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Q - Some of the main recommendations contained in the referred NICE guidelines have already been agreed by QIS a few years ago and I wonder how much longer patients suffering from chronic pain in Scotland will have to wait for the right to choose drug-free treatments.

For instance, the use of acupuncture for chronic low back pain since 2008 in response to an enquiry from NHS Highland and the GRIPS Report of 2006 acknowledges that "There is evidence to suggest that some complementary therapies have a positive effect on chronic pain".

When is the final SIGN/QIS guidelines on non-specific LBP expected to be published?

Does it mean that patients suffering from chronic non-specific low back pain need to be referred to England for the moment if they wish to have the treatments outlined in the NICE guidelines (under the NHS)?

A- From 1st April 2011 NHS QIS has been replaced by Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS). I would suggest that you contact HIS or SIGN direct (details below) for information on when the SIGN guideline on Chronic Pain will be available. Alternatively if you would like to be involved with the SIGN guideline, I suggest you contact Karen Graham, Patient Implementation Officer, 0131 623 4723.

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With regard to the provision of services, NHS Boards in Scotland are responsible for providing NHS services in accordance with national and local priorities and in line with the health needs of the population. Decisions regarding the care of individual patients are a matter of professional judgement for the clinician responsible for the patient's care. We recognise that complementary and alternative therapies may