitioners
Pharmacists
Nurses**

Re: Fluvastatin 80mg and Simvastatin 20mg Interchange

A statin is the recommended drug of choice in many people with hypercholesterolaemia. Simvastatin 20mg is therapeutically equivalent to fluvastatin 80mg, and thus the two drugs are therapeutically interchangeable. Most clinical evidence studies and reviews (including the Drug Class Review on HMG-CoA Reductase Inhibitors published by the Oregon Health & Science University in September 2005) confirm this equivalence.

Simvastatin 20mg (Zocor[®]) is to be procured instead of the fluvastatin 80mg XL (Lescol[®] XL). All new patients requiring a statin equivalent to fluvastatin 80mg XL will thus be started on simvastatin 20mg. Patients currently taking fluvastatin 80mg XL tablets shall be changed over to simvastatin 20mg tablets within a six month interchange period. After this change-over period, fluvastatin 80mg XL will no longer be available. The statins which will be available include simvastatin 10mg (generic), simvastatin 20mg (Zocor[®]), and fluvastatin 20mg and 40mg (Lescol[®]).

Patients presenting a prescription for fluvastatin 80mg XL shall be given 2 months supply of Lescol[®] XL and the second prescription will be made invalid by the government pharmacy dispenser. A prescription for simvastatin 20mg (Zocor[®]) is to be issued to the patient by the respective doctor. Should the interchange be impossible for any particular patient, a request for fluvastatin 80mg with appropriate reasons and/or justifications, is to be made by the respective consultant. If the reasons are assessed to be valid, 2 tablets of fluvastatin 40mg will be dispensed to the patient.

For your attention please,

Dr R Busuttil
Director General (Health)