

2006 PACKAGING AWARDS



The Packaging Awards focus on the packaging quality of drugs evaluated during the previous year in the New Products section of our French edition (issues 268-278 in 2006).

Packaging awards



- **Salbutamol Arrow° 2.5 mg/2.5 ml and 5 mg/2.5 ml, solutions for nebulization (salbutamol)** – Arrow Generics
For the clear labelling of the plastic ampoules, which clearly display the international non proprietary name (INN), the dose, and the route of administration, and placing less emphasis on the brand name (*La revue Prescrire* n° 271)
- **Methadone hydrochloride AP-HP° 5 mg, 10 mg, 20 mg, 40 mg and 60 mg syrup (methadone)** - Bouchara-Recordati
For well-designed packaging, perfectly adapted to different dispensing and administration procedures, as well as to the drug's characteristics, with individually boxed single-dose bottles, clear labelling, with distinct colours for each dose strength and safety lids with tamper-proof seals (*La revue Prescrire* n° 273)

The *La revue Prescrire's* Packaging Awards are intended to draw patients' and healthcare professionals' attention to the fact that high-quality packaging is an important factor in safe and effective treatment. They also provide us with an opportunity to congratulate manufacturers who design user-friendly packaging, and to encourage other manufacturers to improve their packaging.

Throughout the year the editorial staff examines the packaging of each new drug. They focus on the outer packaging (the box), the primary internal packaging (bottle, blister pack, tube, etc.), the patient information leaflet, and on any devices delivery, such as spoons, graduated oral syringes, syringes and needles for injection. The unit doses are also evaluated for convenience of use and patient safety (tablet divisibility, patch adhesiveness, etc.).

This systematic analysis is based on standardised forms. It focuses on drug identifiers (labelling, printing, colour coding), other items contributing to safe use (child-proof caps, dose identifiers), and items helping to provide information to patients (labels, the package leaflet). The risk-benefit balance of the product is also taken into account, along with the categories of patients and caregivers most likely to use the drug. Detailed results of the editorial staff's 2006 packaging analyses can be found on our website, at www.prescrire.org.

At the end of each year, the Packaging Awards are granted following a review of all of the year's analytical forms, in total independence and with no input from drug or packaging manufacturers (rules available from www.prescrire.org).

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Yellow cards



- **Imukin° solution for SC injection** Boehringer Ingelheim (**interferon gamma-1b**)
For the lack of an injection device specifically designed for precise injection of less than 0.1 ml of solution, which is needed for the treatment of low-weight children (*La revue Prescrire* n° 273)
- **DolirhumePro° tablets** Sanofi Aventis OTC (**paracetamol + pseudoephedrine or doxylamine**)
For the ambiguous labelling of the tablets (systematically spanning two blister pockets) that can lead the user to take two tablets instead of one, thus increasing the risk of patient exposure to dose-related adverse effects, especially cardiovascular adverse effects of pseudoephedrine, when treating the common cold (*La revue Prescrire* n° 277)
- **Hyzaar° tablets, three-month box** MSD-Chibret (**losartan + hydrochlorothiazide**)
For barely legible labelling of the blister pack containing these tablets and the absence of the international non proprietary name (INN); the brand name is printed once, in very small type; in addition, the film is shiny and dimpled (*La revue Prescrire* n° 278)

Red cards



- **Zolpidem EG°** EG Labo; **Zolpidem RPG°** RPG; **Zolpidem Zydus°** Zydus; **10 mg tablets (zolpidem)**
For the use of a symbol on the drug's packaging containing 3 boxes to be ticked, for morning, midday, and evening. These boxes may erroneously lead patients to believe that this sedative is to be taken three times daily. It should only be taken once a day, at bedtime (*La revue Prescrire* n° 269, n° 270, n° 276)
- **Alfuzosine EG°** EG Labo - **Alfuzosine Merck°** Merck Génériques - **Alfuzosine Qualimed°** Qualimed - **Alfuzosine Ranbaxy°** RPG - **Alfuzosine Ratiopharm°** Ratiopharm - **Alfuzosine Sandoz°** Sandoz - **Alfuzosine Teva°** Teva Classics, **10 mg SR tablets (alfuzosine)**
The packaging for this product includes the same three symbols with three boxes to be ticked for morning, midday and evening. However, this alpha blocker should only be taken after the evening meal, because of a risk of postural hypotension (*La revue Prescrire* n° 276, n° 277, n° 278)
- **Valproate de sodium Biogaran°** Biogaran - **Valproate de sodium EG°** EG Labo - **Valproate de sodium Merck°** Merck Génériques - **Valproate de sodium Qualimed°** Qualimed - **Valproate de sodium Ratiopharm°** Ratiopharm - **Valproate de sodium RPG°** RPG - **Valproate de sodium Sandoz°** Sandoz - **Valproate de sodium Teva°** Teva Classics - **Valproate sodium Winthrop° 500 mg SR tablets (valproic acid)** Winthrop Médicaments
For the multidose container with an easily removed lid and no child proof cap; yet the bottle contains 15 000 mg of an antiepileptic drug, valproic acid, creating a risk of overdose in children (*La revue Prescrire* n° 271, n° 273, n° 275, n° 276, n° 277, n° 279)
- **Alprazolam Zydus° 0.25 mg and 0.50 mg tablets** Zydus (**alprazolam**)
For the multidose container without a child proof cap; the lid can be easily removed. The very small size of the pill containing this benzodiazepine contributes to the risk of overdose, especially in children (*La revue Prescrire* n° 271)
- **Atoux toux sèche° syrup** Schwarz Pharma (**pholcodine**)
For the lack of child proof cap on this bottle of syrup with an enticing cherry flavour. This creates a risk of overdose in children. The syrup contains pholcodine and about 10% alcohol (*La revue Prescrire* n° 270)
- **CellCept° powders for oral suspension** Roche (**mycophenolate mofetil**)
The packaging of this teratogenic drug for French community pharmacies is not adequately designed to protect health workers preparing the suspension from exposure to the powder (*La revue Prescrire* n° 272)
- **Rotarix° powder for oral suspension** GlaxoSmithKline (**rotavirus vaccine**)
For the box containing an oral syringe, that resembles a syringe for injection. As most vaccines are injected, there is a risk that this oral vaccine will be injected by mistake (*Prescrire International* n° 87 and this issue p. 72). The manufacturer informed us in January 2007 that it would soon improve the labelling and the packet insert in the EU.