

To: Colette McCreedy
Self Medication Specialist and Unit Lead,
Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency,
3rd Floor,
151 Buckingham Palace Road, London SW1W 9SZ.

From: **Royal Pharmaceutical Society**

CONSULTATION LETTER MLX 382 CONSULTATION ON AVAILABILITY OF DICLOFENAC AS A PHARMACY MEDICINE

This is an extremely complex issue and has caused much debate amongst our members. As a professional leadership body for pharmacists it is not within our remit to evaluate the safety of diclofenac but it is our duty to support pharmacists to supply high risk medicines in an appropriate manner, whatever the route of supply.

We support maintaining wider access to medicines whilst carefully managing the balance between access and risk. Ensuring pharmacists have the opportunity to intervene and advise on certain medicines reduces the risks to the public from those medicines. Our aim is to ensure that pharmacists are supported in their decisions to provide safe evidence-based treatments and to ensure patients get the most from their medicines. We value the P category of medicines as they enable patients to self care with the support of the professional judgement of a pharmacist. In order to ensure patients receive consistent messages and the most effective care we believe that any direct advertising of these drugs to patients should advise that these drugs can only be supplied on the professional advice of a pharmacist.

If the MHRA consider that the safety profile of diclofenac is sufficient to continue to have a Marketing Authorisation (MA) then we will support our members to use their skills and knowledge to ensure appropriate use. If the MHRA consider the safety profile to be a major concern then any suggested restrictions should apply to all supply options.

We acknowledge that there are concerns with the safety of diclofenac and would suggest that a wider range of P category NSAID options would be of benefit to pharmacists. Currently the only alternatives to ibuprofen are diclofenac, which may be inappropriate for many patients' needs or naproxen with only a single licensed indication.

** Our reply may be made freely available.*



David Branford
Chair, English Pharmacy Board



John Cromaty
Chair, Scottish Pharmacy Board



Mair Davies
Chair, Welsh Pharmacy Board

For further information or any queries you may have on our consultation response please contact Heidi Wright at Heidi.wright@rpharms.com, 0207 572 2602