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Pharmacy Safety Alert

To: All Community Pharmacists

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Dear Colleague

RE: Risks when dispensing medicines into monitored dosage systems

I am writing to alert you to the risks of dispensing errors with medicines supplied in compliance aids or monitored dosage systems.

- There have been a number of recent dispensing errors involving prescriptions dispensed into monitored dosage systems (MDS) which have resulted in serious adverse reactions for patients. The main learning points which have resulted from these incidents are
- That the dispensing into a MDS is undertaken directly from the current prescription. Labels produced from the PMR must be cross referenced with the current prescription.
- If there appears to be a change in the medication i.e. a medicine formerly on repeat is not on the new prescription, the medication must not be dispensed until the reason for the absence or change is clarified with the prescriber.
- Communication on changes in medication must be directly between the prescriber and the pharmacist not via third parties. A written record of changes made by verbal communication between the prescriber and the pharmacist should be made and kept in the pharmacy and surgery.
- The GP practice and the pharmacy should hold a record of patients who are receiving medications dispensed into MDS and local arrangements between the pharmacy and the practice must encourage communication between both when the medication regimen is changed.
- Good practice dictates that the pharmacy must have a written SOP in place for supplying medicines to patients via a MDS.
- A regular audit should be carried out to ensure that the established process for

assembling, dispensing and supply of medication in a MDS is as robust and safe as possible. To aid this audit procedure see www.rpsgb.org/pdfs/mds.pdf

Please be vigilant when dispensing medicines via MDS and ensure that protocols and procedures are in place to make the supply of medicines in this way as safe as possible.

Yours sincerely



Mr Joe Brogan
Asst Director Integrated Care
Pharmacy and Medicines Management

