

Decision of the Pharmacy Board of Australia

Performance and Professional Standards Panel

Jurisdiction: Western Australia

Date of Hearing: 7 May 2013

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Classification of Notification:

Pharmacy/Medication - inappropriate, unlawful or inaccurate dispensing

Pharmacy/Medication: inadequate counselling/information about medication

Allegations

It was alleged that the pharmacist behaved in a way that constituted unsatisfactory professional performance under section 191(1)(b)(i) of the National Law in that they made a dispensing error by failing to:

- a. check the label details against the medication package
- b. use a barcode scanner when dispensing the medication
- c. accurately count the remaining stock to cross-check the amount dispensed
- d. perform a final check of the dispensed medication against the prescription and
- e. counsel the customer collecting the medication.

Finding

The pharmacist admitted the dispensing error and their unsatisfactory professional performance. The panel accepted the admission and found that the pharmacist had behaved engaged in unsatisfactory professional performance by making a dispensing error by failing to:

- a. check the label details against the medication package and
- b. perform a final check of the dispensed medication against the prescription.

The panel found that there was no evidence to substantiate the allegations that a count had not been undertaken and that the customer had not been properly counselled. The panel also found that the practitioner was not able to use a barcode scanner on this occasion, as barcode scanners had not yet been installed at the pharmacy. While barcode scanners are tools to assist in ensuring dispensing errors do not occur, their use does not abrogate a practitioner's responsibility to perform all other checks to minimise the risk of such an error occurring.

Determination

The panel cautioned the practitioner and recommended that they implement a new process in the pharmacy's dispensing procedures requiring the pharmacist to initial medication packages to identify that the medication had been checked before being supplied to the patient.