HCP DEPARTMENT	POLICY
TITLE	Policy on Responsibilities of Pharmacists Handling and Dispensing Medicines
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SCOPE	This policy covers the NHRA's expectations of pharmacists when dispensing and handling medicines.
PROCESS OBJECTIVE	To ensure pharmacists are aware of the NHRA's expectations and pharmacists' obligations when dispensing and handling medicines.
CHANGES SINCE LAST REVISION	N/A

Policy

As healthcare professionals licensed by the National Health Regulatory Authority to provide healthcare services in the Kingdom of Bahrain, pharmacists have an obligation to practise their profession safely and in the best interests of members of the public. In terms of clinical practice, this means that all pharmacists must handle medicines – both prescription only (POM) and over the counter (OTC) in accordance with accepted protocols, and must have procedures in place to ensure safe dispensing of medicines to patients.

Dispensing of medicines

1. Pharmacists must not dispense POMs without a valid prescription from a currently licensed doctor or dentist. The pharmacist must be satisfied that the prescription is genuine.
2. All pharmacists should exercise professional and independent judgment to ensure that a prescribed medicine is safe and appropriate for the patient, taking into account:

- the dose, frequency and route of administration,
- duration of treatment,
- interactions with any other medicines, foods etc
- contraindications
- the patient's illness and any other pre-existing medical conditions
- side effects
- any other relevant circumstances.

3. If in any doubt about the prescription, the pharmacist must contact the prescriber before dispensing the medicine.
4. Upon dispensing a medicine in accordance with a prescription, the pharmacist must retain the prescription on file (unless a repeat is to be dispensed at a later date – see paragraph 5), also keeping a record in the pharmacy record book with the following information:
   - The date of supply
   - The name, quantity, form and strength of the product supplied
   - Name of prescriber and where the prescriber is not known to the pharmacist, his/her address.
   - The name, CPR and address of the patient
   - The date of prescription
   - Date of supply and reference number of original entry when repeat prescriptions is being dispensed
   - The name and address of the pharmacy and reference number if the prescription is dispensed form another pharmacy.
5. If the prescription specifies that a repeat is to be dispensed at a later date, the pharmacist should record on the back of the prescription the date of dispense, the amount dispensed, and the pharmacist's name and signature. The prescription should then be handed back to the patient for use when seeking a repeat.

Labelling dispensed medicines

6. All dispensed medicines should be dispensed in their original packaging, with labelled information that will ensure the medicine is stored by the patient safely, improve the patient's understanding of the therapy, minimise side effects and enhance patient compliance with dosage requirements. In addition to information supplied on the product label or in the product information leaflet, the pharmacy label should include the following information:
   - Date of dispensing
   - The name of the patient
   - The name and address of the pharmacy that supplied the medicine
   - The proprietary name of the medicine or the generic name with the name of the producer.
   - Directions for use and any precautions specified on the prescription
   - Any required cautionary or warning notices relating to the medicine
   - The words "keep out of reach of children"
   - If for external use only, the words "for external use only."

7. The pharmacy label should not obscure any product information on the original packaging.

Provision of information to patients

8. Pharmacists should make every effort to provide information, or attempt to provide information to patients upon supply of a medicine, whether that medicine is POM, or over the counter (OTC). This is particularly important in certain circumstances, including:

- When a new medicine is prescribed
- When there is a change in the dose or frequency of administration
- The medicine can have a sedative effect
- The dose form is unusual
- The frequency of use is unusual
- When the brand of medicine has changed
- When the medicine is a controlled drug (ie, narcotic or psychotropic)
- With each supply of medicine when there are valid reasons for regular reinforcement of safety information (eg, contraindications, side-effects, cytotoxic or teratogenic medicines, special patient needs such as language limitations, vision, hearing, cognitive or mental impairment)
- When the medicine is for a child
- When the patient is taking many medicines.

Dispensing multiple repeat prescriptions at one time

9. Pharmacists should be aware of the risks involved in supplying multiple quantities of a particular medicine at a single dispensing, taking into account that this may not be in line with the intentions of the prescriber and may increase risk to the patient. Such practices do not promote best pharmacy practice in relation to regular review of therapy and effective provision of medicine information. Dispensing of multiple quantities of any prescription should only occur at the specific direction of the prescriber, unless exceptional circumstances exist to the satisfaction of the pharmacist, and an appropriate record is made to that effect on the prescription and in the dispensing record. The name and signature of the pharmacist taking the decision should be recorded, together with confirmation of the amount dispensed. The prescription, if filled completely, should be retained on file.

Non-pharmacist trained staff

10. The pharmacist in charge of the pharmacy during any shift is responsible for ensuring that non-qualified staff do not undertake tasks that require them to exercise professional judgment or discretion. If a non-qualified staff member assists in the dispensing of medicines, the pharmacist must take responsibility for determining the appropriateness of the medicine in relation to the patient's full medication history, making a final check of the medication to be dispensed, and provision of information to the patient.

Safe handling of medicines

11. Medicines must be stored in a secure manner and in conditions that will not affect their potency. Pharmacists, together with facility owners, are responsible for ensuring that storage of all medicines complies with the NHRA's *Guide To The Application Procedure And Rules For Licensing Pharmacy And Pharmaceutical Facilities In The Kingdom Of Bahrain.*
12. Destruction of expired or compromised medicines must be undertaken in accordance with the NHRA's *Pharmacy Facility Standards* and should include maintenance of an up to date register of destroyed medicines, for audit purposes.
13. Pharmacists and facility owners are expected to accept the return of unwanted medicines from members of the public and to arrange for safe disposal of those medicines.