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Australian Prescriber

Media Release **2 June 2004**

Glucosamine: new possibilities for the treatment of osteoarthritis

The results from two recent trials suggest that glucosamine may be the first complementary medicine that can help to slow the progression of arthritis, according to an article in the latest edition of *Australian Prescriber.*

For many years practitioners of complementary medicine have used glucosamine to treat patients with osteoarthritis. The recent trials, undertaken in Belgium and the Czech republic, now provide evidence that glucosamine can help some patients with osteoarthritis of the knee.

Associate Professor Geoff McColl, from the Centre for Rheumatic Diseases and Department of Medicine, Royal Melbourne Hospital, and author of this article, believes these results will change the way doctors think about the treatment of osteoarthritis.

"Doctors could try using glucosamine for their patients with osteoarthritis of the knee, particularly early in the disease when paracetamol or anti-inflammatory medicines would be used.

"Fortunately glucosamine has few side effects, but it may take up to 8 weeks to take effect," Associate Professor McColl said.

Professor McColl recommended that some caution be taken, as there is no guarantee that glucosamine will have the same effect on other joints. Also, the preparations available in Australia may not be identical to the glucosamine used in the trials.

For the complete article visit the *Australian Prescriber* web site www.australianprescriber.com

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