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Royal
Pharmaceutical
Society
of Great Britain

Society produces guidance for pharmacists on OTC omeprazole

Practice guidance for pharmacists on the over-the-counter supply of omeprazole has been published by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society's practice division following the reclassification of omeprazole 10mg from prescription-only to pharmacy medicine status.

The practice guidance highlights the main points to consider when counter prescribing omeprazole, which is indicated for the relief of heartburn symptoms associated with acid reflux in adults aged 18 and over. The guidance provides information on when omeprazole is appropriate for OTC supply and when patients should be referred to a GP. It explains how omeprazole works and how to recognise that the symptoms described are those of heartburn associated with gastro-oesophageal reflux. It also gives information on how the tablets should be taken and on cautions, adverse effects and interactions.

Sue Kilby, the Society's head of practice, said: "Heartburn is a common condition

that may be extremely unpleasant for the sufferer. It is thought to be experienced by around 40 per cent of adults at some time and to account for one in 20 GP consultations. Community pharmacists, with their skills and knowledge, are in an ideal position to assess people when they are complaining of symptoms of heartburn and for most remove the need of a GP consultation. The pharmacist is able to make recommendations on treatment, provide counselling and information on life style changes which all helps heartburn sufferers to receive prompt, appropriate care, which is easily accessible."

The guidance may be downloaded in PDF format from the Society's website (www.rpsgb.org/practice). Copies may also be obtained from Lorraine Fearon, Practice Division, Royal Pharmaceutical Society, 1 Lambeth High Street, London SE1 7JN (tel 020 7572 2409).

This week

- **Omeprazole practice guidance**
The Society has published practice guidance on over-the-counter omeprazole (p363).
- **VPG weekend conference**
The Veterinary Pharmacists' Group is heading for Stratford-upon-Avon for its 2004 weekend conference (p363).
- **New directorate structure**
More than 60 branch and regional representatives attended a meeting to learn about the Society's new directorate structure (p363).
- **APG committee election**
Nominations are being sought in the triennial election to the Academic Pharmacy Group Committee (p364).
- **Pharmacy history film**
A short pharmacy history film is now on sale to the public (p364).
- **Children's medicine conference**
The Society is to co-host a conference on children's medicine (p364).

Veterinary Pharmacists' Group weekend conference to be held in Stratford

"Opportunity knocks" is the theme of the 2004 weekend conference of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society's Veterinary Pharmacists Group, which is to be held at the riverside Swan's Nest Hotel in Stratford-upon-Avon on 8 and 9 May.

The conference programme will cover a broad range of topics (see Society Meetings, p365) and the weekend includes a coach trip to a local rare breed sanctuary.

The Swan's Nest Hotel dates from the late 17th century. It is one of the oldest brick houses in the Stratford area and has its own river frontage. It is a few minute's walk from Shakespeare's birthplace and other town centre attractions.

The inclusive cost of the full weekend is £225 a person.

Liz Griffiths, the secretary to the Veterinary Pharmacists' Group, said: "The weekend provides a beautiful and informal setting for those interested in veterinary pharmacy to enjoy the company of like-minded people."

Branches learn about Society's directorates

Representatives from more than 60 branches and regions of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society met the Society's directors on Wednesday 10 March to learn more about the new organisational structure and hear how it will help in taking the profession forward.

The all-day meeting, held at the Society's London headquarters, was designed to help those involved in the Society's local network understand how and why the changes had taken place. The meeting heard that the new structure, which has involved an increase from five to seven directorates, is part of the Council's reform of the Society and is designed to support the Society's operations in line with best management practice.

The meeting was addressed by all seven directors — Philip Green (director of education and registration, who is also Deputy Secretary and Registrar), Beverley Parkin (director of public affairs and communications), David Pruce (director of practice and quality improvement), Charles Fry (director of publications), Rob Darracott (director of corporate and strategic development), Bernard Kelly (director of finance and resources) and

Mandie Lavin (director of fitness to practise and legal affairs).

The meeting also included presentations from the President (Dr Gill Hawksworth), the Secretary and Registrar (Ann Lewis) and the editor of *The Pharmaceutical Journal* (Olivia Timbs). The President spoke about her vision of all pharmacists making a personal pledge when they first entered the profession and asked that those attending take the idea back to local members for their thoughts.

Commenting on the success of the day, the Secretary and Registrar said: "The local branch and regional network provides an important sounding board for grass roots members' opinion. It was pleasing that so many took the opportunity to come and learn first hand about the changes to the Society's structure and how this is moving the profession forward into the future."

