

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release



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Hypothyroid Patients being Refused Medication

The results of the Hypothyroid Patient Experiences survey, run by Thyroid UK for the Scottish Government as part of a listening exercise into how hypothyroid patients are being diagnosed and treated, shows that patients with hypothyroidism are being refused alternative medications which many find relieve their symptoms.

The thyroid produces two hormones, thyroxine (T4) and tri-iodothyronine (T3). The standard medication for hypothyroid patients is levothyroxine (T4) but in **up to 16% of patients, this medication does not relieve their symptoms.** Of 4,299 respondents **23% asked for natural desiccated thyroid and 92% were refused** with the main reasons being 'lack of knowledge' (about the medication) and 'no evidence of superiority over levothyroxine'. **27% of the respondents asked for T3 but 72% were refused**, the main reasons being, once again, 'lack of knowledge' (about the medication) and 'no evidence of superiority over levothyroxine'.

The survey also shows **that 4% of the respondents have been taken off some form of thyroid medication which was helping with their symptoms** which Thyroid UK believes is unethical.

In respect of queries from members of the public asking for support, there appears to be a trend in local **Clinical Commissioning Groups refusing to continue to prescribe** an alternative medication for hypothyroidism causing much distress to patients, especially if they have been well on their medication for years. New guidelines are needed in respect of the patients for whom levothyroxine does not relieve symptoms.

About Thyroid UK

*Thyroid UK is a charitable company that provides information and resources to promote **effective** diagnosis and **appropriate** treatment for people with both diagnosed and undiagnosed thyroid disorders in the UK. They also conduct surveys on relevant topics in order to inform certain interested parties of up to date patient opinion.*

For further information contact: Lyn Mynott, Chief Executive, Thyroid UK on 01255 820407 or email: lyn.mynott@thyroiduk.org or go to: <http://www.thyroiduk.org.uk/tuk/TAW/TAW-2015.html>

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Note to the Editor:

Thyroid Awareness Week 2015 is from 17th October to 23rd October.

Hypothyroidism affects 2% of women causing symptoms such as fatigue, weight gain, hair loss and depression.

Our **awareness campaign** this year, **“Let’s Cause a Flutter!”**, is to encourage people to place a temporary tattoo of our logo butterfly or to paint a butterfly (any kind, large or small!) onto any part of their body and then take a photo of it, place it onto Facebook or Twitter and share amongst their family and friends.

We will also be asking people to **write to their MP asking for a debate** on the diagnosis and treatment of hypothyroidism.

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