

Metronidazole 0.75% Gel: different indications



REPORT

- The Community Pharmacy Patient Safety Group was made aware of an incident in which a patient was prescribed and dispensed Rozex a formulation of Metronidazole 0.75% Gel indicated for rosacea, rather than the intended metronidazole 0.75% (vaginal), indicated for bacterial vaginosis.
- The patient used the medication as counselled by her sexual health clinic. She subsequently experienced pain, discomfort and burning. There was no lasting impact on the patients health.
- Whilst it is the responsibility of the prescriber to prescribe the correct medication, there were opportunities for the pharmacy team to pick up the error before the medication was dispensed and in doing so, prevent harm to the patient.

LEARN

- Prior to prescribing the sexual health nurse, who was an Independent Prescriber, rang the pharmacy to confirm availability of metronidazole 0.75% (vaginal). Due to stock issues, questions about availability of the medication were common in the pharmacy.
- The intended use was not made clear by the prescriber and the pharmacy colleague (who was not a pharmacist), advised that Rozex was available.
- The prescriber, who was not aware there were different formulations of Metronidazole 0.75% Gel for different indications, believed they had spoken to a pharmacist, who had recommended Rozex to treat the patients sexual health complaint.

SHARE

- Details were shared with Medication Safety Officers (MSOs) at the Community Pharmacy Patient Safety Group meeting. MSOs will disseminate learnings via their networks.
- Details were published on the Pharmacy Safety website.
- A resource was made available and shared back to the individual, who raised the issue.

ACT

- Pharmacy businesses should remind staff to clearly identify themselves on the phone to avoid any miscommunication about their role.
- The directions on the prescription stated "Use ONCE daily for 5 days' and were typical for metronidazole 0.75% (vaginal) gel. This should have alerted the pharmacist. Pharmacy colleagues should take additional information and instructions into consideration when reviewing prescriptions.
- The prescription was clearly marked 'Sexual Health'. It also carried the FS endorsement indicating "free supply of sexual health treatment". Such endorsements should be considered by the pharmacist when clinically reviewing prescriptions.
- As this was a new medicine for the patient, there was an opportunity to counsel the patient on its use, when it was supplied. Pharmacy colleagues should ensure that patients are given sufficient information in order to use medicines safely.

REVIEW

- Members of the Group will review whether there have been any similar incidents within their organisations.