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Glucosamine: studies verify its use for osteoarthritis of the knee

The results from two trials suggest that glucosamine may be the first complementary medicine that can alter the progression of joint damage in osteoarthritis, 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 shows doctors can consider glucosamine as a valid treatment option for osteoarthritis of the knee.

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

"I think it is reasonable to recommend a trial of glucosamine for the majority of patients with osteoarthritis of the knee, particularly early in the disease when you would normally consider paracetamol or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs," Associate Professor McColl said.

"Fortunately oral glucosamine has few adverse effects. Patients need to understand that it may take up to 8 weeks to have an effect," Professor McColl continued.

Professor McColl advised some caution as we cannot be certain 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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Media enquiries: Miriam Fletcher on 02 8217 8700 (bh), 0419 618 365 (media mobile), mfletcher@nps.org.au or visit our website www.nps.org.au

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