



**Royal  
Pharmaceutical  
Society  
of Great Britain**

## **Law and Ethics Bulletin**

### **Missed doses or collections of methadone**

When providing services to drug misusers it is important to remember that several missed doses of methadone may cause a reduction in tolerance.

In the event that a patient consecutively fails to collect several days' supplies of methadone, pharmacists must consider the patient's best interests and whether tolerance levels may be affected and if there is a need to inform the prescriber.

In the event that a patient has not provided prior consent for their prescriber to be informed of situations where they miss one or more doses, pharmacists should explain to the patient why there is a need to inform their prescriber and attempt to seek their consent to do so. Where a patient refuses to provide consent for disclosure, pharmacists must weigh up their duty of confidentiality to the patient with the need to act in their best interests, and be prepared to justify their decision.

Pharmacists should consider the benefits of a written agreement between themselves, the patient, and the prescriber or drug worker for the service to be provided, which should include the protocol to be followed when a patient does not collect their daily dose or misses a number of doses of methadone.

The Royal College of General Practitioners has issued guidance regarding supplies of methadone and the need for reassessment and re-titration if a patient consecutively misses doses. This can be found at:

[http://www.rcgp.org.uk/PDF/drug\\_meth%20guidance.pdf](http://www.rcgp.org.uk/PDF/drug_meth%20guidance.pdf)