

**DH CIRCULAR No. 217/2012**
DH 2867/201224th July 2012

Attention All: Consultants
Medical Officers
Pharmacists
Pharmacy Technicians
Nurses

Re: Deletion of sodium fusidate skin preparations (cream and ointment) from the Government Formulary List.

Resistance to fusidic acid within local strains of *Staphylococcus aureus* has increased to levels where empiric treatment of dermatological infections by this product is no longer safe for patient care.^{1,2,3} In addition, there is epidemiological evidence that local use of fusidic acid has been a major driver for the emergence of community MRSA in Malta.⁴ Community MRSA carriage in healthy adults, without a history of previous hospitalisation, has been identified to be at 8.2%;⁵ this is one of the highest rates recorded in the literature. As a result, the National Antibiotic Committee has recommended that sodium fusidate topical preparations (creams and ointments) be deleted from the Government Formulary List (GFL).

The **Directorate for Pharmaceutical Affairs (DPA)** has accepted this recommendation in line with its main objective of optimizing patient care through the rational use of drugs within the healthcare setting.

¹ http://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/activities/surveillance/EARS-Net/database/Pages/map_reports.aspx

² Borg MA. Addressing the challenge of antibiotic resistance in Maltese healthcare settings. *MMJ* 2009; 2:7-12

³ Zarb P, Borg MA. Consumption of antibiotics within ambulatory care in Malta. *MMJ* 2011; 2:13-19

⁴ Scicluna EA, Shore AC, Thürmer A et al. Characterisation of MRSA from Malta and the description of a Maltese epidemic MRSA strain. *Eur J Clin Microbiol Infect Dis*. 2010; 29:163-70.

⁵ Scerri J. Prevalence and characteristics of community carriage of methicillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* in Malta. 2011; B.Sc. thesis.

DIPARTIMENT TAS-SAHHHA



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

L-Uffiċċju tal-Uffiċjal Mediku Ewlieni

Office of the Chief Medical Officer

Guidance on alternatives to fusidic acid cream/ointment use in appropriate dermatological infections can be found in the recently published Community Antibiotic Guidelines at:

https://ehealth.gov.mt/HealthPortal/others/regulatory_councils/national_antibiotic_committee/download_material.aspx

Thank you
For your attention, please

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