

MEDIA STATEMENT

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PAGB response to case-control study on NSAIDs and heart failure

A nested case-control study, published in The BMJ, carried out by the University of Milano-Bicocca in Italy, has suggested that commonly used prescribed non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), used for treating pain and inflammation, are associated with an increased risk of heart failure.

John Smith, PAGB Chief Executive, said: “This observational study analysed prescription only NSAIDs, used long-term by people with an average age of 77 years to treat conditions such as arthritis. Prescribed NSAIDs contain a higher dosage than medicines available over-the-counter (OTC), which the authors acknowledge would typically be used by younger people, at lower doses and for shorter durations than those prescribed.

“The authors admit that the study has several limitations. The study does not provide data on absolute risk, therefore the probability of these people developing heart failure without the use of NSAIDs is unknown.

“The authors also highlight that the risk of hospital admissions varies between the type of NSAID used and the dose taken. Furthermore, heart failure is often associated with other cardiovascular diseases which could mean that some of the people analysed were already a higher risk of heart failure prior to the study.

“Safety is of paramount importance to the OTC medicines industry. OTC medicines manufacturers provide comprehensive accessible information to support people to make responsible informed decisions.

“If anyone has any concerns about an existing health condition, we would recommend they always speak to a pharmacist before taking any medicine to check for any potential drug interactions or health concerns.”

- ENDS -

Notes to editors:

The nested case-control study carried out by the University of Milano-Bicocca in Italy, looked at real world data from four European countries (Netherlands, Italy, Germany and United Kingdom) and almost 10 million NSAID users without a history of heart failure. A total of 27 individual NSAIDs, including 23 traditional NSAIDs and four selective COX 2 inhibitors, were included in the analysis.

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.

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