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Welcome message

Dear Pharmacist,

Over the past weeks there have been a few major changes here at the PSI. The former Registrar and CEO Dr Ambrose McLoughlin has been appointed Secretary General of the Department of Health by the government and resigned his position at the PSI. The Council has appointed Ciara McGoldrick, PSI's Head of Fitness to Practise and Legal Affairs, as Acting Registrar, pending a recruitment process for a permanent replacement.

The PSI has also recently moved offices and is no longer based in Shrewsbury Road. We will be temporarily based at: Block A, 11-12 Hogan Place, Grand Canal Street, Dublin 2 while our new headquarters in Fenian Street is being refurbished.

Please note that our new postal address will be: PSI House, Fenian Street, Dublin 2. Our telephone numbers and email addresses will remain the same.

Emergency Contraception Guidance Update

Pharmacists may be aware that a new prescription-only emergency contraception product containing ulipristal acetate (ellaOne) was launched this month in Ireland. Therefore pharmacists should ensure that relevant policy or patient consultation documents for emergency contraception are updated to reflect this fact. The PSI's interim guidance on supply of non-prescription Norlevo 1.5mg tablets issued February 2011 states that: *"where appropriate to the patient circumstances, the pharmacist should discuss with the patient that an alternative method of emergency contraception may be available upon referral to a medical practitioner."* Therefore patients should be made aware of this new option during a consultation.

Pharmacists may find the clinical [guidance published by the Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare of the Royal College of Obstetrics and Gynaecologists](#) to be a useful resource.

The HSE Crisis Pregnancy Programme, in partnership with the Irish Pharmacy Union, will be launching a new public health awareness campaign on emergency hormonal contraception (EHC) in the coming weeks. This campaign aims to increase public knowledge about the availability of EHC, including that EHC is now available directly from pharmacists following a private consultation. Information packs including public information leaflets and pharmacy stickers and posters will be delivered to pharmacies around the country shortly. The PSI is supportive of this campaign and the aim to further develop the role of pharmacists in public health promotion and protection. Further information is available at www.thinkcontraception.ie

NCCP Advice on home test PSA kits

The National Cancer Control Programme (NCCP) has made the PSI aware of its concerns in relation to the sale of home testing Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) kits. Pharmacists will be aware of the NCCP Prostate Cancer GP Referral Guidelines which outline best clinical practice in relation to PSA testing.

These Guidelines state:

- PSA testing of asymptomatic men or PSA screening is not national policy
- Prostate assessment consists of a **digital rectal examination (DRE) and a PSA test**
- PSA testing should only be carried out after full advice and provision of information
- All men with an abnormal DRE should be referred to a urologist regardless of PSA results

- Patients presenting with symptoms or signs suspicious of prostate cancer should be referred for rapid access prostate assessment

It is therefore clear from the guidelines that offering home testing PSA kits is not consistent with best practice and the NCCP guidelines. PSA tests may show normal levels even in men with prostate cancer or raised levels in men who do not have prostate cancer, therefore an appropriate assessment must include a DRE and full counselling and information.

Therefore the PSI wishes to advise pharmacists that offering home testing of PSA levels is not appropriate, as it is not in line with the National Cancer Control Programme policy. Pharmacists and pharmacies are important sources of accurate and up-to-date information and advice for members of the public, so it is important that all pharmacists and pharmacy staff who may be dealing with queries from the public in relation to prostate cancer are familiar with the guidelines and current best practice.

Further information about the work of the NCCP is available at www.cancercontrol.hse.ie. Printed copies of their patient information booklet can be ordered by contacting the NCCP on (01) 8287100.

CPD: Consultation Skills; Cancer Screening; MSc Clinical Pharmacy

Consultation Skills

The one-day training course **Consultation Skills for Pharmacists**, an initiative of the PSI/ICCPE taskforce, will be running on Saturday June 9th and Sunday June 10th at CityWest hotel. This course aims to build on pharmacists' existing skills, confidence and understanding in engaging patients in effective consultations.

As more medicines are moved to "pharmacist supply" and more clinical services introduced in pharmacies, it is important that pharmacists maintain and develop their competency and confidence in relation to patient consultations and communicating with patients.

Please note that as places are limited, early booking for this course is essential.

Queries regarding this course should be sent to the ICCPE at info@iccpe.ie or on 01 2196000.

