



**EMBARGO: THURSDAY 8 MAY – 10.00am EST**

### **Choice magazine say glucosamine supplements of benefit to osteoarthritis sufferers**

The Complementary Healthcare Council welcomes the following verdict for joint supplement usage in this month's *Choice* magazine which states "plenty of people who suffer from osteoarthritis think it's working for them, so it's still worth giving glucosamine and chondroitin a try".

"Consumers in Australia overwhelmingly take glucosamine together with chondroitin and numerous studies point to the efficacy and safety of using both to tackle the discomfort of conditions like osteoarthritis" said Complementary Healthcare Council Executive Director, Dr. Wendy Morrow.

"Research also indicates it is helpful in rebuilding damaged cartilage. Hence its use extends beyond mere pain relief which is a very subjective thing to measure."

One study estimates that the indirect financial cost of osteoarthritis in 2007 was more than \$7 billion (Access Economics 2007). Direct health expenditure on osteoarthritis in Australia was almost \$1.2 billion in 2000–01.<sup>1</sup> This was about 2.3% of the country's total allocated health expenditure for that financial year. A recent study estimated that population growth and inflation would have increased direct health expenditure on osteoarthritis to \$2.3 billion in 2007 (Access Economics 2007).

"We have a government with a stated commitment to preventative healthcare policy. Realistically, this must involve the implementation of strategies which recognise both the benefit to consumers and the sizable economic benefits to be gained if these supplements with their excellent safety record and without the side effects of commonly prescribed prescription medications were taken more widely." Dr Morrow added.

With about 75% of the population using complementary medicines, arthritis, bone, joint and muscle products have the single biggest market share reflecting products like calcium for bone health and glucosamine for the management of osteoarthritis.

Note:

According to a study published in the *Medical Journal of Australia*, "...glucosamine sulfate was found to be cost effective at less than \$5000/QALY (Quality Adjusted Life Year). These supplements had equivalent efficacy to NSAIDs, with no evidence of excess morbidity or mortality"[ Segal N, Day S, Chapman A and Osborne R, *Can we reduce disease burden from osteoarthritis?*, Medical Journal of Australia, vol 180, no. 5, 2004.]

**Media Contact:**

**Nalyni Mohamed – Communications and Media Manager 0408 388 015**

<sup>1</sup> AIHW, *Health expenditure for arthritis and musculoskeletal conditions in Australia*, 2001.

