

## Medicines Safety Update – sharing learning across community pharmacy in Northern Ireland

In a recent edition of “Medicines Safety Matters” the Medicines Governance Team (MGT) highlighted some of the recognised risks associated with removing medicines from their original packaging and inserting them into an MDS, <http://www.medicinesgovernance.hscni.net/primary-care/newsletters/medicines-safety-matters-community-pharmacists/>

A MDS is often unable to accommodate specific times for administration. For example when medicines must be taken with, after or before food, PRNs and doses which vary according to response.

The MDS database <http://www.ukmi.nhs.uk/applications/mca/> advises that the bisphosphonates Risedronate and Alendronic Acid are not suitable for MDS due to the associated administration requirements. However, the MGT have been made aware that in some cases inappropriate dispensing options are being used for patients who use an MDS and are on a bisphosphonate. For example:

- Bisphosphonate is dispensed in the same blister as other morning medicines. It has to be picked out by the patient, to administer at a separate time so as to comply with the administration requirements.
- Bisphosphonate is dispensed in a separate blister, usually the lunchtime blister, but patient must know it is actually for morning administration.

### Action for community pharmacists:

- **Ensure bisphosphonates (risedronate and alendronic acid) are not added to an MDS.**
- **Where an MDS is required, ensure patients/carers are aware which medicines are dispensed separately, and not included in, the MDS.**
- **Ensure patients/carers are aware of the special administration requirement of these drugs.**

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Welcome to the first edition of “PRN” the publication produced by the HSCB Pharmaceutical Services Team specifically for community pharmacists and pharmacy staff. This Newsletter will include features on the latest pharmacy campaigns and initiatives, local pharmacy news and events, as well as relevant medicines governance information and pharmacy guidance. If you would like to submit an article to PRN or have any comments or ideas, please contact any member of the Pharmaceutical Services Team (contact details at end of this newsletter).

#### In this edition of PRN:

- Retention of Patient Records
- European Antibiotic Awareness Day 2015
- Flu vaccination clinics for community pharmacy staff
- Lithium Support Service provided by Community Pharmacists
- **Medicine Governance Update:** bisphosphonates and MDS
- Contact details for members of the Pharmaceutical Services Team

#### Retention of Patient Records

The HSCB has received a number of enquiries from community pharmacists, seeking advice on the time period records relating to pharmacy services should be retained.

**Good Management Good Records (GMGR)** has been published by DHSSPS as a guide to the required standards of practice in the management of records for those who work within or under contract to Health and Social Care (HSC) i.e. independent contractors including pharmacists. It is based on professional best practice and reflects the current legal requirements. Robust records management procedures are required to meet the requirements set out under the [Data Protection Act 1998](#) (DPA 1998), the [Freedom of Information Act 2000](#) (FOI Act 2000) and the [Environmental Information Regulations 2004](#) (EIR 2004).

Information on DHSSPS website <http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/gmgr-schedule-m> categorises pharmacy records into 3 sections. Each section charts record types, minimum retention periods, relevant legislation/derivation and any final actions.

## European Antibiotics Awareness Day - November 18

Rising levels of antibiotic-resistant bacteria is a major issue and highlighted every year on the 18<sup>th</sup> November by European Antibiotic Awareness Day. There were 1,910,454 prescriptions dispensed for antibiotics across NI in 2014 – that's more than one per head of the population!



You can support your local GP in reducing the demand for antibiotics from the public this winter by spreading some key messages in the pharmacy:

- **Antibiotics will not work on ANY cold, and most coughs, sore throats or earache. Generally healthy people can fight these infections without antibiotics**
- OTC medications can help to relieve your symptoms; unnecessary antibiotics may make you feel worse because of side-effects like diarrhoea.
- The more we use antibiotics, the greater the chance that bacteria will become resistant to them so that they no longer work on our infections.
- Drug resistant infections don't just affect you, they can spread to other people in close contact with you (and even pets!) and are very difficult to treat.



You can pledge to become an Antibiotic Guardian by selecting a simple action you can take which will protect our antibiotics at <https://antibioticguardian.com/>

Forward your acknowledgement email to [hsc.amrs@hscni.net](mailto:hsc.amrs@hscni.net) and you could be in with a **chance of winning a brand new iPad Mini!**

## Pharmacy Staff – Catch the vaccine not the flu!

Protect yourself, your family and your patients by getting your annual flu vaccine. It is available free of charge to community pharmacy staff through your local Trust occupational health scheme. **Details of clinics in your area are available at the BSO website: [www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/2570.htm](http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/2570.htm) .**

Clinics are drop-in unless otherwise stated (appointment not needed). Please bring along ID that identifies you as a community pharmacy staff member or if not available bring along a copy of the form from the website.

## Lithium Support Services provided by Community Pharmacists

During the recent Mental Health Medicines pilot projects conducted in the Southern LCG and South Belfast ICP areas, community pharmacists provided Lithium Support Services (LSS) to patients. They provided information on medicines adherence, adverse reactions and toxicity, interactions, precautions and the importance of recommended regular blood monitoring. The work was published on the NICE Shared learning database and commended by the Chief Medical Officer NI: [http://www.nice.org.uk/savingsandproductivityandlocalpracticeresource?ci=http://search.nice.org.uk/sl\\_838](http://www.nice.org.uk/savingsandproductivityandlocalpracticeresource?ci=http://search.nice.org.uk/sl_838)

This initiative followed a National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA) patient safety alert (2009) that suggested lithium therapy is an error-prone process. Both NPSA and NICE guidance on Bipolar disorder (CG185) state that “healthcare professionals must ensure that patients are given information about their treatment”.

The Choice and Medication website, designed to support healthcare staff and patients, was commissioned by HSCB as a resource for the LSS. It is available to all NI residents.



Learn more about mental health medicines and conditions on the Choice and Medication website <http://www.choiceandmedication.org/hscni/>

It has up to date mental health medicines information and a range of information on mental health conditions. It is suitable for both healthcare professionals and patients. All the materials have the HSCB logo but the information is collated and maintained on a central UK server. Useful features of the site include:

- Patient information leaflets suitable for 3 different levels of reading ability for all mental health medicines <http://www.choiceandmedication.org/hscni/pages/printableleaflets/>
- Sections (handy charts, handy fact sheets) which may be useful for pharmacists providing specialist services e.g. supervised dispensing <http://www.choiceandmedication.org/hscni/pdf/postermethadonesafety.pdf>
- Comparison charts for groups of medicines indicated for specific conditions e.g. depression <http://www.choiceandmedication.org/hscni/pdf/handychartdepression.pdf>
- Handy histories which could be used to help patients monitor their own progress with mental health medicines <http://www.choiceandmedication.org/silo/documents/handy-history.pdf>

Pharmacists are encouraged to advertise the website. Posters and business cards to advertise the site were sent to all GP practices and community pharmacies in NI; more are available from HSCB staff.