



# THE SCOTTISH OFFICE

Department of Health

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NHS in Scotland  
Trinity Park House  
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NHS Management Executive  
St. Andrew's House  
Edinburgh EH1 3DG  
7th May 1998  
Telephone 0131-244  
Fax 0131-244 2683

Dear Colleague

## EVIDENCE-BASED HEALTHCARE: COMMON CORE WORK PROGRAMME

### SCOTTISH HEALTH PURCHASING INFORMATION CENTRE

#### REPORT ON THROMBOLYSIS FOR HEART ATTACKS

##### Summary

1. A Report by the Scottish Health Purchasing Information Centre on Thrombolysis for Heart Attacks is attached.
2. The Report examines the use of thrombolytic drugs in the treatment of heart attacks.
3. The Report concludes that:
  - Thrombolysis is a valuable, life-saving, and highly cost-effective treatment, which is under-used in Scotland.
  - The earlier thrombolysis is given, the more effective it is. There is a great opportunity for general practitioners to make a significant contribution to reducing heart disease mortality by giving thrombolysis in the community, although the difficulties in the field should not be underestimated.
  - For treatment in hospital the drug of choice is streptokinase for all patients except those who have had the drug before.
  - For treatment outside hospital the drug of choice for general practice use is at present urokinase, but this may be replaced by new drugs now coming on to the market. At present urokinase does not have a licence for this purpose (though it is licensed for other uses such as DVT and pulmonary embolism) but is used on a named-patient basis.

##### Addressees

##### For action:

General Managers, Health Boards

##### For information:

General Manager, Common Services Agency  
Chief Executive, Health Education Board For Scotland  
General Manager, State Hospitals Board for Scotland  
Executive Director, SCPMDE  
Chief Executives, NHS Trusts

##### Enquiries to:

(For copies of the Report)

Dr Norman Waugh  
Director  
Scottish Health Purchasing Information Centre  
Summerfield House  
2 Eday Road  
ABERDEEN  
AB15 6RE  
Tel : 01224 663 456  
Fax : 01224 404 474

(General Information)

Mr Willie Farquhar  
NHS Management Executive  
Health Gain Division  
Clinical Audit Resource Group  
Room 161A  
St Andrew's House  
EDINBURGH EH1 3DG  
Tel: 0131-244 2750  
Fax: 0131-244 2989

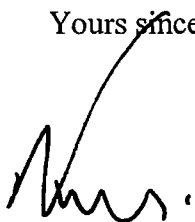
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- Aspirin remains valuable in heart attacks, because it inhibits further clotting in the artery, and should be given in addition to thrombolysis.
- The giving of thrombolysis by General Practitioners should be strongly supported by Health Boards and Cardiologists.

**Action**

5. Health Boards should use this Report when assessing local needs. Health Boards are asked to pass copies of this circular to all General Practitioner practices within their area. Sufficient copies will be provided for this purpose.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin J Woods', with a long, sweeping flourish extending upwards and to the left.

**KEVIN J WOODS**

Director of Strategy and Performance Management