

THIS MONTH

...Drug names
...Praise from down under

Letters

Similar drug names cause concern

In August 1992, the general council of the Canadian Medical Association passed a resolution stating that the growing number of drug products that have look-alike and sound-alike names is a concern. Members are asking that the Health Protection Branch, Department of National Health and Welfare, take urgent action to reduce the problem.

In response, the Health Protection Branch has indicated that there is insufficient evidence that this is a serious enough health risk to take action beyond the current system of checking for obviously similar names. They have a particular problem in the area of brand line extensions, the use of similar sounding names for different but related products manufactured by the same manufacturer, eg, Brand X, Brand X-AF, Brand X-DM, Brand X Children's Liquid, which are an intentional form of look-alike and sound-alike names.

The remaining look-alike and sound-alike names are accidental, and both government and industry have similar interests in reducing the problem. The Health Protection Branch has asked physicians to document as many serious events as possible that can be attributed to look-alike or sound-alike drug names, particularly brand line extensions.

The challenge has been given, and I urge physicians to respond. Send a short report on any health- or life-threatening event that can be blamed on a drug name mix-up to: Dr Anne O. Carter, Associate Director, Health Care and Promotion, Canadian Medical Association, PO Box 8650,

1867 Alta Vista, Ottawa, ON K1G 0G8.

I will make sure that all reports go directly to the people at the Drugs Directorate looking for this information. I will also see that they go to the drug adverse reaction reporting system and any provincial system that is applicable.

— Anne O. Carter, MD, FRCPC
Associate Director
Health Care & Promotion
Canadian Medical Association

Canadian Family Physician fan

Could you please tell me how I would go about subscribing to *Canadian Family Physician*? I have found no other journal as useful and as comprehensive as this one.

Also, I would appreciate receiving any back issues of the journal you might have.

— Dr Louise Stone
Victoria, Australia

Response

Subscription rates to *Canadian Family Physician* are as follows: In Canada, \$74.90 per annum or a single copy for \$7.49. In the United States, \$80 (CDN) per annum or a single copy for \$8 (CDN). All other, \$110 per annum or a single copy for \$13.

This information appears on the masthead page (page 741 this issue) in every issue, as well as our address, telephone number, and fax number.

— The Editors
Canadian Family Physician



Change of Address



If you plan to move, please let us know well in advance by attaching the address label from your copy of the journal in the space provided and filling in your new address.

Attach
label
here



Name.....

Address.....

Phone.....

Return to:
Canadian Family Physician,
2630 Skymark Avenue,
Mississauga, ON L4W 5A4