

Dear Sirs,

This email is in response to the article in Pulse Magazine on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2010 written by Dr Anthony Toft about the correct dose of thyroxine and the rationale for adding tri-iodothyronine.

Thyroid UK is a registered charity providing information and resources to promote effective diagnosis and appropriate treatment for people with thyroid disorders in the UK.

Whilst we are in agreement with Dr. Toft regarding the importance of adding tri-iodothyronine in some cases, we would argue that in our experience it is considerably more than a handful of patients who complain that levothyroxine alone does not restore them to health.

Dr Toft's suggestion that as long as serum levels of TSH are normal and symptoms persist then the patient should look to their home or work life as the cause of these symptoms is a gross insult and a statement based entirely on speculation. It serves nobody well to blame the patient when the doctor's measures have proved ineffective, and this we would suggest is what largely adds to any stress levels the patient might experience.

In 2008 we carried out a survey and the results of this and the daily contacts from those suffering from thyroid disease suggest that lowering serum TSH to the lower part of the reference range is not always satisfactory in monitoring thyroid disease as symptoms frequently remain.

It was of great concern to many of the respondents to our survey that both tri-iodothyronine and animal thyroid extract were not readily available on the NHS. Dr. Toft and approximately 100 other endocrinologists throughout the country were sent a copy of our survey and offered a full and longer version of it, but no-one responded.

Dr. Toft is quite wrong to suggest that there is "no place for animal thyroid extract." Our survey showed that many thyroid patients are frequently dissatisfied with their diagnosis and treatment, and in particular are very unhappy with levothyroxine alone. 25% of the respondents were taking additional tri-iodothyronine and 29% were taking animal thyroid extract.

There are, in fact, two recent papers showing that Armour thyroid has improved lives of patients.<sup>12</sup>

We feel we must correct Dr Toft's statement, "Although preparations contain both thyroxine and tri-iodothyronine, the hormone content varies between batches.<sup>5</sup>" Animal thyroid extract contains thyroid USP. The raw product has to be tested to ensure that there are no impurities and there are very strict regulations on the amount of hormone in each tablet to ensure that there is no batch to batch differences.

United States Pharmacopeia inform us, "Thyroid Tablets contain not less than 90.0 percent and not more than 110.0 percent of the labeled amounts of levothyroxine and liothyronine, the labeled amounts being 38 µg of levothyroxine and 9 µg of liothyronine for each 65 mg of the labeled content of thyroid."

Henri Knafo, Medical Director of Erfa Canada Inc., states, "Thyroid<sup>R</sup> is the brand name of desiccated thyroid distributed in Canada by ERFA Canada Inc that has been around for more than 30 years and is approved by the Canadian Health Authorities... The analysis done of every production batch reveals that the variations in hormone levels are extremely low from batch to batch and are within acceptable standard limits. Certificates of analysis on every batch are required by Health Canada. After reviewing past batches, I estimate this variation to be less than 5%."

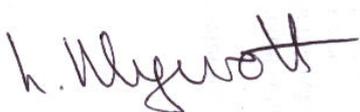
The Rt Hon Andrew Lansley, CBE MP, Secretary of State for Health spoke to an audience of members of National Voices, LINKs and the Patient Association on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2010. In his speech he stated, "So we will disempower the hierarchy, the bureaucracy, the Primary Care Trusts and the Strategic Health Authorities. I don't want the whole of the NHS to wait to hear from me. I want it to listen to patients, and to take responsibility for action. Action to give patients and care-users more control, to exercise choice – from choice of GP to choice of treatment, all the way through to personal budgets."

What thyroid patients want is patient-based treatment designed around their own particular symptoms using whatever thyroid medication is found to work best for them.

#### References:

1. Does synthetic thyroid extract work for everybody? Gautam Das, Shweta Anand & Parijat De – Endocrine Abstracts (2007) 13 P316
2. Improvements in quality of life in hypothyroid patients taking Armour thyroid. D H Lewis, J Kumar, P Goulden & D J Barnes – Endocrine Abstracts (2008) 15 P359

Yours faithfully,



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