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Welcome message

Dear Pharmacist,

This is the first of a new regular newsletter from the PSI to registered pharmacists. Over the past two years, the PSI has moved to communicating more by email and through its redeveloped website, as this is a more timely, efficient and cost-effective way of communicating with the profession on important and urgent issues.

One of the main feedbacks from the profession was a preference that we collate and present non-urgent information for pharmacists into a regular email/newsletter, rather than a series of individual emails, which would also make information more easily retrievable. These newsletters will be archived on the PSI website.

Your feedback is welcome at info@thepsi.ie.

In 2012 the PSI will also be publishing a quarterly corporate newsletter to all stakeholders including the profession.

PSI Guidance on Methadone Issued

The PSI Council has this month approved [Guidance for Pharmacists on the Safe Supply of Methadone](#) and this document is now available to download from the PSI website.

The purpose of this guidance is to remind and clarify to pharmacists involved in the supply of methadone, and the provision of associated services to patients, of the requirements which must be fulfilled in order to ensure compliance with legal and professional obligations.

The guidance addresses issues including the legal and Code of Conduct considerations relating to the supply of methadone, including the associated prescription requirements, patient counselling and multidisciplinary patient care considerations.

All pharmacists are advised to familiarise themselves with the guidance. Superintendent and supervising pharmacists are advised to review their policies and procedures in light of the guidance and incorporate the relevant elements of the guidance in their updated policies and procedures.

Queries in relation to this guidance or any related matter can be sent to the PSI in writing and preferably by email to info@thepsi.ie.

High Tech Reminder

The PSI would like to highlight to all pharmacists the importance of ensuring compliance with existing guidance and requirements on the management of High Tech medicines. The PSI previously issued [guidance in 2008 which is available on the PSI website](#) which highlights that this is a **patient-specific pharmaceutical care and treatment programme**.

Pharmacists are particularly reminded to be cognisant of the requirement to have a **valid prescription** for the dispensing of High Tech medicines and the importance of good planning and management for repeat prescribing. The maximum validity period for any prescription, including High Tech prescriptions, is six months from date of issue, when so indicated. The PSI understands that the term 'lifelong therapy', which has previously been included in these prescriptions and which may have caused some confusion, is to be removed.

Good communication between the various members of the multidisciplinary team caring for these patients should ensure that patients, prescribers and pharmacists are all aware of the patient's care plan and the arrangements for regular therapeutic reviews and appointments and for issuing of further prescriptions (either by the initiating consultant or the patient's GP).

Therefore, for patients on a six-monthly prescription, pharmacists should check in advance of the final dispensing, with either the patient or the prescriber, what the arrangement is for the issuing of a new prescription and whether the patient needs to be reviewed by the initiating consultant prior to this prescription being issued.

Pharmacists involved in providing care and treatment to patients under the High Tech programme are also reminded of the need to ensure that they maintain their clinical and professional knowledge in respect of the specific medicinal products, and the conditions which they are used to treat, and to maintain vigilance around adverse drug reactions, particularly as many of these medicines are novel and/or potentially toxic.

The PSI has been liaising with the HSE and the Department of Health on a number of issues in relation to the management of High Tech medicines and understands that further improvements to the management of these patients and medicines are being actively considered.

Superintendent Pharmacist Film

Earlier this year the PSI/CCPE taskforce held a series of educational meetings with superintendent pharmacists, to look at their role and responsibilities and to dialogue over continuing developments and supports for pharmacists carrying out this role.

To build on this activity, the PSI has produced a short film covering the role and responsibilities of the superintendent pharmacist which is intended to be helpful not only to superintendents but also to inform other pharmacists, pharmacy owners and staff of the importance of this pivotal role.

The film, which is divided into four short sections for easier downloading and viewing, is now available to view and download from PSI website.

New CD Registers/Changes to PSI supply of booklets

An updated version of the Register of Controlled Drugs (CDs) and a new Controlled Drugs Destruction Record Book have been developed and will be distributed free-of-charge to all registered pharmacies this month. A Duty Register for 2012 will also be distributed to all pharmacies.

The updated CD register and CD destruction record book are designed to facilitate compliance with the requirements of the PSI's *Guidelines on the Sourcing, Storage and Disposal of Medicinal Products within a Retail Pharmacy Business* which were issued earlier in 2011.

The new CD register includes information on the legislative requirements, and a section to record the witnessed destruction of CD2 drugs, as well as their receipt and supply. As the CD register may only be used for the specific purposes in the legislation, a separate CD destruction record book has been developed for recording the destruction of Schedule 3, 4 and 'patient returned' schedule 2, 3 and 4 controlled drugs.

