



**Royal
Pharmaceutical
Society
of Great Britain**

Law and Ethics Bulletin

Administration of adrenaline (epinephrine) in an emergency

Pharmacists are advised that whilst there are a number of legal restrictions controlling the supply and administration of medicines, there is an exemption in legislation to allow adrenaline (epinephrine) injection 1 in 1000 to be administered for the purposes of saving a life in an emergency.

The Society's Code of Ethics, which all registered pharmacists and pharmacy technicians are required to adhere to, states that when acting in your professional capacity you must:

'In an emergency take appropriate action to provide care and reduce risks to patients and the public, taking into account your competence and other options for assistance or care available'.

The Professional Standards and Guidance document for the Sale and Supply of Medicines states you must:

'Assist persons in need of emergency first aid medical treatment whether by administering first aid within your competence or by summoning assistance'.

Guidance regarding the legal requirements concerning the supply and administration of medicines is published in *'Medicines, Ethics and Practice - a guide for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians.'*

In addition, the Society has produced a booklet entitled *'Emergency First Aid - guidance for pharmacists'* which contains information on action in life threatening situations when the Society believes a pharmacist would be justified in supplying and administering certain medicines. The guidance is not intended as a replacement for first aid training and pharmacists are advised to keep their first aid skills up to date.

One of the life threatening situations on which guidance is provided is anaphylactic shock. It sets out the symptoms pharmacists should look for and the action they should take, which includes the administration of adrenaline.

Copies of the emergency first aid booklet can be obtained from the Fitness to Practise and Legal Affairs Directorate (Tel: 0207 572 2308; email: ftp@rpsgb.org)