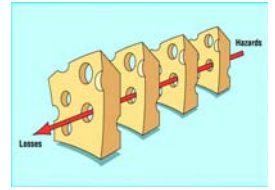


Medicines Governance Team



SAFETY MEMO 7

From: Medicines Governance Pharmacists,

To:

Directors of Pharmaceutical Services / Trust Pharmacy Managers – For action

Dr N Morrow, Chief Pharmacist, DHSSPSNI

Directors of Pharmacy, HSS Boards

} For information

10th September 2004

RE: Change to packaging of Priadel[®] 200mg tablets (lithium carbonate)

The packaging for Priadel[®] 200mg tablets (lithium carbonate) has changed. It is now available in blister packs, contained within an outer cardboard box. **The appearance of the outer cardboard box is very similar to Priadel[®] 400mg tablets, which increases the risk of confusion between the different strengths.**

As you will be aware, lithium is a medicine with a narrow therapeutic range. A medication incident involving confusion between the strengths of this high-risk medicine could have potentially serious consequences for patients. As different lithium preparations are not interchangeable and there is no alternative packaging for Priadel[®] 200mg tablets available, it is recommended that:

- **all relevant staff are informed of the potential for confusion;**
- **all staff involved in the administration of medicines, are reminded of the need to take particular care to read the product label before medicine administration and not rely on product appearance as a means of identification; and,**
- **all staff involved in counselling patients taking Priadel[®] 200mg tablets, are advised to draw the patient's attention to the packaging change.**

It may also be appropriate to separate the storage locations of the 200mg and 400mg strengths of tablets. Alert notices are attached that can be fixed to storage locations in the pharmacy department and on wards.

This identified risk is being reported to the manufacturer. The tablets themselves remain unchanged, with 200mg tablets being oblong in shape and 400mg tablets being round in shape.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact your Medicines Governance Pharmacist.

Tracey Boyce

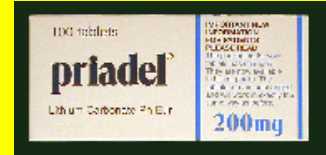
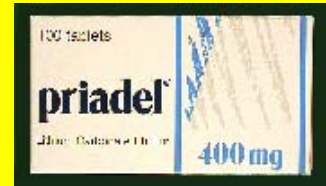
Team Leader, On behalf of the Medicines Governance Team.



**** CAUTION – Risk of confusion ****

Priadel® 200mg tablets (lithium carbonate) are now in a very similar box to Priadel® 400mg tablets. Priadel® 200mg tablets are now stored in Priadel® 400mg tablets are stored in

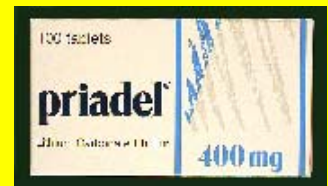
Remember – always read the label.



**** CAUTION – Risk of confusion ****

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