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## IMPLICATIONS OF THE SHIPMAN INQUIRY

Are pharmacists aware just how much of an impact the Shipman Inquiry will have on them? Shipman might have been a general practitioner but the inquiry's remit stretches far wider than the medical profession. It will have implications for every pharmacist who dispenses Controlled Drugs.

This week sees the publication of a discussion document about CDs by the Shipman Inquiry (see p171). It does not put forward any formal proposals but instead asks many questions about the current arrangements for handling CDs. It is clear that the inquiry does not think these arrangements are good enough. In fact, it states that they require an overhaul.

Some of the suggestions raised could result in changes to pharmacy practice on a day-to-day basis. Prescriptions for CDs could have different requirements from today's and the information to be recorded in CD registers could change. Patients (or their representatives) collecting CDs could have to provide proof of identity and acknowledge receipt of the drug. But the inquiry also asks fundamental questions: should all pharmacies handle CDs? Or should their supply be limited to specialist pharmacies? Similar questions hang over doctors.

The inquiry is now inviting responses to this document. These will form the basis of seminars to be held next January.

The depth in which the inquiry is looking at all aspects of the handling of CDs and their regulation means that change is inevitable. So any pharmacists thinking that Shipman will not affect them should reconsider.

## STREAMLINED SCOTLAND

Scotland's approach to drawing up a new contract for community pharmacy seems more streamlined than that taken south of the border. Proposals for a new contract have been jointly published by the Scottish Executive Health Department and the Scottish Pharmaceutical General Council (p165). Maybe it is the size of the country, rather than the people involved, but it seems that there is a better rapport between both sides and, as a result, more innovation in Scotland. Those initiatives that have been successfully piloted in the past couple of years — such as the minor ailments service and pharmaceutical care model schemes — appear in the proposed new contract. Perhaps more informal talking, as well as formal negotiations, should take place elsewhere.