



## 2008 Prescrire 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 291 to 302 for 2008).



### Packaging awards



- **Méthadone AP-HP°** Bouchara-Recordati (*methadone*)

For the pre-cut blister packs, with full labelling of each unit dose, protected with a tamper-proof film to minimise the risk of accidental ingestion, this morphine derivative being fatal at low doses in children. For the labelling that gives due emphasis to the international nonproprietary name (INN) and distinguishes clearly between the strengths, minimising the risk of error when preparing the doses (*la revue Prescrire* 295 and coming in *Prescrire International*).

- **Miltex°** cutaneous solution Baxter (*miltefosine*)

For the measures taken to guarantee safety at each step of dose preparation and when disposing of the packaging after administration of treatment: presence of a child-proof bottle, latex gloves and two waste disposal bags, drawing attention to the cytotoxic nature of the waste (*la revue Prescrire* 300).

The first aim of *Prescrire's* Packaging Awards is to draw the attention of healthcare professionals and patients to the dangers posed by certain types of drug packaging. They also promote examples of high-quality, patient-friendly packaging used by some pharmaceutical companies and encourage the others to improve their packaging.

Packaging that complies with all quality criteria receives a Packaging Award. Particularly poor packaging is awarded a yellow or red card, depending on how dangerous it is.

**Systematic analysis throughout the year.** Throughout the year the editorial staff examines the packaging of new drugs and of older drugs that have been modified. Every aspect is examined: the outer packaging (the box), the immediate packaging (blister pack, bottle, syringe, sachet, etc.), devices provided for preparing and/or administering the doses, and of course the package leaflet.

This systematic analysis is based on *Prescrire* standardised forms. The steps taken to guarantee the quality and safety of each item of packaging are studied, taking into account the risk-benefit balance of the drug, the patients concerned and the conditions of administration.

**Total independence.** A specialised team, the *Prescrire* packaging working group, produces an overview of the analyses. At the end of each year, the Packaging Awards are granted on the basis of the standardised forms, in total independence and with no input from drug or packaging manufacturers (rules available on [www.prescrire.org](http://www.prescrire.org)).

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### Yellow cards

- **Actifed allergie cétirizine°** tablets McNeil Santé Grand Public (*cetirizine*)

For the ambiguous labelling of this over-the-counter drug (belonging to an umbrella brand): the international nonproprietary name (INN) on the blister packs is particularly difficult to read and could lead to confusion with other drugs from the same umbrella brand (*la revue Prescrire* 296).

- **Cymbalta°** capsules Lilly (*duloxetine*)

- **Januvia°** tablets MSD-Chibret (*sitagliptin*)

- **Xelevia°** tablets Pierre Fabre Médicament (*sitagliptin*)

For the rather incomprehensible labelling (under the pretext of multilingualism): the unit doses are not fully and individually labelled, making it difficult to read the INN, especially if blisters are separated (*la revue Prescrire* 292, 295, 299).

- **Maxalt°** tablets MSD-Chibret (*rizatriptan*)

For the poorly legible labelling of the blister packs: unit doses are not fully and individually labelled, the INN is only marked once and in small characters (*la revue Prescrire* 300).

- **Niquitin°** transdermal patches GlaxoSmithKline Santé Grand Public (*nicotine*)

- **Testopatch°** transdermal patches Pierre Fabre Médicament (*testosterone*)

For not featuring the name of the drug on the external surface of the patch, making it difficult to identify them once applied to the skin: this could cause confusion in the event of concomitant application of a similar patch (*la revue Prescrire* 293, 301).

- **Vicks adultes toux sèche miel°** syrup Procter & Gamble Pharmaceuticals (*dextromethorphan*)

For not supplying a dosing device with the syrup, which is available over the counter. Patients will therefore use a teaspoon, which can lead to dosing errors (*la revue Prescrire* 299).

### Red cards

- **Advilcaps°** soft capsules 200 mg and **Adviltab°** tablets 400 mg Wyeth Santé Familiale (*ibuprofen*)

For insufficient information in the package leaflet on data suggesting an increased risk of miscarriage when NSAIDs are taken during the first trimester of pregnancy. This exposes pregnant women to an unjustified risk given how common its indications are (fever and pain) and the fact that these products are available over the counter (*la revue Prescrire* 301).

- **Durogesic°** transdermal patches Janssen-Cilag (*fentanyl*)

For the package leaflet which shows an illustration of a patch being applied to a child's chest. This site is too easily accessible to children. A child could remove and swallow the patch, and would be exposed to a potentially fatal overdose of fentanyl (*Prescrire International* 95, 96, 98).

- **Okimus°** tablets Biocodex (*quinine + hawthorn solid extract*)

For the lack of a child-proof cap on the bottle; it is easy to open and contains tablets resembling chocolate sweets, creating a risk of massive ingestion which would be potentially fatal for young child (*la revue Prescrire* 297).

- **Valda rhume°** tablets (*paracetamol + pseudoephedrine + vitamin C*) and **Valda toux sèche sans sucre°** oral solution (*pholcodine*) GlaxoSmithKline Santé Grand Public

For the labelling of these two drugs from an umbrella brand illustrated with a plant, whereas they contain none: this trivialises the serious cardiovascular adverse effects of *pseudoephedrine* and the neurological adverse effects of *pholcodine* (especially as this oral solution is available over the counter) (*la revue Prescrire* 302).