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Comments on labelling paper

Congratulations on this excellent list of suggestions to improve safety of medications.

As a hospital pharmacist as well as an older consumer I look forward to being able to find a legible generic name in a standard place on medications packaging. I do hope that “equal prominence” of the generic and brand name will include the legibility of the colour used- some colours such as yellow or pale green are particularly hard to read. Perhaps this could be clarified by specifying a minimum amount of black toner in the colour of the generic name (sorry do not know the technical name for this) so that the generic name stands out as the dominant name.

The changes you suggest should reduce dispensing and administration errors by health professionals, as well as make medication much less confusing for patients. Patients or consumers taking medication are overwhelmingly toward the older age range, so readability means font 12 or larger for the key elements of the label such as the name and strength.

The blister pack illustrated in the photograph demonstrated a problem with the proposal for labelling over two dosage units. If there is a rip-off perforation between the two units, they may end up unlabelled if broken apart. In the illustration the labelling should have been over 2 dosage units vertically rather than horizontally. Maybe there should also be a specification that the smallest unperforated section of the strip must have a whole label. (For some medications this would mean a label on every unit, or redesign of the perforations).

Thanks for the opportunity to comment.

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