

names (INNs) and the dose strength; information presented graphically, such as dosing schedules and pictograms; any devices provided for preparing or administering the required dose; the quality and clarity of the information provided in the patient leaflet on how to prepare the doses to be administered, on adverse effects, and on the situations and patient groups in which the drug poses a risk.

The Packaging Awards are based on the assessments conducted by *Prescrire's* Packaging Working Group, in total independence, free from any influence from packaging manufacturers.

No Award in 2015, but various dangers to report. None of the packaging examined in 2015 satisfied all the requirements concerning safety and therapeutic advance to earn a *Prescrire* Packaging Award. However, the dangers identified are illustrated in this year's edition by the 20 or so products that received a Red or Yellow



2015 Prescrire Information Awards

The Information Awards focus on the information provided to *Prescrire* by the companies whose products we examined in the New Products section of our French edition in 2015.

Honours List

(in alphabetic order)

• **Outstanding :**
EG Labo,
Lucane Pharma

• **Followed by :**
Arrow Génériques,
Codexial Dermatologie,
GlaxoSmithKline

Red cards

(in alphabetic order)

Allergan, Bayer Healthcare
(Pharmaceuticals),
Biogen Idec,
Bristol-Myers Squibb,
Crinex, Gilead Sciences,
Meda Pharma, Menarini, Pfizer

Yellow cards



• **Monosept^o** eye drops in single-dose containers (**cethexonium bromide**) Horus Pharma (*Rev Prescrire* n° 376)

The INN is not displayed on the single-dose containers.

• **Zovirax^o** 200 mg/5 ml oral suspension (**aciclovir**) GlaxoSmithKline (*Rev Prescrire* n° 386)

The new dosing device (a double-ended measuring spoon, one end for measuring 2.5 ml and the other 5 ml) is unsuitable and could cause wrong-dose errors, given that the recommended dose is 5 ml or 10 ml.

• **Ribavox^o** tablets (**ribavirin**) Bioprojet Pharma (*Rev Prescrire* n° 386)

The boxes and bottles are covered with fanciful graphics (a tablet depicted as a rocket, clouds and the sun) that increase the resemblance between the three dose strengths and could lead to confusion when dispensing them or preparing doses.

Card: some lack a child-proof cap, others provide no means of preparing doses for children, some patient leaflets fail to warn users of known dangers.

A non-exhaustive list of packaging flaws. Increasing numbers of drugs are placed on the market in packaging that could lead to difficulty or poorly evaluated dangers, for example:

cancer drugs such as cytotoxic agents, in bulk bottles; insulins marketed at different concentrations; and the continued growth of umbrella brands.

The *Prescrire* Packaging Awards and the annual drug packaging review (to be published in a coming issue) reflect the true state of affairs as regards the safe use of drugs. The overall picture is disturbing.

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Pharmaceutical companies hold a wealth of information on the drugs they market or withdraw from the market. They have a responsibility to share this information, in part to help ensure that their drugs are used appropriately and to protect patients from certain risks.

As part of its systematic literature search, *Prescrire* requests clinical data, packaging, and administrative and regulatory information from drug companies, then compares them with information obtained from other sources. *Prescrire's* Information Awards reflect how each company assumes this responsibility to share information.

Still too little transparency on the part of drug companies in 2015. On the whole, pharmaceutical companies supply *Prescrire* with a lot of information, some new and some that we have obtained elsewhere. But they are less cooperative when asked to provide relevant, detailed documen-

tation containing unpublished data, which for example could include details about adverse effects.

Some companies choose to be transparent. These companies are placed on the Honours List. And those rated as "Outstanding" provided us with useful, detailed data without delay and sometimes without being asked.

Other companies fail to respond to some or all of our requests for information, or provide only limited data. Some of them delay their response, then fail to provide usable information. Some omit the most important data. Red Cards are given to highlight persistent shortcomings in the provision of information by certain drug companies.

In 2015, few pharmaceutical companies embraced transparency by agreeing to share with health professionals all the data they hold, in particular data on adverse effects.

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