



## **Summary of the month – August 2009**

Throughout August the Society's public relations (PR) team was successful in achieving coverage across a broad range of national, regional and specialist media. Highlights include:

### **NATIONAL / REGIONAL COVERAGE**

#### **Ramadan Campaign**

On the 20<sup>th</sup> August the Society launched its Ramadan campaign urging Muslims who are taking medication and fasting during Ramadan to seek advice from pharmacists on how to manage medicine intake effectively and safely in the interest of their health. The campaign was backed by a community pharmacist and the Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Great Britain. The campaign was very successful and received extensive coverage both in broadcast and print, including a pre-rec interview with Muslim TV station Islam TV, PR Week, the Pharmaceutical Journal and ATN Bangla. The campaign also received coverage in various regional radio stations including BBC Leicester, BBC Shropshire, BBC Radio 4, BBC Radio Asian Network, Sunrise Radio and Islam Radio.

#### **Urine test 'predicts' best drugs**

The BBC contacted the Society regarding a urine test that could help doctors decide which drugs will be most effective for their patients. On 11 August Jayne Lawrence, Chief Scientific Advisor was quoted in the article and said the findings were exciting and potentially very useful, but added: "More work needs to be performed on larger populations and on different drugs to say whether the methodology is going to be predictive and therefore useful to prescribers."

#### **Chemist warning on drug shortages**

Chemist and Druggist magazine conducted a poll with pharmacists on the shortage of some medications. More than 150 pharmacies responded to the survey, almost 90% of whom said they were "very concerned" about problems they were having getting hold of some medicines. The BBC picked up on the story and contacted the Society for comment. Jeremy Holmes, Chief Executive & Registrar was quoted in the article and said the Society was concerned about the stock problems. "This problem has been exacerbated recently by parallel exporting, where a product is bought in the UK in order to sell onto another country at a higher price." He added: "The current supply chain relies on medicines being available within 24 to 48 hours. "When this doesn't happen it causes stress and anxiety to those affected - and it is the patients who suffer most."



## **PHARMACY / HEALTH PRESS**

### **Hard Times: Stress amongst pharmacists is on the rise**

The Society's Workplace Pressure Campaign continued to get coverage this month following the symposium on workplace pressure. Pharmacy Magazine ran a full page article on the research from the symposium in which 52% of pharmacists said their working days were continually stressful. Dave Pruce, Director of Policy and Communications was quoted in the article: "The number of prescriptions has gone up by 50 per cent in England and Wales during the last 10 years". However, not only are there more prescriptions being issued, but more patients have several items on each. "On top of this there are the new contracts, so in England and Wales for example, pharmacists have to cope with MURs and other services, such as stop smoking or weight management. Pharmacies are also staying open for longer and there's little opportunity for pharmacists to have a break."

### **Drugs Cocktail**

The Society's MUR campaign continued to receive coverage in August with Pharmacy Magazine writing an article on the campaign. Paul Johnson, the Society's RX Factor winner was quoted "It's not unusual for older people to get confused with the medicine they are taking. Pharmacists are ideally placed to provide advice to a patient on their medicine which can really improve someone's health or even their quality of life".

### **RPSGB: Antivirals for swine flu in children should be recommended**

The 15<sup>th</sup> August edition of Chemist & Druggist ran an article about a study which claimed Tamiflu and Relenza were largely ineffective in children. The Society's response was printed in the article which stated it backed the Department of Health's policy to continue giving antivirals to children. A spokesperson for RPSGB was quoted as saying "The data presented adds to the overall picture, but the advice on the use of antivirals in children with suspected swine flu should not change on the basis of this study alone."

### **RPSGB calls for parity in controlled drugs prescribing**

The Society's press release to introduce parity between nurse and pharmacists in the prescribing of controlled drugs generated coverage within the specialist press including in OnMedica, Medical News Today and The Pharma Times.

## **WELSH COVERAGE**

The Ask the Experts column in the health supplement of the Western Mail (Circulation 37,152) featured the Director of Wales giving advice on various topical issues. The August column focused on medicine use



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## **PR AND MEDIA REPORT**

**August 2009**

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reviews. The Ramadan Campaign also gained coverage on Radio Wales. Once again, the Welsh Pharmacy Board attended the National Eisteddfod in August and this was the most successful participation yet. Over 45 full health checks were carried out with a further 26 people having either their blood pressure or weight measured.

**If you would like a copy of the August press cuttings please contact the Public Relations team.**

### **Media enquiries, releases and statements issued during August**

**National/Broadcast/Regional, 18 enquiries:** Including decriminalisation of dispensing errors, marking irregularity at Sheffield University

**Specialist/Consumer, 6 enquiries:** Including branded v generic products and online pharmacies

**Pharmacy press, 28 enquiries:** Including methadone, online medicines, MUR's, prescribing rights and restructure queries

**Letters to editors, 4 issued:** Sent to *The Pharmaceutical Journal* including topics covering the availability and distribution of the antiviral medicine Tamiflu, the deficit of the Society's pension fund, the library service and responsible pharmacists regulations.



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### **11 news releases were issued during August:**

28 Rest breaks essential for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians says Society

28 Pharmacy sector steps up joint work

18 Royal Pharmaceutical Society issues guidance to Muslims on safe medicine management during Ramadan

11 Royal Pharmaceutical Society calls for parity in controlled drug prescribing

04 Society issues guidance on dog antiparasitics

**To view these media releases online, please visit [www.rpsgb.org](http://www.rpsgb.org) and click on the 'News' section. Alternatively, contact the Public Relations team.**

### **Useful diary dates and notable events**

#### **Delivering enhanced services Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain conference: 28 September**

A conference supporting pharmacists in delivering enhanced services taking place at Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain headquarters.

#### **Pharmacokinetics: 5 October**

EUFEPS and APS Joint one day conference (co-sponsored by Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain and International Pharmaceutical Federation), Pharmacokinetics: Spearheading advances and delivering the science, Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain headquarters.

#### **Pharmacy Show: 11-12 October**

The Pharmacy Show will be taking place at the NEC Birmingham.

#### **Reducing medication errors: 14 October**

Healthcare Events conference, managing risk and improving patient safety in clinical practice: Reducing medication errors, Cavendish Conference Centre, London