

Inappropriate Advertising to the Public

(Reviewed September 2016)

During recent months various advertisements in British newspapers and magazines have caught the attention of the British Orthopaedic Association's Patient Liaison Group.

The ones that cause this Group the most concern are those advertising devices or medications for musculo-skeletal conditions that claim to reduce or delay the need for surgery. Some of these advertisements, which appear to be created by the manufacturers, use a named consultant to endorse their product. That consultant may not be practising in the UK and almost certainly will have no knowledge of any individual's clinical needs.

The Patient Liaison Group is deeply concerned that such advertisements may persuade patients to buy inappropriate treatments, and strongly urges all patients to seek the advice of their GP or Specialist before making an investment. Their GP and/or their Specialist will not only know a patient's clinical needs but will also be aware of the many products that are approved for use by the NHS in the UK. It is entirely possible that something similar to that advertised is available on prescription and therefore at greatly reduced, or no cost.

In an ideal world these product promotions would not happen, but while manufacturers are free to run such campaigns, patients need to be aware of their potential to mislead. Patients should also remember that in almost every case, more appropriate treatment may be available from their GP or Specialist.

Written on behalf of the BOA PLG by

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