

Recent Publications

Local, small-scale preparation of eye drops

It is becoming increasingly difficult to obtain even basic eye medications in many developing countries. The price of commercially prepared eye drops is rising, and deteriorating infrastructures make their distribution more problematical. In an attempt to overcome these constraints the WHO Programme for the Prevention of Blindness, working in collaboration with the Christoffel Blindenmission, has developed a simple scheme for the local, small-scale, non-commercial production of a range of aqueous eye drops at low cost using simple, appropriate technology. "Local" within this context refers to production in a setting as close to the patient as possible, and always within the country in which the products are to be used.

The scheme is described in detail in a booklet that is not issued to the general public but that is intended for limited distribution to pharmacists in regional or district hospitals in developing countries where the necessary facilities are available. It is recognized that in rural areas of many of these countries, the preparation of medicines is often of necessity left to personnel who may not have had full formal pharmaceutical training. It is forcefully stressed, however, that on no account should persons become engaged in such manufacture without undergoing a period of training in a department where eye drops are already being prepared under the supervision of a pharmacist with experience in this field.

The local small-scale production of eye drops. Programme for the Prevention of Blindness, WHO document WHO/PBL/90.20. World Health Organization, Geneva, 1990.

WHO Model Prescribing Information: Drugs used in mycobacterial diseases

This book provides model prescribing information for some thirteen essential drugs used for the prevention and treatment of tuberculosis, for the treatment of leprosy, and for the treatment of

diseases caused by nontuberculous mycobacteria, including localized cutaneous lesions, pulmonary disease, lymphadenitis, and disseminated disease. Model prescribing information is produced by WHO to assist national authorities, particularly in developing countries, when preparing drug formularies, data sheets, and teaching materials.

The information is presented in three main chapters. The first, devoted to tuberculosis, opens with a detailed overview of the disease, its clinical features, and the main principles of prevention, tuberculin testing, and chemotherapy. The special problems of diagnosis and treatment in HIV-infected patients are briefly discussed. Readers are also given detailed information on the properties of antituberculosis drugs, preferred treatment regimens, monitoring of patient compliance and therapeutic response, and the treatment of relapsing and unresponsive disease. Against this background, model prescribing information is presented for ten drugs used in vaccination, chemoprophylaxis, and chemotherapy. Each drug is profiled in terms of its clinical uses, dosage and mode of administration, contraindications and precautions, use in pregnancy, adverse effects, and possible interactions with other drugs.

Drugs used in the treatment of leprosy are covered in the second chapter, which also features background information on the disease and the main principles of multidrug therapy. The final chapter provides prescribing information for drugs used to treat non-specific mycobacterial infections.

Drugs Used in Mycobacterial diseases. World Health Organization, Geneva, 1991, 40 pages (available in English; French and Spanish editions in preparation). ISBN 92 3 140103 6. Order No. 1150363 Sw.fr. 9-/US\$8.10. In developing countries: Sw. fr. 6.30.

Basic tests for pharmaceutical dosage forms

This book sets out rapid screening tests required to verify the identity of some 150 pharmaceutical dosage forms in common use. The tests, which are simple and readily applicable, make it possible to

confirm the identity of pharmaceutical substances in tablet, capsule, solution, lotion and other forms in those cases where quality is in doubt. The basic tests detailed in this book may also be applied to determine whether gross degradation has occurred despite high standards of packaging.

The book opens with an outline of the essential equipment and laboratory services needed to carry out basic tests. Readers are also advised on what to look for during visual inspection for physical defects, and given detailed information on the procedures required for the determination of melting characteristics.

The core of the book provides step-by-step instructions in the test procedures required to verify the identity of each formulation. The methods describe the use of a limited number of easily available reagents and equipment, and do not require a fully-equipped laboratory. These are predominantly test-tube reactions which can be undertaken away from a laboratory – at a customs post or in a warehouse – by anyone with some understanding of analytical chemistry.

The book concludes with an extensive list of reagents, test solutions, and volumetric solutions needed for testing dosage forms. Preparation

procedures are also provided, in full detail, for those test solutions requiring special attention.

Basic tests for pharmaceutical dosage forms. World Health Organization, 1991, v + 129 pages (available in English; French and Spanish in preparation). ISBN 92 4 154418 x. Order No. 11500359. Sw. fr. 24.–/US\$ 21.60. In developing countries: Sw. fr. 16.80.

Medications that increase sensitivity to light

The Center for Devices and Radiological Health of the United States Food and Drug Administration has produced a listing of drugs and other substances that can increase sensitivity to natural and artificial exposure to ultraviolet light. Intended to alert both health professionals and consumers to the risk of photosensitization and the need for protective measures, it has been compiled from currently available literature and it will be updated as new information becomes available.

Medications that Increase Sensitivity to Light: A 1990 Listing. Obtainable from: FDA, Center for Devices and Radiological Health, HFZ-114, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 20857.