



Update on New Zealand standardised batch sheets for compounded oral liquid formulations – October 2020



HEALTH QUALITY & SAFETY
COMMISSION NEW ZEALAND
Kupu Taurangi Hauora o Aotearoa

Baclofen suspension associated with risk of medication error

The New Zealand Compounding Working Group has been made aware of a number of serious medication errors associated with of baclofen suspension.

The NZ standardised batch sheet for compounding baclofen (hosted on the Pharmaceutical Society of New Zealand website) is for a **10 mg/mL suspension**. However, some hospitals may use a section 29 proprietary **1 mg/mL oral liquid** which is available on the Hospital Medicines List (HML) but is *not funded in the community*. It is also possible that not all community pharmacies make the suspension according to the NZ standardised batch sheet.

This variability means that if the patient/carer goes to different pharmacies, the strength dispensed could be different from the one they have received from their previous pharmacy. A number of dosing errors have occurred across New Zealand as a result. In most cases the patient/carer does not realise the strength is different and administers the same volume as they have used previously.

Such errors have the potential to result in serious consequences (including fatality) for patients who may receive significant overdoses (e.g. 10 times the intended dose) or under-dosing leading to ineffective management of their condition (e.g. spasticity).

All pharmacists please:

- **Check** with the patient/carer what strength/volume of baclofen they have been using previously (if it is not a new medication for them).
- **Ensure** the patient/carer **always** receives counselling about the strength and volume to administer for the suspension they are receiving, and carefully highlight any changes from what they have used previously. (Note: this applies to any compounded suspension).

Work is currently underway to reduce the risk of dosing errors by eliminating variability in the strength of baclofen oral liquid used in New Zealand. Once completed, this will be communicated via the Pharmaceutical Society newsletter and website.

If you are involved in dispensing baclofen liquid, please take extra care and keep an eye out for future updates.

Dave Woods

Chair, Compounding Working Group
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