David Morgan, secretary of the Clwyd branch, said: "There was much evidence in the presentations of the huge amount of work that the Society is doing on behalf of members, and branch and regional secretaries can now communicate these important messages to members at a local level."

Society seeks a strong input from its new Academic Pharmacy Group Committee

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society is hoping for a strong input to its work from the new Academic Pharmacy Group Committee elected this year.

The group, which holds an election every three years, is now inviting nominations of members to serve on the committee, which consists of six elected members and two member appointed from the Society's Council (see Official Notices, p365).

The group says that those elected will have an important opportunity to influence the way in which the Society addresses academic issues during a period that will see major change whether or not the Council is able to proceed with the reforms it has proposed.

Commenting on the election, Dr Sue Ambler, head of research and development, said: "Health and education policy is changing rapidly. The Society has an important part to play, working with the schools of pharmacy and the academic workforce, to ensure that the profession's research base continues

to be world class and that our teaching prepares new graduates appropriately for their future careers. It is vitally important that the Society continues to receive good advice and supports leadership among the academic workforce. Although there may be some changes to the APG during the lifetime of the new committee, the need for strong academic input to the work of the Society will continue well beyond the next three-year period."

Dr Ambler added that Rob Darracott, director of corporate and strategic development, and his team are looking forward to working with the new committee and others to help the Society's staff and Council to develop the Society's education policy.

The group committee is already working with Dr Ambler's research and development division to take forward important aspects of the Society's research agenda, as well as running a full programme of meetings and conferences.

Society co-hosts conference on children's medicine

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society is co-organising a conference and exhibition on "Good medicine for children" at the Commonwealth Institute, London, on Tuesday 18 May.

The conference is the third in a series of "prescribing excellence" conferences, held under the banner of the British National Formulary and organised by the BNF's joint publishers, the Society and the British Medical Association, in association with the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health.

The conference will look at prescribing and practice issues in children and promote the provision of reliable information on the use of medicines.

A 15 per cent reduction in the conference fee is available to those who book and pay by Friday 26 March (see Society Meetings, p365).

Museum's pharmacy history film goes on sale to the public

A short film showing how medicines were prepared in the days before the mass manufacture of prepacked products is now on sale to the public. Produced by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society's museum in 2001, "How medicines were made" shows Peter Homan, a retired pharmacist and one of the museum's volunteers, demonstrating various manipulative techniques, including pill-mak-

ing, cachet filling and the use of a Brockedon press to make tablets. The film is subtitled.

Briony Hudson, the Society's keeper of the museum collections, said: "Seeing some of the techniques involved in dispensing really brings the history of pharmacy to life. The museum has regularly used this film as part of lectures, alongside exhibitions and to illustrate some of the objects in its collections.

With so many potential uses, it is great to be able to make it available for other people."

The 15-minute film, which is in VHS format, is priced at £12.50 including postage. Copies can be obtained direct from the museum (tel 020 7572 2210; e-mail museum@rpsgb.org). Members of the Society can borrow the video from the Society's library.

Law and ethics bulletin

Change of drug names from BANs to rINNs

From 30 June, all prescribers and dispensers will be required to use the Recommended International Non-proprietary Name (rINN) for medicinal products in cases where the British Approved Name (BAN) and rINN differ. The two exceptions to this are adrenaline and noradrenaline, for which the BANs (which is also the official name in the European Pharmacopoeia) should continue to be used rather than the rINNs (epinephrine and norepinephrine).

Until 30 June, it is recognised that situations may arise where a prescriber's computer software has been updated to reflect the rINN while the pharmacy software still refers to the

BAN, or vice versa. It is recommended that pharmacists use the rINN when labelling dispensed medicinal products but should ensure that patients are appropriately counselled to avoid confusion.

Pharmacists are also reminded of the importance of ensuring that any medication errors resulting from the switch are recorded and reported accordingly, through local and/or national reporting systems to allow common problem areas to be identified and addressed.

Marketing authorisation holders have until December to apply to change the name of an affected product to the rINN. At present there are no plans to impose a cut-off point after which stock using the former BAN may not be supplied. Therefore stock using the

BAN should be exhausted in the normal course of business, with pharmacists ensuring that patients are appropriately counselled where the name on the packaging differs from the name on the dispensing label.

Information, including question-and-answer briefing material, is currently available on the website of the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (www.mhra.gov.uk). A professional letter about the name changes will shortly be issued to key health care professionals, including pharmacists. The MHRA is to produce a specimen leaflet for patients that will explain the changes. The leaflet will be made available to download from the agency's website. Further enquires should be directed to the MHRA (e-mail info@mhra.gsi.gov.uk).