Cancer Screening and Early Detection

One-day workshops for pharmacists, developed by the National Cancer Screening Service (NCSS) and the National Cancer Control Programme (NCCP), on cancer screening and early detection will be held in Dublin in June. This workshop covers issues around early detection of breast, cervical, prostate, skin and colorectal cancer and the role of the pharmacist in promoting cancer screening.

The workshop, which is free, will be held on Wednesday 13th and Tuesday 19th June (more places available on the 19th) at the NCSS offices at Kings Inns House (4th floor), 200 Parnell St., Dublin 1. The workshop runs from 9.30am to 4.00pm, lunch and refreshments provided. Further information or to book a place, please contact lynn.swinburne@cancerscreening.ie

UCC MSc in Clinical Pharmacy

The School of Pharmacy, University College Cork is currently offering an MSc in Clinical Pharmacy is a two year part-time distance learning Masters Degree offered by. The course is structured to provide specialist training to enable pharmacists extend their professional role within the evolving clinical healthcare system.

Applications are now being accepted from registered pharmacists for this course which commences in September 2012. Applicants must apply online at www.pac.ie/ucc. Full details of the applicant procedure are available on this website.

The closing date for applications is Friday 27th July 2012.

Applicants must hold a primary pharmacy degree and ideally, should have a minimum of two years' practical experience. Applicants must also be registered pharmacists or be eligible to register in Ireland at the time of application.

Further information about this course is available [please click here](#).

or by contacting the School of Pharmacy in UCC by telephone on (00 353 21) 4901662 or by email to pharmacy@ucc.ie or to Dr Teresa Barbosa course co-ordinator at t.barbosa@ucc.ie

PSI Inspectors Advice on 'Emergency Supply'

The 'emergency supply' provisions of Regulation 8 of the Medicinal Products (Prescription and Control of Supply) Regulations 2003 (as amended) permit pharmacists, in emergency circumstances, to supply certain prescription only medicines without a prescription. Emergency supply can be carried out at the request of a patient or at the request of a prescriber.

When supplying a medicine under these provisions, the pharmacist must be satisfied that there is an immediate need for the medicine to be supplied and that it is impracticable to obtain a prescription without undue delay. It is important that pharmacists are aware of the potential risks, both to the safety and welfare of patients and in the context of their own liability, where medicines are supplied in the absence of an original prescription. Pharmacists should also be aware of their own professional responsibilities as well as those of prescribers.

Emergency Supply at the Request of a Patient

Where the emergency supply is made at the request of a patient, the pharmacist must interview the patient and satisfy themselves that:

- There is an immediate need for the medicine
- It is not practicable to obtain the prescription without undue delay
- The treatment has been prescribed for the patient on a previous occasion
- They can safely specify the dose of the medicine for the patient

When assessing the appropriateness of supplying a medicine at the request of a patient, please consider:

1. The patient has not been reviewed or assessed by a prescriber
2. The pharmacist is reliant on information provided by the patient in the course of their decision making process
3. The potential consequences for the patient if an inappropriate medicine is supplied
4. The potential consequences for the patient if the medicine is not supplied
5. Should the pharmacist decide to supply the medicine, that this supply is made without the prior knowledge or approval of the prescriber
6. Doctor on call services are available nationwide and patients may be referred to these services, if appropriate

Please remember:

- No more than a 5 day supply of the medicine may be made, with the exception of:
 - aerosols, creams or ointments, where the smallest available size may be supplied,
 - the oral contraceptive pill, where a full cycle may be supplied or
 - an antibiotic where the smallest quantity that will provide a complete course may be supplied.
- To include the words 'Emergency Supply' on the label of the dispensed medicine
- To document the reason for the emergency supply in the prescription register (daily audit report) and the Patient Medication Record (PMR)
- To document the name and address of the previous pharmacy which dispensed the medicine (where different to the pharmacy making the supply) in the prescription register (daily audit report) and PMR

Emergency Supply at the Request of a Prescriber

Where the emergency supply is made at the request of a prescriber (medical practitioner or dentist) the pharmacist must be satisfied that:

- The prescriber is, by reason of an emergency, not in a position to provide the prescription immediately

- The prescriber undertakes to provide the prescription within 72 hours

Please remember

- The medicine must be supplied in accordance with the directions of the practitioner
- To keep a record that the supply was made at the emergency request of a prescriber
- To document the date the original prescription was received from the prescriber into the prescription register (daily audit report).

