



Eye Health Centre Patient Participation Group Quarterly Newsletter December 2017

The inside story of the Eye Health Centre Dispensary

May I first thank all of you who participated in the recent Dispensary Satisfaction Survey. The results were spectacularly good. I thought that it would be a good idea to give you a behind the scenes peek at how the dispensary operates and the number of prescriptions it deals with in an average month, which totals around 5,500 to 6,000 items. So let us take a look at the journey of a typical drug from its manufacture to your prescription bag.

In the beginning, drugs are produced to very high standards by large drug manufacturers whom apply rigorous checks on the quality of their medicines. The trail then takes us to a distributor or wholesaler who stores thousands of different drugs from different suppliers, again under very strict quality standards regarding storage at their premises and during transportation. The local dispensary, in this case Eye Health Centre Dispensary, will order the drugs from the wholesaler according to estimated demand. The ordering procedure can occur twice a day with corresponding deliveries, again twice a day. Sometimes the particular wholesaler does not have the drug in stock which means that the dispensary staff have to try and find another supplier quickly. And all of this still keeping in mind the cost implications, after all the drugs market is very competitive and it is very important to source the correct drugs at the best price.

Once the drugs are received at the Health Centre, they have to be unpacked and carefully checked and stored securely and refrigerated if necessary. Keeping the right amount of a particular drug in stock requires continuous monitoring and reordering. All of this requires a considerable amount of monitoring by the dispensary team. It is probably at this stage that we, the patients, begin to become involved.

The practice doctors will request a drug, via a prescription form, or digitally via the computer. Normally the prescription is ready within a few minutes of seeing the doctor. So what happens when that prescription is received in the dispensary. The medication is "picked" off the shelf or the refrigerator by a member of staff. The medication is checked against the prescription by a different member of staff and finally placed in the paper bag after validating the patient name and address, and is then ready for the patient to collect. During the picking and checking stage, it is vital that the procedure is not interrupted by anybody, including the doctors, until the drugs are verified and placed securely in the bag. This means that sometimes it might appear that the waiting patient is being ignored, but this is far from the truth. It is totally for patient safety and accuracy that the dispensed drugs are the correct dose, the correct number and above all it is for the correct named patient. So not breaking that concentration is vital.

The dispensary operates from 8.00am until 6.30pm Monday to Friday. Most of the time there are at least two staff on duty, but at busy times, three. The dispensary asks for a two day turnaround period to supply both online and repeat prescriptions, so that they can be safely fitted into the programme of supplying more than 200 prescriptions a day.

So what we see as patients is just the tip of the iceberg. Please be patient while the staff, who are very efficient and friendly (as stated in the survey response), complete the very important task of supplying you with your correct drugs at the right time. They are there for your benefit and take their responsibility to you very seriously.

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Please support Nurse Nikki Boughen in her untiring efforts to establish a new local **Cancer Support Group in Eye**. Meetings will be held on the first Friday in the month beginning on 1st December 2017. This inaugural and future meetings will be held in Hartismere Place Day Centre from 10.30 until 12.30. Please come along and support Nikki for this initial group meeting which will feature 'A Grand Christmas Raffle' with some great prizes, and tea and cakes. There is plenty of parking. We look forward to welcoming you at this and future meetings.

If you have any comments about the issues raised in this newsletter, please contact me direct at tony.white@awaconsulting.co.uk or c/o Julie Ashley, Practice Manager at the Health Centre.

Tony White (Chair PPG)