



**Royal
Pharmaceutical
Society
of Great Britain**

Law and Ethics Bulletin

Multiple Packs

Following a recent case considered by the Society's Investigating Committee, pharmacists are offered the following information in relation to the supply of multiple packs of the same medicine.

Principle 1 of the Code of Ethics for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians states that you must make the care of patients your first concern. In complying with this you must encourage the effective use of medicines and be satisfied that patients, or those who care for them, know how to use their medicines. When patients are provided with multiple packs of the same medicine, you must consider ways to advise the patient that these packs must be taken one after the other or sequentially. The risk of confusion is increased if a patient is supplied with medicine from more than one manufacturer, since the different packaging from different manufacturers may lead the patient to believe they are different medicines.

The Society's guidance on "Risk minimisation with regard to dispensing and checking" (www.rpsgb.org/pdfs/restoolriskmin.pdf) advises that if multiple containers are required the label should state: "This is one of ... containers". Alternatively, pharmacists could label each pack as "1 of X", "2 of X", etc.

The National Patient Safety Agency has produced "Design for patient safety: a guide to the design of dispensed medicines" (www.npsa.nhs.uk/patientsafety/improvingpatientsafety/design/dispensed-medicines). This advises: "Always label each container when a medicine is supplied in multiple packs. Include information to indicate that each container is one of a number holding the same medicine."