



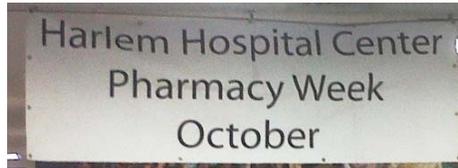
# Harlem Pharmacy Newsletter

## Celebrating Pharmacy Week October 17-23!

National Pharmacy Week (October 17-23), is an opportunity to acknowledge and give special thanks to all the dedicated and hardworking pharmacists and technicians for their achievements in ensuring safe and effective medication use in institutions and pharmacies throughout the nation.

In celebration of National Pharmacy Week, the Department of Pharmacy set up Medication related displays in the Main Lobby of the Martin Luther King (MLK) building and the Ronald Brown Building.

The Pharmacists, pharmacy staff and Touro College of Pharmacy students provided people with great handouts, pamphlets, and booklets on different disease states and their treatments, as well as providing an opportunity to ask questions regarding their medications. Additionally, the pharmacy provided weekly pillboxes, medication bottle opening devices, nail-care kits, pens, etc to all the visited the pharmacy tables.



**Touro College of Pharmacy Students, Sarah Awad, Sharon Gayed, Uyen Le, Tram Nguyen**

Pharmacy Week provided the Department an excellent chance to share the accomplishments, drug expertise, medication knowledge and advice with patients, other health professionals, and the community.

### Pharmacy on the Radio

In the spirit of Pharmacy Week host of Radio Talk Show, "Health in Harlem", Maurice Shelby invited the Director of Harlem Hospital Pharmacy Shahnawaz Khan and Touro College of Pharmacy Student Sarah Awad for a segment called "Talk about Prescriptions". This aired October 20, 2011, and a number of various Pharmacy Topics were discussed.



Issues pertaining to the importance of taking medications correctly as well as reading all labels were addressed. Listeners were encouraged to ask questions to their healthcare providers and were urged to obtain a flu shot. The radio show was an excellent forum to educate the Harlem community regarding the significance of knowing about their medications thoroughly.

## Blank Prescription Pads Stolen From New York Hospitals

October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2011 reports of a substantial theft of blank prescription (Rx) forms headlined the news. Since 2008, NY officials fear an estimated 1.4 million Rx forms have been stolen from NYC institutions.

Originally, investigators believed that these were isolated incidents, however now it is thought to be a widespread "scheme by gang members to make money from addicts desperate for prescription painkillers".

Health Department Officials have criticized security measures as inadequate.



**NY officials fear 1.4 million stolen Rx forms - used to get drug users painkillers illegally**

Officials are recommending all hospitals to review their existing guidelines, policies/procedures and physical safeguards to ensure that strict safety measures for securing prescription forms are being followed.

Institutions must make sure that all Rx blanks are stored in locked cabinets and printers, accessible only to a limited number of people.

Health Department Officials are recommending hospitals to further improve safeguarding methods to deter thefts.

**!!!! Congratulations !!!!**  
**Article Published in Leading Pharmacy Publication**



**Treatment of Diabetes and Angioedema Risk**

**ANGIOEDEMA**  
 A recently discussed category of adverse drug reactions (ADRs) is angioedema, a condition characterized by swelling of the skin, most often around the lips and eyes, secondary to ACE-I was the reaction identified.

**ANGIOEDEMA**



During Harlem Hospital Pharmacy's review of Adverse Drug Reaction (ADR) it was noted that the antihypertensive class of medications referred to as ACE inhibitors (ACE-I) or angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitors (e.g., lisinopril, enalapril, etc.) were one of the top 7 drugs involved in ADRs during 2010.

Angioedema (swelling of the skin, most often around the lips and eyes) secondary to ACE-I was the reaction identified.

Going forward, research by our Pharmacy Department staff, Saleem Ahmad, Ph.D, RPh and Shahnawaz Khan, RPh was able to conclude that ACE-I alone and in combination with Dipeptidyl peptidase Inhibitor (DPP-I) also known as gliptins (e.g. sitagliptin; Januvia®) commonly used for treatment of diabetes could increase the risk of angioedema. This is because both these drug suppress the enzymes that block potent edema causing agents (e.g. peptides: bradykinin, and substance P). Healthcare professional should be aware of this possible increased risk of angioedema secondary to ACE-I in combination with a gliptin drug.

To read more, go to:  
<http://www.pharmacytimes.com/publications/issue/2011/October2011/Treatment-of-Diabetes-and->

**FDA:**  
**Medication Safety**

**Lower Concentration for Oseltamivir Oral Suspension**

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and Genentech, the manufacturer of the antiviral drug oseltamivir (*Tamiflu*) for oral suspension have revised and lowered the product's concentration from 12 mg/mL to **6 mg/mL** for the sake of more accurate measurements. Oseltamivir is used for the prevention or treatment of certain types of influenza.

In addition, the oral dosing device that comes with the drug **will be graduated in milliliters, as opposed to milligrams**, which had been the measure in the past.



**Physicians should write all new prescriptions for oseltamivir at the new concentration, with the dose in milliliters.**

All healthcare providers should be on alert because both old and new concentrations will be on the market simultaneously this flu season. To prevent dosing confusion that can lead to medication errors, please educate all healthcare professionals and patients at your institutions regarding this change.

**Look A-like Sound A-like Medications**

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**Valganciclovir** (available as tablets) is used to treat cytomegalovirus (CMV) retinitis (eye infection that can cause blindness) in people who have acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). Valganciclovir is also used to prevent cytomegalovirus (CMV) disease in people who have received a heart, kidney, or kidney-pancreas transplant and who have a chance of getting CMV disease. Valganciclovir is in a class of medications called antivirals..

**(Valganciclovir is HAZARDOUS agent –must use appropriate precautions for handling and disposal)**

**Valacyclovir** (available as tablets) is also an antiviral used to treat herpes zoster (shingles) and genital herpes. It does not cure herpes infections but decreases pain and itching, helps sores to heal, and prevents new ones from forming.

These two medications are **NOT INTERCHANGEABLE**, use **CAUTION DURING ORDERING, DISPENSING AND ADMINSTRATING**



**TO PREVENT LOOK ALIKE, SOUND ALIKE MEDICATION ERRORS:**

- Separate locations of look alike medications.
- Use Tallman lettering to distinguish similar medication names (e.g. DOBUTamine and DOPamine)
- Use look alike sound alike (LASA) auxiliary stickers, LASA bags and bins when storing and dispensing medication
- Train staff to recognize LASA errors
- For handwritten/oral prescriptions, do not make assumptions; call the prescriber to confirm medication.
- Check patient's profile: review medication list, check patient's diagnosis with drug indications to prevent errors

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