DEATHS

Cocker On 7 February, John Cedric Cocker, MRPharmS, of 119 Carr Head Lane, Hardhorn, Poulton-le-Fylde, Blackpool, Lancashire FY6 8EG. Mr Cocker registered in 1970.

Edmondson On 6 March, Thomas Holden Edmondson, MRPharmS, of 63 Dorket Drive, Wollaton Park, Nottingham NG8 1AD. Mr Edmondson registered in 1938.

Haigh On 9 February, Rita Rosina Haigh (Mrs Holmes), of "Holmvalea", 8 Pinewood Avenue, Thornton Cleveleys, Blackpool, Lancashire FY2 0EF. Miss Haigh registered in 1952 and retired from the register in 1999.

LIBRARY ADDITIONS

The following are among recent additions to the Royal Pharmaceutical Society's library in London. They can be borrowed by members and by preregistration trainees and pharmacy students who have registered with the library. The loan period is 28 days. A loan may be renewed if the item is not required by another user. Details of all titles added to the library since 1991 can be found in a searchable online catalogue (olib.rpsgb.org.uk)

Audiovisual presentations

- Breast cancer. Health Education Video Unit. Leicester: Health Education Video Unit. Video: 20 minutes.
- Drug addiction. Macaulay A. Windsor: Cardinal Broadcast. Video: 29 minutes.
- Good practice in safe, efficient and cost-effective drug prescribing. Teathon K. Newcastle upon Tyne: University of Newcastle upon Tyne. Videos (3): 180 minutes.
- Listening and intervention skills: teaching tapes for the caring professions. Tape 1: poor and better practice. Gill P. Newcastle upon Tyne: University of Newcastle upon Tyne. Audiotope: 86 minutes.
- Listening and intervention skills: teaching tapes for the caring professions. Tape 2: specific situations. Gill P. Newcastle upon Tyne: University of Newcastle upon Tyne. Audiotope: 101 minutes.
- Listening and intervention skills: teaching tapes for the caring professions. Tape 3: marital and sexual therapy. Gill P. Newcastle upon Tyne: University of Newcastle upon Tyne. Audiotope: 86 minutes.
- Oxygen therapy. World Health Organization. video: 38 minutes.
- Personal centred counselling: a demonstration. Kuypers B, Eccles S. Ipswich: Concord. Video: 36 minutes.

SOCIETY MEETINGS

Unless otherwise stated, further details of meetings organised by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society can be obtained from the Society at 1 Lambeth High Street, London SE1 7JN (tel 020 7735 9141; fax 020 7735 7629).

Veterinary Pharmacists' Group annual conference

The Veterinary Pharmacists Group of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society is to hold its 2004 weekend conference at the Swan's Nest Hotel, Stratford-upon-Avon, on 8 and 9 May. The theme of the conference will be "Opportunity knocks".

The weekend will begin on Saturday 8 May with a buffet lunch, followed at 1.45pm by a coach trip to a local rare breed sanctuary and dinner at the hotel in the evening. On Sunday 9 May, a full day's conference will include sessions on the current political environment, the re-launch of the Society's diploma in veterinary pharmacy and the introduction of the certificate in companion animal health care (*PJ*, 13 March, p333), farm animal health plans (with a talk by a representative of the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) and an outline of the veterinary pharmaceutical industry's point of view. There will be opportunities for participants to put questions to a specialist panel and to network with colleagues.

The cost of the full weekend is £225 per person, which includes lunch, excursion and dinner on the Saturday, overnight accommodation and breakfast and lunch on the Sunday. Those wishing to attend only the Sunday conference will be charged £65, which includes lunch.

Full details and booking information are available from the group secretary, Liz Griffiths (tel 020 7572 2408; e-mail liz.griffiths@rpsgb.org). The closing date for bookings is 19 April.

News item, p364

Good medicine for children

A conference and exhibition on "Good medicine for children" will take place at the Commonwealth Institute, London, on Tuesday 18 May, organised jointly by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society and the British Medical Association in collaboration with the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health.

The conference is the third in a series of "prescribing excellence"

conferences under the banner of the British National Formulary, which is published jointly by the Society and the BMA. Aimed at physicians, pharmacists and others involved with prescribing policies, it will look at prescribing and practice issues in children and promote the provision of reliable information on the use of medicines.