Lists of authorised products of **CD 2 and 3 drugs known to be on the Irish market as of December 2010** also **CD 4 drugs known to be on the Irish market as of December 2010** have been made available by the IMB and are available at the following link on the PSI website for your information and ease of reference. Please note that this is the most up-to-date collated list available, specific products should be checked on the IMB website www.imb.ie for the most current information.

As the PSI is no longer selling registers or other booklets to pharmacies, the HSE warfarin booklets which were previously supplied can now, from 01 January 2012, be ordered directly from KPW Print in Ballinasloe, Co Galway. Contact Darran Finnerty or Lisa Kinsella in KPW at darran@kpw.ie or lisa@kpw.ie or by telephone on 090 9631843/8 for further information. In early 2012, the PSI will send a batch of steroid and MAOI cards to all pharmacies free-of-charge and clarify regarding future sources of these.

Revised BNF Wording on Cautionary Labels/Aspirin Warning

The British National Formulary (BNF) 61 (March 2011) and BNF 62 (Sept 2011) introduced a revised set of cautionary and advisory labels for prescribed medicines, following user-testing of the existing labels with patients. The new warning labels are now given in Appendix 3 of the BNF 62 (Sept 2011).

Pharmacists in Ireland will be aware that Schedule 5 of the Medicinal Products

(Prescription and Control of Supply) Regulations 2003, as amended, contains cautionary and warning notices for dispensed medicinal products. These are the statements currently recommended for use by pharmacists for labelling dispensed medicinal products and were in line with the original BNF statements.

The **PSI now recommends that pharmacists in Ireland use the updated labels as contained in the BNF 62** (Sept 2011). The PSI will be liaising with the pharmacy software providers and the product file unit of the IPU to facilitate the implementation of the updated labels in pharmacy dispensaries.

Aspirin Warning

It has come to the attention of the PSI that a number of centrally authorised medicinal products containing acetylsalicylic acid do not have reference to the product containing 'aspirin' in the associated product or patient information.

One example of such a product is DuoPlavin®, a combination medicine containing clopidogrel and acetylsalicylic acid. The product labelling and patient information leaflet, including information on precautions for use and allergies for this product, do not refer to the product containing 'aspirin'.

As there is a perceived risk to patients, especially those who may be allergic to aspirin products, the PSI requests pharmacists to ensure that a warning label 'contains aspirin' be included on the dispensing of all such medicines, as well as providing patient information and counselling verbally on appropriate use at the time of supply.

The PSI is also liaising with the relevant software providers regarding this labelling issue.

Tutor Pharmacists for 2012/2013

The PSI is inviting applications from pharmacists interested in being a tutor pharmacist for the academic year 2012/2013.

This invitation is for all registered pharmacists who have practised as a pharmacist for a minimum of three years (and at least one year in their current field of practice) and includes all previous tutor pharmacists and those who wish to apply to be recognised as a new tutor in line with the minimum criteria set down by Council of the PSI. It is intended that a list of tutor pharmacists will be circulated to current fourth year pharmacy students in the three schools in January 2012, so applications should be made if possible by **Friday, 17 January 2012**.

As well as acting as tutor for the pharmacy interns undergoing the National Pharmacy Internship Programme (NPIP), tutor pharmacists are also required every year to supervise adaptation periods of third country qualified pharmacists. These are applicants who hold pharmacy qualifications obtained in a country outside of EU/EEA who are seeking to have their qualification recognised by the PSI as a pre-requisite for eligibility to apply for registration in Ireland.

All tutors have access to a support infrastructure that includes access to the RCSI online virtual campus and libraries, as well as a help desk and an online Tutor Training and Accreditation Programme.

Further information about becoming a tutor and the NPIP are available on the PSI website under the Education section. [The application form for tutors for the 2012/2013 academic year is available on the PSI website.](#)

If you would prefer a hard copy of the application form to be posted to you or if you have any queries, please contact Hugh Carroll in the RCSI on (01) 402 2774 or email mpharm@rcsi.ie.

IMB Drug Safety Newsletter December 2011

The Irish Medicines Board (IMB) has published its December 2011 Drug Safety Newsletter, which is available on the [IMB website](#).

This edition contains safety updates regarding:

- domperidone and the risk of cardiac disorders
- citalopram and escitalopram and the risk of QT interval prolongation
- Strattera (atomoxetine) and effects on blood pressure and heart rate
- Pradaxa (dabigatran etexilate) and recommendations for assessment of renal function and monitoring in the elderly

Pharmacists should also be aware of the PSI's recent guidance on the supply of

domperidone, in light of the new safety information.
This guidance is available on the PSI website.

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Published by PSI

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