

Prescribing Tip No. 195 Date: 8<sup>th</sup> March 2018

## Regulation 28: Controlled Drugs (CD) Clear Dosing Instructions



NHS England has received a Regulation 28 report from a coroner relating to the use of clear dosage instructions on controlled drug prescriptions. The report requests that **all healthcare professionals involved in the prescribing and dispensing of prescriptions take further action to prevent future deaths.**

NHS England has received a coroner's report relating to a patient who was prescribed liquid morphine (schedule 5 CD) by their GP and later died through misadventure. The medication label printed was 'take as directed by your doctor every four hours'. The dose to be taken was discussed with the patient by their GP and this understanding was checked further at the point of dispensing. **The coroner's concern was that neither the individual unit dose nor the maximum total daily dose was printed on the label of the medication.**

Although this prescription was issued and dispensed in keeping with regulations, NHS England would like to remind all health care professionals of the guidance contained in the BNF and NICE guideline 46 'Controlled Drugs, Safe Use and Management'. **It is considered best practice to**

- Include clear dosing instructions on the prescription
- Include clear dosing instruction on the corresponding medicine label, such as the individual unit dose and maximum total daily dose.
- Avoid the use of phrases such as 'as directed' and 'when required' as these may lead to confusion and misunderstanding.

### Action for prescribers/dispensers

- Review the use of these phrases within your area of practice.
- Take appropriate action where it is deemed that the phrases are being used inappropriately.
- In cases where it is deemed necessary to use 'as directed' or similar, provide the patient and/ or their carer with explicit verbal and/ or written instructions.

To contact the Medicines Optimisation Team please phone 01772 214302