

A few advances in 2014, but dire packaging persists. This year, for the first time, a child-proof cap was seen on a tube of cutaneous gel, namely *brimonidine* gel, authorised in the EU for the treatment of rosacea. This cap was difficult to unscrew in our tests and is a useful means of protecting children from accidental ingestion, which was reported during the development of this drug, provoking serious adverse effects (respiratory disorders, arrhythmia, psychomotor hyperactivity).

In contrast to this advance, numerous examples of dangerous packaging were again identified in 2014, with about 30 pharmaceuticals receiving a Red or Yellow Card.

This year's Packaging Awards once again highlight the dangers of umbrella brands in the pharmaceutical field, in which similar-looking boxes obscure the fact that the products contain very different drugs.

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Yellow cards



• **Azyter°** eye drops (**azithromycin**) Théa (*Rev Prescrire* n° 369) • **Monoprost°** eye drops (**latanoprost**) Théa (*Rev Prescrire* n° 366) • **Naabak°** eye drops (**N-acetyl-aspartyl-glutamic acid**) Théa (*Rev Prescrire* n° 371) • **Tanakan°** tablets (**Ginkgo biloba**) Ipsen Pharma (*Rev Prescrire* n° 365)

The primary packaging (single-dose containers or blister packs) of these four products fails to mention the nonproprietary name.

• **Orofluco°** capsule (**fluconazole**) Majorelle (*Rev Prescrire* n° 373)

The international nonproprietary name is not printed on the front of the box.

• **Diffu K°** capsules (**potassium chloride**) UCB Pharma (*Rev Prescrire* n° 369)

The strength is expressed differently on the various packaging articles, e.g. 313 mg of *potassium* on the box and 600 mg of microencapsulated *potassium chloride* on the blister packs, which could cause dosing errors.

• **Selincro°** (**nalmefene**) Lundbeck (*Rev Prescrire* n° 374)

The labelling of the blister packs is ambiguous: the packs are divided into pairs of tablets by perforations, and the international nonproprietary name and dose strength are printed just once across each pair of blister pockets. Patients could understand this to mean that the contents of two blister pockets correspond to one dose, leading them to ingest a double dose.

• **Salbumol°** 0.5 mg/1 ml solution for injection and **Salbumol fort°** 5 mg/5 ml solution for IV infusion (**salbutamol**) GlaxoSmithKline (*Rev Prescrire* n° 366)

The graphics on the two boxes are similar and they could be confused, resulting in dosing errors.



2014 Prescrire Information Awards

The Information Awards focus on the information provided to *Prescrire* by the pharmaceutical companies whose products we examined in the New Products section of our French edition in 2014.

Honours List

(in alphabetical order)

• Outstanding:

CTRS (Cell Therapies Research & Services), EG Labo, Lucane Pharma, Mayoly Spindler

• Followed by:

Arrow Génériques, Bioprojet Pharma, GlaxoSmithKline, Mylan, Novartis Vaccines and Diagnostics, SERB

Red cards

(in alphabetical order)

Almirall, Bayer Healthcare, Biogen Idec, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Celgene, Genzyme (Groupe Sanofi), Gilead Sciences, Janssen-Cilag, Menarini, MSD, Novartis Pharma, Pfizer, Sanofi-Aventis

Prescrire's reviews are based on a thorough literature search. Pharmaceutical companies hold a wealth of information on the drugs they market or withdraw from the market. *Prescrire* requests such data (mainly clinical data, packaging, and administrative and regulatory information) so that we can compare or add them to information obtained from other sources.

As is the case with the other *Prescrire* Awards, the Information Awards are granted in total independence, free from any industry or institutional influence. The rules governing the Information Awards are available online, at english.prescrire.org.

Some companies are transparent, others uncooperative. On the whole pharmaceutical companies provide *Prescrire* with a lot of information, some new and some that we have obtained elsewhere. Certain companies respond to our requests in a timely manner and provide us with rel-

evant, detailed documentation, including unpublished data. These companies are placed on the Honours List. The companies rated as "Outstanding" provided us with exhaustive and detailed data, without delay and sometimes without being asked.

Other drug 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. Others omit the most relevant data. "Red cards" are given to highlight persistent shortcomings in the provision of information by some drug companies.

Yet transparency is a sign of a responsible company, determined to make health care safer by withholding none of the data obtained during the evaluation of their drugs, including their limitations.

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