



MINISTRY for ENERGY and HEALTH
15, PALAZZO CASTELLANIA, MERCHANTS STREET, VALLETTA, MALTA

DH CIRCULAR No. 49/2015
DH 562/2015

04 February 2015

Attention All: Consultants
Medical Doctors
Pharmacists
Pharmacy Technicians
Nurses

Re: Change in Brand of Theophylline 250mg Prolonged Release Tablets

Theophylline is a xanthine used as a bronchodilator in asthma and stable chronic obstructive pulmonary disease; it is not generally effective in exacerbations of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. Theophylline has a narrow therapeutic index and adverse effects are common even when serum concentrations are in the therapeutic range of 10-20 µg/mL (55-110 micromol/L).

Theophylline 250mg prolonged release tablets are available on the Government Formulary List. Patients suffering from Chronic Asthma, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, and Chronic Respiratory Failure are entitled to this drug. Theophylline can be prescribed by Consultants.

Due to their narrow therapeutic index, theophylline 250mg prolonged release tablets were procured as the branded Nuelin SA®. Currently there is an international shortage of Nuelin SA® and hence another brand had to be procured. Theophylline is now available as Slo-Phylline® 250mg prolonged release capsules.

Patients should be instructed not to chew or suck the capsules or pellets as this destroys the time-release properties. However, for those who experience difficulty in swallowing capsules, the contents of a capsule may be sprinkled on to a spoonful of soft food, e.g. yoghurt.

A new service for the monitoring of plasma theophylline levels as recommended in the product's SPC (Summary of Product Characteristics) has been recently introduced by the Pathology Department.

For your attention please.

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Chief Medical Officer

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