

MEDIA RELEASE

17 March 2016

PAGB response to Paracetamol and Osteoarthritis Study

New research, published in the Lancet, has suggested that paracetamol does not meet the minimum standard of clinical effectiveness in reducing pain or improving physical function in patients with knee and hip osteoarthritis.

The meta-analysis study from the University of Bern, Switzerland, reviewed data from 74 randomised trials published between 1980 and 2015 and compared the effect of 22 different medical treatments including seven NSAIDs, paracetamol and placebo on pain intensity and physical activity.

Despite the headline findings, the study found that all preparations of pain relief, irrespective of dose, improved patients symptoms of pain compared to the placebo.

John Smith, PAGB Chief Executive, comments: "Paracetamol has been on the market for more than 50 years and is a safe and effective treatment for mild to moderate pain relief. National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines recommend paracetamol as a first line pain relief drug for osteoarthritis.

"It is important to note that the authors of this study identified limitations in the quality of analysis, due to the data available. It is unclear whether investigators in some trials were properly blinded and most trials had a high risk of incomplete outcome data bias, therefore further research is needed to draw any firm conclusions.

"We would advise anyone who is concerned about the use of paracetamol to speak to their pharmacist in the first instance. Pharmacists are highly trained healthcare professionals and can provide useful information and advice on over-the-counter painkillers."

- ENDS -

Notes to editors:

PAGB (Proprietary Association of Great Britain) is the UK trade association representing manufacturers of branded over-the-counter medicines, self care medical devices and food supplements.

For further information, please contact Pegasus: Lauren Jones or Amy Simmons
01273 712000 / PAGB@thisispegasus.co.uk