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1. Directors of Pharmacy
2. Medical Directors NHS Boards

18 March 2020

Dear Healthcare Professional,

Please see attached letter from Professor Stephen Powis NHS England, Medical Director regarding concerns about the use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications (NSAIDs) in relation to Covid-19 following a statement by the French Health Minister advising against the use of ibuprofen. I would be grateful if you could cascade this information to all relevant colleagues.

Could all Directors of Pharmacy please forward this alert to:-

- Community Pharmacists
- Hospital Pharmacists
- Primary Care Pharmacists

Please could Medical Directors forward this alert to:-

- General Practitioners
- Accident & Emergency Departments
- Directors of Public Health
- Consultants in Communicable Diseases
- Dentists
- Optometrists
- Relevant Clinics
- Chief Executives of NHS Board

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

IRENE FAZAKERLEY
Pharmacy and Medicines Division

NHS MEDICAL DIRECTOR

Novel coronavirus

Message for all clinical staff:

Anti-inflammatory medications

There has been concern about the use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications (NSAIDs) in relation to Covid-19 following a statement by the French Health Minister (a clinician) advising against the use of ibuprofen.

This statement was based on provisional information reported from French care settings which UK authorities have not seen and is, to date, unpublished. There is no current literature on the impact of NSAIDs use in Covid-19.

There appears to be some evidence for SARS 1 that there may be an adverse impact on pneumonia. There is also some literature suggesting NSAIDs may increase complications from simple acute respiratory infections or slow recovery. However the evidence is not conclusive overall.

There appears to be no evidence that NSAIDs increase the chance of acquiring Covid-19. In view of the current lack of clarity the Committee of Human Medicines (an advisory body of MHRA) and NICE have been asked to review the evidence. It is therefore suggested that, in the interim, for patients, who have confirmed Covid-19 or believe they have Covid-19, that they use paracetamol in preference to NSAIDs.

Those currently on NSAIDs for other medical reasons (e.g. arthritis) should not stop them.

This position will be kept under constant review.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'St Powis', enclosed within a thin black rectangular border.

Professor Stephen Powis

NHS England Medical Director