



**Royal
Pharmaceutical
Society
of Great Britain**

Law and Ethics Bulletin

Update on sale and supply of pseudoephedrine and ephedrine containing medicines

At its October meeting, the Council discussed whether sales of medicines containing pseudoephedrine or ephedrine should be restricted to pharmacists only, following a recommendation by the MHRA that sales of these medicines should only be made by a pharmacist. Council decided not to support the MHRA recommendation, but to issue the following guidance to pharmacists.

Pharmacists are reminded that the Society's Code of Ethics for Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians states that you must ensure that individuals to whom tasks are delegated must be competent and fit to practise. Pharmacists must ensure that all staff involved in the sale or supply of over-the-counter medicines are trained, or are undertaking training relating to pseudoephedrine and ephedrine issues¹, and are aware of situations where referral to the pharmacist may be necessary. If support staff have not been trained in pseudoephedrine and ephedrine awareness, personal sale by the pharmacist is recommended.

Following discussions with the Commission on Human Medicines (CHM) Expert Working Group, the Society advises that pharmacists review their sale of medicines written protocols. The written protocols should incorporate details of any medicines containing pseudoephedrine or ephedrine held in stock². They should also make reference to criteria for referral of sales to the pharmacist.

Pharmacists and pharmacy staff should continue to be alert to unusual requests for any items or products containing pseudoephedrine or ephedrine and refuse to make a supply where there are reasonable grounds for suspecting misuse. Requests for more than one product containing pseudoephedrine or ephedrine should have personal involvement from a pharmacist and supplies should only be made in exceptional circumstances. Pharmacy medicines must not be accessible to the public for self-selection.

¹ Training modules are available from www.MethguardUK.learnsomething.com and www.npa.co.uk/members.

² A list of pseudoephedrine containing products is available from [http://www.pagb.co.uk/media/downloads/doc/PSEUDOEPHEDRINE%20CONTAINING%20PRODUCTS%20LIST\(3\).doc](http://www.pagb.co.uk/media/downloads/doc/PSEUDOEPHEDRINE%20CONTAINING%20PRODUCTS%20LIST(3).doc) (7th March 2007)

In September 2007, the Society advised that pharmacists should ensure that sales of any pseudoephedrine and ephedrine containing medicines are restricted to one pack per sale (<http://www.rpsgb.org/pdfs/LEBrestrictpsephmeds.pdf>). If faced with a request for more than one pack (e.g. adult and infant formulations), pharmacists should consider and act in the best interests of individual patients and the public. Any decision to supply needs to be carefully balanced and the additional supplies should only be made in exceptional circumstances. Pharmacists should be able to justify any decision to supply more than one pack if asked to do so.

Pharmacists are reminded that the CHM has given pharmacy the opportunity to demonstrate its ability to control pseudoephedrine / ephedrine sales. The CHM intends to monitor the impact of the pharmacy controls implemented and the option to reclassify to prescription-only status remains open.