The morning programme will include a session on "Learning from the past, planning for the future", with contributions on the Children's National Service Framework, the challenge of the newborn, the challenge of cancer, and the lessons of MMR. The afternoon will begin with parallel sessions on the theme of "Learning together", which will look at the need for a paediatric BNF, the industry and paediatric use of medicines, paediatric nurse prescribing, medication errors and decision support systems. This will be followed by a plenary debate on the motion, "Not enough medicines are being used for children with behaviour problems".

The conference fee, which includes a delegate pack, lunch, refreshments and a free copy of BNF No 47, is £235 (including VAT), reduced to £199.75 for bookings made and paid for by Friday 26 March.

Conference brochures and registration form can be obtained from the BMA/BMJ Conference Unit (tel 020 7383 6819; e-mail clyders@bma.org.uk). Bookings can also be made online at www.bma.org.uk/conferences.

OFFICIAL NOTICES

Communications to the Royal Pharmaceutical Society should be addressed, unless otherwise stated, to: The Secretary and Registrar, Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, 1 Lambeth High Street, London SE1 7JN (tel 020 7735 9141; fax 020 7735 7629). Official Notices also appear in the Notice-Board section of PJ Online (www.pjonline.com/notices).

Academic Pharmacy Group Committee election 2004

Full members of the Academic Pharmacy Group of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society are invited to nominate for election to the group committee candidates who are full members of the group. Please note that in addition to the six elected members, the group committee also includes two members appointed from among the members of the Council of the Society.

As the reforms of the Council envisaged in the proposed revisions of the legislative framework and the proposed new Royal Charter are agreed and implemented, the Council's committee, advisory and interest group structures will also be reviewed to ensure that the future Council has access to advice from a full range of stakeholders. Depending on the timing and the outcomes of the review, the terms of office served by those elected to the APG committee this year may possibly be less than the three years stated in the group's constitution. Nevertheless, those elected will have the opportunity to shape any

Listening Friends

The Listening Friends Scheme exists to offer free confidential help to pharmacists suffering from stress.

The scheme was set up by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society but operates independently so that help can be sought in complete confidence. The service allows any pharmacist under stress to talk to a fellow pharmacist who has insight into the particular pressures that apply in pharmacy. The service is not, however, restricted to work-related problems, but offers help with all causes of stress, such as family problems, illness and bereavement.

The service is run by a team of volunteer pharmacists, all of whom are mature and experienced in their field of practice. All have been trained in listening skills and many have counselling training and experience. They are also able to direct pharmacists under stress to sources of specialist help where needed.

Contact with the Listening Friends is made initially by telephoning the scheme's automatic answering service on 020 7572 2442. Callers will be given brief details of the service and asked to leave their name, the area in which they live, a contact telephone number and a convenient time to call. A Listening Friend will then call back to discuss the details of the pharmacist's problem in complete confidence. Further contacts are usually by telephone.

Information about the scheme and how it operates is available in the form of a leaflet, which can be obtained by contacting the help-line number. The scheme is funded by the Society's Benevolent Fund.

new structures, which will need significant input and support from the pharmacy academic workforce. If the structures remain unchanged, there will be opportunities to influence how academic issues are addressed in what will still be a period of major change.

The serving elected members are Dr Susan Barker, Dr Rachel Elliott, Dr Mark Gumbleton, Professor Jayne Lawrence, Dr Chris Rostron and Dr Anthony Smith. In addition, Dr Paul Gard has been co-opted to the group committee for the past three years.

All nominations should be marked "APG election" and addressed to: Rachel Ollerearnshaw, Secretary to the Academic Pharmacy Group, Royal Pharmaceutical Society, 1 Lambeth High Street, London SE1 7JN. The closing date for nominations is Monday 5 April.

Once the nominations have been received, all full group members will receive a list of candidates, together with voting papers and candidates' statements of policy. The election process will conclude with the receipt of voting papers by noon on Monday 21 June 2004.

Rachel Ollerearnshaw
Secretary to the Academic Pharmacy Group

Industrial Pharmacists' Group Committee Election 2004: amended announcement

Nominations are invited for candidates for election to fill the seven places on the Royal Pharmaceutical Society's Industrial Pharmacists' Group Committee. Those elected will normally serve for three years on the committee.

Nominations do not necessarily have to be made on a special form. They should be sent to the secretary to the Industrial Pharmacists' Group at the Society's headquarters by 26 March 2004.

The seven serving elected members are John Jolley, Dr John Kerridge, Michael Murray, Jane Nicholson, Dr Michael Parker, Mel Smith and Dr Steve Wicks.

Dr Janet Halliday was co-opted to the committee in 2002. All the current committee members are eligible for nomination.

