



Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain

Substances of Misuse

Pharmacists have a professional responsibility to ensure that they do not supply any products where there are reasonable grounds for suspecting misuse. Every pharmacist must be aware of any problems in his/her area, whether or not they are general, or known to the Society. He or she should be aware of any products which are sold in excessive quantities or with abnormal frequency. Consideration should be given to updating standard operating procedures to include advice on local procedures for dealing with such matters. The list below identifies the types of non medicinal and medicinal products that could be liable to misuse. It does not detail specific brand names however, when training your staff you should ensure that they are familiar with the brand names you stock associated with these generics. Almost any substance can be misused and the guidance given below is not exhaustive.

A. Non-medicinal products / general sale list medicines

1. All products containing solvents, or propellants, e.g. glues, Tippex, nail varnish remover, Dylon conditioner, PR spray, Zoff, methylated and surgical spirits, butane gas refills and cleaning fluids aerosols, Ralgex and Deep Freeze sprays. Veterinary pharmacies may sell portable butane and propane canisters for gas debudders.
2. Miscellaneous e.g. caffeine-containing products

B. Pharmacy medicines

1. Products used either alone or in combination with other medicines containing codeine, morphine, antihistamines or similar substances (promethazine, diphenhydramine, cyclizine). Veterinary pharmacists should be aware of Pardale-V tablets (codeine phosphate 9mg/paracetamol 400mg), now NFA- VPS, licensed for dogs.
2. Laxatives e.g. bisacodyl, senna-containing, sodium phosphate, sodium citrate/sodium alkylsulphoacetate combination
3. Any products containing ephedrine or pseudoephedrine

C. Prescription-only medicines / Controlled Drugs

1. Morphine/codeine analogues, e.g. buprenorphine
2. Barbiturates and benzodiazepines, e.g. temazepam, nitrazepam, diazepam
3. Miscellaneous, e.g. clomethiazole, zopiclone
4. Controlled Drugs in general e.g. dipipanone/cyclizine combination
5. Steroids, e.g. nandrolone (also used in veterinary medicine)
6. Insulin
7. Skin bleachers e.g. hydroquinone

Pharmacists should be alert to the possibility of patients obtaining prescriptions for excessive quantities of these medicines and should question prescribers where it appears there may be inappropriate supplies requested.

D. Chemicals

Pharmacists should be alert to requests for large quantities of any chemical that could have the potential to be misused, especially powders since these can be used to dilute or bulk out ('cut') illicit drugs.

It would be helpful if sales could be monitored to identify unusual purchases.

1. Fireworks. Pharmacists are reminded not to sell any of the following substances: chlorates, nitrates, magnesium, potassium permanganate, sulphur, powdered aluminium and phosphorus, unless they are satisfied that they are required for a proper purpose and will not be used for making explosives or fireworks.

2. Explosives. These products can be used to make explosive devices (some may also be used as precursors for illicit drugs manufacture): hydrogen peroxide, acetone, citric acid, sulphuric acid, hexamine, methyl ethyl ketone, sodium chlorate.

3. Miscellaneous e.g. acetic anhydride, acetonitrile, allylbenzene, ammonia (anhydrous), amyl nitrite, ascorbic acid, denatured alcohol, ethyl ether, iodine isobutyl nitrite, lithium, benzyl methyl ketone, ergot alkaloids (precursors), red Phosphorous.

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