Controlled Dugs

Controlled drugs may never be supplied under the emergency provisions, whether at the request of a patient or a prescriber. This includes Schedule 2 (e.g. morphine), Schedule 3 (e.g. temazepam) and Schedule 4 (e.g. diazepam) controlled drugs. The supply of controlled drugs is tightly controlled by the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 1988 (as amended) due to the dangerous nature of these medicines, their potential for abuse and the associated risks to patients and the public if they are supplied inappropriately.

Patients' Best Interests

It is in patients' best interests that the emergency supply provisions are reserved for genuine emergency circumstances only. Pharmacists must ensure that complacency surrounding these provisions does not occur and that it is not employed on a regular and routine basis. The importance of regular attendance and consultation with the prescriber should be communicated to patients.

CD Prescriptions – vigilance required

The PSI occasionally receives information from pharmacists regarding suspected forged prescriptions, usually for controlled drugs. In recent weeks this has included, for example, information from the Coombe Women and Infants Hospital of reports of prescriptions written on Coombe headed paper for Cyclimorph preparations being presented in community pharmacies, even though this drug is not prescribed within the hospital.

This is an issue which requires constant vigilance by pharmacists when assessing and dispensing prescriptions for controlled drugs. Pharmacists must satisfy themselves as to the authenticity of the particular prescription, that it was written by a person authorised to do so and that this person did in fact write the prescription, which often requires seeking confirmation from a prescriber before dispensing. While the PSI is not in a position to circulate information about all the reports of suspected forged prescriptions it receives, we recommend that the following actions are taken where such circumstances arise:

- Contacting An Garda Síochána to inform them as appropriate about the particular incident or suspicion
- Contacting the HSE as they may be in a position to inform other pharmacists or professionals in the area as appropriate
- Contacting other pharmacies within your catchment area to inform them of the issue or using local 'cascade' systems where these are in place.

Medicine Price Listing Clarification

The PSI has recently received queries from pharmacists as to whether factual information regarding the prices of prescription medicines may be lawfully displayed. The advertising of prescription only medicines to the general public is not permitted by the Medicinal Products (Control of Advertising) Regulations 2007; however these regulations do not apply to factual informative announcements, including price lists, provided they include no product claims (i.e. any information should just include the name of the product, its pharmaceutical form and strength, and its price).

The display of such information must not imply that the prescription-only products concerned are available without the presentation of a prescription (or that the emergency supply arrangements would be availed of for the purposes of making a

supply). The display should not compare prices of different products, or offer discounts for patients that might encourage them to obtain larger quantities of prescription only medicines than are needed, or than have been prescribed for them. It is the PSI's view that if any form of a price comparison were to be included as part of the display, the information would cease to be purely factual and that it would then constitute advertising which would not be permitted. In addition, any information displayed should not draw any invidious distinction between the pharmacy and any other pharmacy.

PSI Public Consultation: Premises & Equipment Guidelines

The PSI will shortly be issuing for public consultation draft guidelines to facilitate compliance with requirements in the Regulation of Retail Pharmacy Businesses Regulations 2008 regarding Premises and Equipment.

These guidelines are intended to assist pharmacy owners (those applying to open a pharmacy and owners of existing pharmacies), as well as superintendent, supervising and other pharmacists, in ensuring that their premises meet required standards, and to assist with planning for changes in their premises such as refurbishments, and that equipment used for the delivery of pharmacy services is fit for purpose and well maintained

The draft guidelines will be sent by email to pharmacists and other stakeholders, and will also be available to view on the PSI website. Comments in writing on the draft guidelines will be welcome to the PSI at consultation@thepsi.ie or by post to PSI House, Fenian Street, Dublin 2.

Please note that submissions made to the PSI during its public consultations are subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Acts 1997-2003. Following this consultation process and consideration and analysis of submissions received, the draft guidelines will be reviewed for submission to Council for its approval. Council will have regard to all submissions when making its decision. The PSI will publish on its website a collated version of all written comments received in response to the public consultation together with the PSI's response to those comments.

Palliative Meds Info Newsletter

Palliative Meds Info, a national medicines information service which is pharmacist-led and based at Our Lady's Hospice and Care Services in Harold's Cross in Dublin, has recently launched an e-newsletter for health professionals. The first two newsletters and other information are available on their [website](#).

If you would like to be added to the circulation list for future editions or if you have any medicines information enquiries, you can contact the service by telephone at 01 4912578 or by email to palliativemedsinfo@olh.ie

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