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Overview

This final newsletter for 2013 provides updated guidance on the supply of Norlevo and advice on the development and maintenance of pharmacy Standard Operating Procedures. There is also an update on the work of the National Forum, which is tasked with overseeing the move to a new integrated programme of undergraduate pharmacy education in Ireland, an overview of the Medicines Management Forum which took place in November and CPD opportunities which may be of interest.



Following the recent recruitment process, the PSI is delighted to welcome Dr. Catriona Bradley to the role of Executive Director of the Irish Institute of Pharmacy. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank all tutor pharmacists for their continued work and valuable contribution to the development of our future pharmacists.

The PSI wishes you and your family a safe and peaceful holiday season.

(Photo: At the recent National Medicines Forum: Dr Michael Shannon and Dr Helen Flint, Office of the Nursing and Midwifery Services Director at the HSE, PSI Registrar Marita Kinsella and PSI President Eoghan Hanly.)

Updated Guidance on the Supply of Norlevo®

Important new information has emerged on the clinical efficacy of the emergency hormonal contraceptive, Levonorgestrel 1.5mg, marketed in Ireland as the non-prescription product Norlevo® 1.5mg tablets. In clinical trials, contraceptive efficacy was reduced in women weighing 75kg (11st, 11lb) or more, and levonorgestrel was not effective in women who weighed more than 80kg (12st, 8lb). Patients should be informed of this change and women over 75kg should be referred to their doctor or family planning clinic for alternative emergency contraception.

The Summary of Product Characteristics for Norlevo® has been amended to include this information and is available on the [IMB website](#). In light of this information, PSI guidance on the supply of this product to patients has been updated and is [available here](#).

Pharmacists should review and amend the policies and procedures of the pharmacy in light of this new information, to include consideration of the patient's weight as part of their overall assessment of the appropriateness of supply of this product.

PSI Advises Vigilance on Pseudoephedrine

In recent weeks the PSI has again received concerns about unusual or suspicious requests for pseudoephedrine containing medicines, which, as you are aware, can be used in the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine or

'crystal meth', a dangerous and highly addictive drug. The following points may be useful to pharmacists in dealing with this matter:

- Consideration should be given to the location and storage of these medicines, to ensure that they are under the personal control and supervision of the pharmacist. This is both to ensure that the supply of any of these medicines can be adequately supervised by the pharmacist and also to minimise the risk of theft of these products.
- Requests for these products should be referred to the pharmacist, particularly if the request might appear to suggest that it is not for a genuine therapeutic reason – for example, requests for multiple packs or frequent requests by the same person.
- In dealing with requests where they may have suspicions, pharmacists should use their professional judgement and discretion in deciding whether a genuine clinical need exists and that the medicine is appropriate for the patient. Pharmacists will understand that they can refuse to supply a medicine where, in their professional opinion, such supply is not appropriate.
- Pharmacy staff should be made aware of the issue and asked to be vigilant.
- Your local Gardai should be advised if you suspect diversion of these medicines for illegal purposes.

Inspectors' Advice on Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

The effective implementation of SOPs in the pharmacy is one of the ways in which pharmacy owners, Superintendent and Supervising Pharmacists can demonstrate their control over the management and administration of the pharmacy as well as assisting staff in understanding and adhering to safe and efficient practices. The PSI requires that SOPs be produced during an inspection. To assist in preparing your SOPs, PSI Inspectors have compiled [this advice on the development and maintenance of SOPs](#).

Interim Report of the National Forum

An interim report of the activities of the National Forum for Pharmacy Education and Accreditation is now available to view on the [National Forum page of the PSI website](#). The National Forum is tasked with advising and assisting the Council of the PSI in its oversight of the development and ongoing delivery of the new five year integrated programme of pharmacy, education, training and assessment. The interim report was accepted and noted by the PSI Council at its most recent meeting.

Medicines Management Forum

A second Medicines Management Forum was successfully held in late November jointly hosted by the PSI, the HSE Medication Management Programme and the Office of the Nursing and Midwifery Services Director at the HSE. The theme of the multi-disciplinary forum was 'Medicines Management - the safe, effective and cost-effective use of medicines to improve patient care' and presentations on the day included updates on the HSE National Medicines Management Programme, enhancing prescribing in primary care, medicines adherence and anticoagulation monitoring service in community pharmacy. Access to presentations from the day will be made available shortly on the PSI website.

National MRSA Clinical Guidelines Launched

On 11th December the Minister for Health, Dr James Reilly TD, launched the Second National Clinical Guideline: Prevention and Control of Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA). This guideline was quality assured

by the National Clinical Effectiveness Committee (NCEC).

This National Clinical Guideline provides practical guidance for all healthcare staff on prevention and control measures for MRSA to improve patient care, minimise patient morbidity and mortality and to help contain healthcare costs. At the launch of the guideline, Prof. Hilary Humphreys outlined how many control measures are generic and every healthcare professional has a role e.g. hand hygiene/standard precautions, minimise overcrowding and understaffing, antibiotic stewardship, support for infection prevention and control teams. The full guideline, summary version and presentation from the launch are available on the [Patient Safety First](#) and [Department of Health websites](#).

Upcoming CPD Opportunities

NCSS Training for Pharmacists

Following on from a notice in the October newsletter, the National Cancer Screening Service (NCSS) will run one day training events specifically for pharmacists next February and March. These will ensure understanding of the screening services offered through the National Cancer Control Programme, cover early detection symptoms and public engagement messages for access to screening and referral. For detailed programme information, training locations and to book your free training place see contact details below:

11th February in Limerick - email [Fiona Treacy](#) or 061 406560

12th February in Cork and **25th March in Dublin** - email [Lynn Swinburne](#) or 087 6876928

CPD at University College Cork

The School of Pharmacy at University College Cork are offering a number of flexible CPD modules in Spring 2014. Courses are outlined below and for full programme details and bookings visit the [UCC School of Pharmacy website](#) or call 021 4901661.

Commencing 11 February 2014: **Coagulation Management** (2 day workshop)

Commencing 25 February 2014: **Pharmacy and Public Health** (by teleconference)

Commencing 30 April 2014: **Asthma** (by teleconference)

Training days with Croí in Galway

Croí will be running a number of short training courses in Galway in Spring 2014. These are aimed specifically at supporting healthcare professionals to confidently and successfully help people make complex lifestyle changes, providing techniques and communication tools to assist in dealing with everyday patient interactions. See www.croi.ie/shortcourses for details.

Pharmacy Benevolent Fund Draw

The Pharmacy Benevolent Fund is now gratefully accepting subscriptions to its annual confined draws for 2014. This facilitates the Fund's support of pharmacists and their families who are experiencing difficult times. The annual draw form and further information is available on the [Pharmacy Benevolent Fund website](#).

PSI Recruitment

The PSI is seeking to recruit a **Specialist in Education** on a three year contract basis. Further details can be found on the [PSI website](#). **The closing date for applications is Friday 17th January 2014 at 5:00pm.**

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