

Controlled Drugs Newsletter

NHS England Central Midlands

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CD incidents & destructions requests
www.cdreporting.co.uk

Welcome to the NHS England Central Midlands Controlled Drugs Newsletter.

Palliative care for adults: strong opioids for pain relief

Starting strong opioids When starting treatment with strong opioids, offer patients with advanced and progressive disease regular oral sustained-release or oral immediate-release morphine (depending on patient preference), with rescue doses of oral immediate-release morphine for breakthrough pain.

First-line maintenance treatment Offer oral sustained-release morphine as first-line maintenance treatment to patients with advanced and progressive disease who require strong opioids. **Do not** routinely offer transdermal patch formulations as first-line maintenance treatment to patients in whom oral opioids are suitable. *NICE Clinical guideline [CG140] Published date: May 2012 Last updated: August 2016*

Security of prescription forms

Theft of prescription forms and their consequent misuse is an area of concern. Prescription forms should be treated as 'blank cheques' which, in the wrong hands, can lead to a misuse of NHS resources. Stolen forms, or indeed whole pads, can be used to illegally obtain controlled drugs (CDs), as well as other medicines either for illegitimate personal use, which might lead to a clinical incident, or for the purpose of selling them on. The forms themselves are items of value which can be sold to a third party. As a matter of best practice, prescribers should keep a record of the serial numbers of prescription forms issued to them. The first and last serial numbers of pads should be recorded. It is also good practice to record the number of the first remaining prescription form in an in-use pad at the end of the working day. This will help to identify any prescriptions lost or stolen.

- The effective management of prescription forms, how they are stored and accessed by authorised prescribing and non-prescribing staff requires appropriate security policies, procedures and systems in place
- Prescribers are responsible for the security of prescription forms once issued to them, and should ensure they are securely locked away when not in use.
- Patients, temporary staff and visitors should never be left alone with prescription forms or allowed into secure areas where forms are stored.

Suspected lost or stolen prescriptions should be reported immediately *NHS Protect—Security of prescription guidance (updated 2015)*

Sharing learning from incidents

Incident 1 Description

Recently one gentleman has been 'purchasing' over the counter supplies of Ibuprofen and Codeine tablets from pharmacies. Following the usual pharmacy checks, payment is made by either debit or credit card, and the items are handed to the customer. However the card is then declined so the customer hands back the items and says he will go and get cash and return to pick up the items, but he does not return. The items are placed back on the shelf for sale. Other customers unconnected with this gentleman, have returned over the counter packs of Ibuprofen and Codeine to the stores, complaining that the blisters have been opened and the tablets have been substituted.

Lessons Learnt

It seems from investigations that when the payment card is declined, the customer hands back switched packs, containing what appears to be Ferrous Sulphate and Lansoprazole (which is thought may have been legitimately obtained on prescription)
The pharmacy has checked all stocks of these items and no other tampered packs have been found. They have implemented strict till checks for these over the counter items, and have stopped another attempt to obtain these by deception when they refused the sale.

Incident 2 Description

A pharmacy has recently had numerous requests for pseudoephedrine tablets. The first request was from a customer who was insistent that he had blue Sudafed tablets, he would not accept capsules and left the pharmacy.

Another male entered the pharmacy and asked for Actifed. After being asked the 'wwham' questions he was sold one box. Ten minutes later another male entered the pharmacy and asked for Actifed, on asking him the 'wwham' questions he became uncomfortable and left. Within 10 minutes another male came in asking for blue Sudafed tablets. The pharmacist asked him why it had to be tablets and he mumbled something about his mother. He was refused the sale and he left. There were at least a further **ten** requests for Sudafed the same day.

Lessons Learnt/Actions

If a patient requests pseudoephedrine, especially if it's for tablets, then please ensure you question the person thoroughly and if you are not certain that the request is genuine refuse to serve them. We urge pharmacies, hospitals, GPs etc. not to prescribe/dispense any type of pseudoephedrine if not completely sure that they are being requested for a valid reason.

If you have any concerns or intelligence relating to the abuse or use of medication, please contact your Controlled Drugs Accountable Officer :
Bhav Pattani at England.centralmidlands-cd@nhs.net

Reminder

To report all CD incidents, or to request a CD destruction visit, please use the CD online reporting tool available at www.cdreporting.co.uk