

Tact and discretion

This week could almost be dubbed Controlled Drugs Week. In addition to the pull-out guidance, 'Changes in the management of CDs affecting pharmacists', produced by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society's practice division (p355-8) for pharmacists in England, there is separate guidance about commissioning pharmaceutical services for drug misusers (p337) — also in England. And there is a further letter mildly berating the Council for its current advice on the extemporaneous preparation of methadone (p346).

The changes in CD management, produced in the wake of the Shipman inquiry, will make some tasks less arduous and others more time-consuming and potentially wearing. For example, best practice will entail a pharmacist asking the collector of a Schedule 2 or 3 CD to sign the reverse of the prescription form, although pharmacists will be able to use

Some tasks will be less arduous, others more time-consuming and potentially wearing

their discretion in deciding whether or not to dispense the CD if a signature is refused.

In addition, although legislation will not require pharmacists to ask everyone who collects a Schedule 2 CD for proof of identity, pharmacists will have to exercise the same discretion for dispensing the CD if they have no proof of the collector's identity. It is at this point that matters may become frustrating. Pharmacists will be required to record, in the CD register, whether they asked

for proof of identity or not and what proof, if any, was seen. On the other hand, if no ID was seen, the reason why must also be recorded. Fortunately it will not be a criminal offence to supply the CD without proof of identity, even when the collector is not known to the pharmacist. Nevertheless, it is not hard to imagine circumstances where pharmacists will have to be supremely tactful.

The second set of guidance this week is primarily for commissioners to encourage pharmacists to develop services for drug misusers. Although many pharmacies provide huge support for these patients, it is not necessarily appropriate for all pharmacies. The guidance has been produced by the National Treatment Agency for Substance Misuse (NTA), in conjunction with the Society and the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee. The NTA expects that 75 per cent of community pharmacies will have to be involved in providing supervised consumption and shared-care schemes and 25 per cent will have to offer needle exchange services if the needs of these patients are to be met. That seems quite a tall order.

Meanwhile, there are still rumblings about the Law and Ethics Bulletin (25 February, p245) advice on the preparation of methadone mixture and the Council is once again asked to amend its guidance and be less prescriptive (Letters, p346).

While procedures on handling CDs — in whatever form — needed to be tightened up post-Shipman, they must not prove so demanding that they compromise patient care.

Editor and editorial director
Olivia Timbs
Tel 020 7572 2414

Deputy editor
Andrew Haynes, *MRPharmS*
The Society section
Tel 020 7572 2421

Managing editor
Graeme Smith, *MRPharmS*
Letters and other contributions
Tel 020 7572 2426

Assistant editor
Michael Thompson
Editor — PJ Online
Tel 020 7572 2428

News editor
Harriet Adcock, *MRPharmS*
Tel 020 7572 2415

News and feature writers
Dawn Connelly, *MRPharmS*
Notice-board
Tel 020 7572 2427

Tom Moberly
Tel 020 7572 2417
Matthew Wright, *MRPharmS*
Tel 020 7572 2430

Contributions editors
Gemma Cleveland
Reviews
Tel 020 7572 2416
Lin-Nam Wang, *MRPharmS*
Continuing professional development
Tel 020 7572 2413

Production editor
Christopher Icha

Website controller
Gowan Clews
Tel 020 7572 2418

Personal assistant to the editor
Emma Kerby-Evans
Tel 020 7572 2414

Administrative assistant
Pauline Heslop
Branch meetings, copyright, permissions
Tel 020 7572 2422

Editorial advisory board
Tim Albert
Noel Baumber, *FRPharmS*
Soraya Dhillon, *MRPharmS*
Niall Dickson
Steve Wicks, *MRPharmS*

Head of business development
Philippa Stahelin

Office administrator — sales
Jo Cook

Classified and systems support — sales
Clare Knights

Display sales
Stuart Thomas

Classified advertisement manager
Lily Emery

Classified advertisement executive
Anne-Marie Judge

Head of publishing services
John Wilson

Production manager
Joanne Marks

Production assistants
Hillary Carter
Adam Jones

Director of publications
Charles Fry