

Embargoed until 1 p.m. Friday 23rd October 2009.

“WE ARE NOT DEPRESSED – WE ARE B₁₂ DEFICIENT”

The propensity for General Practitioners to prescribe anti-depressant medication rather than a harmless vitamin is a serious concern for the Pernicious Anaemia Society. The society receives calls on a daily basis to its helpline from patients with Pernicious Anaemia who have been refused an injection of vitamin B₁₂ because the patient has requested it earlier than three months have lapsed since their last replacement therapy injection.

“By far the most common complaint that we receive from our members relates to the inadequate treatment regime that is routinely prescribed” says Alex Critchlow, Membership Secretary for the society. “And time and time again we hear from members who present themselves to their doctor with all of the symptoms of Pernicious Anaemia and are told that the three-monthly injection regime is adequate for their needs and are offered expensive anti-depressants. We know of twenty two women members who were prescribed anti-depressants for over five years before finding an alternative supply of B₁₂ and then they throw the anti-depressants away”, she says.

The treatment of Pernicious Anaemia changed from an injection once a month in the 1960s to every two months in the 1970s and then to every three months in the 1980s. The society is calling for a Review of the Treatment of Pernicious Anaemia and an Early Day Motion has been tabled calling for such a Review.

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Further Information from M. Hooper. 01656 724163/720187 07545897608

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