Note: The secretary to the group apologises to Dr Parker for his name being given incorrectly in the earlier election notifications.

Ann Harrington
Secretary to the Industrial Pharmacists Group

DIARY

Local meetings

Events listed below are meetings of branches of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society. Details of all future meetings notified to *The Journal* appear in the Diary section of PJ Online (www.pjonline.com/diary)

Monday 22 March

Isle of Man "Prison pharmacy: the forgotten pharmacist" by Robert Goff (principal pharmacist, HM Prison, Leeds). Keyll Darree, Noble's Hospital. Buffet 7.15pm, meeting 8pm.

Worcester "The Parkinson's patient" by Caroline Johnson (UK Parkinson's Disease Society). Lecture Theatre, Charles Hastings Education Centre, Worcestershire Royal Hospital, Newtown Road. Buffet 7pm, meeting 7.30pm.

Tuesday 23 March

Durham "Your contract: your future" by Sally Arnison (National Pharmaceutical Association) and Steven Lutener (Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee) Eden Arms, Rushyford. 8pm.

Wednesday 24 March

Bradford "The impact of the Shipman inquiry" by David Slater. Guide Post Hotel. Buffet 7.30pm, meeting 8pm.

Cambridge "Pharmacist prescribing" by Beth Taylor (specialist principal pharmacist, London Pharmacy Service/Southwark Primary Care Trust, and a member of the Department of Health's Modernisation Board). Boardroom, Addenbrooke's Hospital. 7.30pm.

Chesterfield "Current issues in hormone replacement therapy" by Srimi Vindla (consultant gynaecologist). Clinical Skills Laboratories A & B, Postgraduate Centre, Chesterfield Royal Hospital, Calow. Buffet 7pm, meeting 7.30pm.

Macclesfield "Parkinson's disease: treatment update" by Dr N. McDermott (consultant neurologist). Education and Training Centre, Macclesfield District General Hospital. Buffet 7.15pm, meeting 8pm.

Leeds "Medication review or medication management: how can pharmacy get involved in the National Service Framework for Older People" by Duncan Petty. Leeds Business Centre, Clarendon Road, Leeds. 7.30pm.

Manchester, Salford and Trafford "Training needs for pharmacists" by Keith Pearson (intermediate care clinical pharmacist). Postgraduate Medical Centre,

Manchester Royal Infirmary, Oxford Road, Manchester. Light refreshments 7.30pm, meeting 8pm.

Teesside "Recent developments in ophthalmology" by Graham Cox (senior optometrist, Boots The Chemists). Parkmore Hotel, Eaglescliffe. Buffet. 7.30 for 8pm.

Thursday 25 March

Bath "Current treatment of hyperlipidaemia" by Dr John Reckless (consultant endocrinologist, Royal United Hospital, Bath). 8 West, University of Bath. 7.30pm.

Birmingham "Infections and epidemics (methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, etc)" by Professor Tom Elliott (consultant microbiologist, University Hospital Birmingham) and annual general meeting. Birmingham Medical Institute, 36 Harborne Road, Edgbaston. Buffet 7.15pm, meeting 8pm.

Chelmsford "The Children's National Service Framework and the role of the pharmacist" by Tony Nunn (director of pharmacy, Royal Liverpool Children's NHS Trust). Room SAW 005, Sawyer Building, Rivermead Campus, Anglia Polytechnic University, Chelmsford. Buffet. 7.30 for 8pm.

Dudley and Stourbridge "Epilepsy" by Dr Roland Etti (Dudley Hospitals NHS Trust). Dudley Clinical Education Centre, Russells Hall Hospital, Dudley. 7.45 for 8pm.

Halifax "Cystic fibrosis" by Dr Vijay Kumar (Calderdale Royal Hospital). Learning and Development Centre, Calderdale Royal Hospital, Halifax. Buffet 7.30pm, meeting 8pm.

Slough "Pharmaceutical care" by Professor Clare Mackie (head, Medway school of pharmacy). John Lister Postgraduate Centre, Wexham Park Hospital, Slough. Buffet 7.15pm, meeting 8pm.

Weald of Kent "New contract for pharmacy" by Sue Sharpe (chief executive officer, Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee). Ramada Jarvis Hotel, 8 Tonbridge Road, Pembury, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. Buffet 7.30pm, meeting 8.15pm.

Monday 29 March

Bury and Rochdale "Mental health updates" by Petra Brown (chief pharmacist, Manchester Mental Health and Social Care Partnership). Village Bury, Waterfold Business Park, Rochdale Road, Bury (off M66 at Junction 2). 7.30 for 8pm.