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## **Newsletter Number 36**

5th September 2005

### **INFORMATION CIRCULAR FOR PHARMACISTS IN TASMANIA**

#### **1. Changes to the Tasmanian Poisons List**

Consistent with the recommendations of the National Drugs and Poisons Scheduling Committee, a number of amendments have been made to the Tasmanian Poisons List that take effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2005. Changes this round have been minor and the full list of changes made to the Schedules are available on the website [www.thelaw.tas.gov.au](http://www.thelaw.tas.gov.au)

##### **1.1 Schedule 2- New Entry**

**DICLOFENAC** in divided preparations for oral use containing 12.5mg or less of diclofenac per dosage unit in a pack containing 20 or less dosage units and labelled with a recommended daily dose of 75mg or less of diclofenac

***Background:** The committee was satisfied that the available data, including results of clinical trials and post-marketing safety data, supported an acceptable safety profile of diclofenac 12.5mg at a daily dose of up to 75mg and was consistent with a Schedule 2 listing. The Schedule 3 availability of diclofenac (for oral use containing 25mg or less of diclofenac per dosage unit in a pack of 30 or less dosage units) remains unchanged.*

#### **2. Other important information for pharmacists**

##### **2.1 Out-of-date medicines including vaccines**

The following note has been received from Lynne Andrewartha of this Department's Communicable Diseases and Immunisation Section in Population Health. There has been particular concern at cases where there have been suggestions that health practitioners may have recommended the use of out-of-date vaccines.

“Pharmacists are reminded that out of date medicines should not be used after their expiry date. It should be noted that it is an offence under Section 24 of the Therapeutic Goods Act 2001 to supply therapeutic goods by retail after their expiry date. There may also be medico-legal issues to consider with the supply of out-of-date stock.

Expiry dates are developed following extensive product testing by manufacturers. In particular, short dated products which may also be subject to specific temperature storage requirements (eg vaccines) have a more limited safety margin. Sub-potent vaccines are unlikely to initiate the required level of antibody response.”

## **2.2 Dispensing of repeat prescriptions for Schedule 4 Declared substances**

Concern has been expressed to the Branch at the failure of some pharmacists to observe the restrictions on the interval at which Schedule 4 Declared (S4D) prescription repeats may be dispensed. Pharmacists place themselves at risk of disciplinary action where they acquiesce to customers' demands for early dispensing where this is not sanctioned by the medical practitioner or under the arrangements provided for by Regulation 44(3)-(5).

Regulation 44 states that where a prescription is for a declared restricted substance and the prescription is authorized to be repeated, the minimum intervals at which it may be dispensed must be written on the prescription by the prescriber. If this has not occurred, the pharmacist may do one of the following-

- (1) dispense the original supply only, then cancel the script;
- (2) contact the prescriber for instructions;
- (3) if the script has specific dose directions, calculate when the new supply is required and allow up to 4 days before that date.

In the case of (2) and (3), the pharmacist is to write on the script how the minimum interval was ascertained, and sign and date the script.

In the case of (3) where a pharmacist is dispensing a repeat, the due date for dispensing should be calculated using the date of first supply (not the date of the dispensing of the previous repeat).

## **2.3 Compliance with Schedule 2 and 3 storage requirements**

Non-compliance of a number of pharmacies with the storage requirements of Regulation 38 has been of concern. All pharmacy managers should review their storage arrangements for Schedule 2 and Schedule 3 items and take any necessary corrective action without delay. The Branch is continuing inspections around the State in respect to this matter.

Pharmacy managers who are undertaking refitting of shop and dispensary areas should be mindful of requirements. A number of recently refitted shops have not complied. The Branch has been in contact with a number of shopfitters that undertake pharmacy design for buying groups and has advised them of storage specifications under the Poisons Regulations. The obligation to ensure compliance remains with the pharmacy owner. **Note:** The need for more dispensary and/or store space may be impacted upon by the changes to pseudoephedrine scheduling (see below).

Please contact the Branch if any clarification is required.

## **2.4 Pseudoephedrine - Advance notice of expected scheduling changes**

Due to the continued public health harms from the illicit production of methylamphetamine from pseudoephedrine, the NDPSC has reviewed the scheduling of pseudoephedrine at the June 2005 meeting. Recent data indicates that methamphetamine has emerged as the most widely used illicit drug in Australia after cannabis. The use of methylamphetamine has serious and diverse health impacts.

The committee has made a number of recommendations for changes to scheduling with the effective date being the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2006. These proposals will be subject to further consideration at the October 2005 meeting. The recommendations are provided so that pharmacy managers are given as much time as possible to consider the potential impact of the proposed changes on their pharmacies and the set-up of their dispensaries. Schedule 3 substances may only be stored in the dispensary or a store-room. Certain products should be stored out of sight (refer to previous circular).

The Schedule 2 listing for pseudoephedrine is to be deleted and the recommended Schedule 3 and 4 amendments read:

**Schedule 3 – Proposed amended entry**

**PSEUDOEPHEDRINE** (other than preparations for stimulant, appetite suppression or weight-control purposes) when supplied in a primary pack:

- (a) in liquid preparations containing 800 mg or less of pseudoephedrine hydrochloride (or its equivalent); or
- (b) in other preparations containing 720 mg or less of pseudoephedrine hydrochloride (or its equivalent).

**Schedule 4 – Proposed amended entry**

**PSEUDOEPHEDRINE** **except** when included in Schedule 3.

Further information will be provided to pharmacists via a circular once the NDPSC has considered submissions and has confirmed or amended its foreshadowed decision in October. In the meanwhile the requirements advised in previous circulars must be followed.

**2.5 Removal of the name of Dr. Ian Martin from the Medical Register**

Please be advised that the name of Dr. Ian Anthony Martin has been removed from the Tasmanian Medical Register effective 29<sup>th</sup> August 2005. No prescriptions written on or after that date may be dispensed.

***PHARMACY MANAGERS- PLEASE CIRCULATE TO ALL PHARMACISTS IN YOUR EMPLOYMENT.***

Jim Galloway  
**Senior Pharmacist**