NSW HEALTH

Safety Notice 004/08

Oxycodone (Revised)

05 February 2008

Distributed to:

- Chief Executives
- Directors of Clinical Governance
- Directors of Clinical Operations

Action required by:

- Directors of Clinical Governance

For response by:

No response to Quality and Safety Branch required

We recommend you also inform:

- Drug and Therapeutic Committees
- Area Directors of Nursing and Midwifery
- Area Directors of Pharmacy
- Area Directors of Medical Services
- Directors of Cancer Services
- Pharmacists
- Nurses
- Medical staff

Deadline for completion of action

Not applicable

Quality and Safety Branch
NSW Department of Health
Tel. 02 9391 9200
Fax. 02 9391 9556
Email
quality@doh.health.nsw.gov.au

http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/quality/sabs/index.html

Purpose

The purpose of this Safety Notice is to ensure that:

- doctors, pharmacists and nurses are aware of the range, strength and variable rates of release of oxycodone products available. Information is included regarding the range of morphine products available to assist in preventing mix-up with oxycodone products.
- the intended correct oxycodone product is prescribed, dispensed and administered.

Background

A review of medication incidents involving oxycodone, notified in the NSW Incident Information Management System (IIMS), identified confusion arising from:

- naming of the various oxycodone products
- multiplicity of strengths available
- different rates of release available.

Specific incidents involved:

- prescribing or administering Endone® or OxyNorm® instead of OxyContin®
- prescribing or administering OxyContin® instead of Endone® or OxyNorm®
- confusing OxyContin® (oxycodone controlled release) and MS Contin® (morphine sulphate controlled release) tablets.
- prescribing or administering the wrong strength of OxyContin®
- prescribing or administering the wrong strength of OxyNorm®

Oxycodone Formulations

Oxycodone is available as:

- Oxycodone tablets (Endone®) – an immediate release product available in one strength
- Oxycodone capsules and liquid (OxyNorm®) – an immediate release product available in multiple strengths
- Oxycodone injection (OxyNorm® Injection) – an injection available in multiple strengths
- Oxycodone tablets (OxyContin®) – a controlled release product available in multiple strengths
- Oxycodone suppositories (Proladone®) – available in one strength.

Suggested Actions by Area Health Services

1. Review local incidents to determine the occurrence of oxycodone incidents.
2. Monitor compliance with witnessing and checking processes set out in Medication Handling in NSW Public Hospitals PD2007_077.
3. Develop and implement strategies to address local causes of oxycodone incidents.
4. Inform staff of the results of reviews and the strategies for addressing local causes.

Revised 7 May 2008: Oxycodone poster (pages 3 and 4) has undergone extensive revision.

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Suggested Strategies to Reduce Incidents Involving Oxycodone

- Conduct inservice education for nurses and doctors on the available range of products and strengths. Provide concise information for use in patient care areas.
- Review the range of products available on hospital formulary.
- Limit the range of products available in clinical areas.
- Separate products with look-alike names on storage shelves, computer screens, and on any printed prescriber or stock order forms.
- Prescribe oxycodone and morphine products using the generic **AND** trade names.
- Pharmacists, when available, should review all opioid prescriptions and clarify product to be administered prior to first administration.
- Build computer alerts to notify the prescriber, pharmacy and nursing staff, and affix warning labels to products or storage areas as appropriate.
- Advise staff, **patients** and carers about the potential for confusion.

Further Information

Medication Handling in NSW Public Hospitals PD2007_077

Quality and Safety Branch website on Medication Safety

See attached poster on “Solid Oral Morphine and Oxycodone Products for Pain Relief” (adapted from St Vincent’s Hospital, Melbourne, October 2007).

SOLID ORAL MORPHINE and OXYCODONE PRODUCTS for PAIN RELIEF

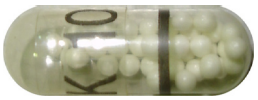
NSW HEALTH

Drug administration errors have occurred where patients have been given

- **morphine** when **oxycodone** was ordered and vice versa
- **immediate release tablets/capsules** when **controlled/sustained release** was ordered and vice versa.

Please check all medication orders carefully to see which product is required.
If in doubt, contact the prescriber or a pharmacist.

Brand name	Presentations and strengths
Morphine products	
Anamorph®	**Morphine tablets immediate release**  30 mg
Sevredol®	**Morphine tablets immediate release**  10 mg  20 mg
MS Contin® Swallow whole. Do not cut, crush or chew. Usual dosage frequency: twice a day.	**Morphine tablets controlled release**  5 mg  10 mg  15 mg  30 mg  60 mg  100 mg  200 mg

Brand name	Presentations and strengths
Kapanol® Do not crush or chew pellets. Usual dosage frequency: once or twice a day. Not interchangeable with MS Contin® as bio - equivalence has not been established.	**Morphine capsules controlled release**  10 mg  20 mg  50 mg  100 mg
MS Mono® Do not crush or chew pellets. Usual dosage frequency: once a day.	**Morphine capsules controlled release**  30 mg  60 mg  90 mg  120 mg
Oxycodone products	
Endone®	**Oxycodone tablets immediate release**  5 mg
OxyNorm®	**Oxycodone capsules immediate release** 5 mg 10 mg 20 mg 
OxyContin® Swallow whole. Do not cut, crush or chew. Usual dosage frequency: twice a day.	**Oxycodone tablets controlled release** 5 mg 10 mg 20 mg 40 mg 80 mg