

Independent Pharmacy Awards 2009

Entries will soon be formally invited for the Independent Pharmacy Awards for 2009.

Awards will include Independent Pharmacist of the Year, to recognise development of clinical services, and Advocate of the Year, to recognise promotion of the cause of independent pharmacy. There will be a special Key Staff award, to recognise a pharmacy staff member who has gone beyond the call of duty to help a patient or



group or patients. The awards will be presented at a lunch-time event in London in November.

Full details of the awards and an entry form will be included in the June issue of *ICP*.

The Independent Pharmacy Awards were successfully launched by *ICP* last year (*ICP*, November 2008 p12). Among the sponsors this year are Numark, Reckitt Benckiser and the National Pharmacy Association.

Pharmacist Support

Signs of stress increase

Pharmacist Support has seen call volume to its Listening Friends stress helpline increase considerably over the past 12 months, the welfare charity for pharmacists says. Calls are up 60 per cent on 2007, it declares.

The charity puts the increase down to the current economic climate.

It says: "Numerous independent and small multiple community pharmacists have substantial loans to facilitate the running of their businesses, and are working long hours (often without breaks) to get the work done. Couple this with additional financial stresses placed on pharmacists through recent changes in NHS remuneration and increased workload, and pharmacists everywhere are feeling the pressure."

The charity has also seen a "significant rise"

in the number of new applications for financial grants — "30 new cases were opened in 2008, the largest number in the recent history of the charity."

The charity provides "confidential, financial and pastoral support in times of need". Formerly known as the Benevolent Fund of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, it was recently re-launched as Pharmacist Support, with the aim of developing its range of services.

"The re-brand reflects the increasing level of pastoral care the organisation is called upon to provide and has led to the extension of the charity's support services to include advice on benefits, debt and employment."

More information is available at www.pharmacistsupport.org.

Royal Pharmaceutical Society

Symposium considers workplace pressures

A symposium on "workload pressures and the pharmacy workforce" was taking place as *ICP* was going to press.

It was being organised by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society as part of its recently announced "Workplace Pressure" campaign.

Pharmacy organisations, employee groups, employers, trade unions, academics and pharmacy superintendents were among those attending.

John Murphy from the Pharmacists' Defence Association was presenting findings from a PDA survey on stress in pharmacy.

Before the meeting, Steve Churton (the

Society's President) said: "We have been hearing loud and clear through the course of this campaign the concerns of pharmacists.

"We know many of them feel worn down by working long hours with inadequate rest breaks, and we know there are concerns about the numbers and skill levels of support staff.

"If we can get the ball rolling on some meaningful solutions which will improve the quality of the working environment and practices, I think we will be well on the way to bringing about the tangible changes pharmacists are asking for and deserve."

Pain and inflammation advice clinic

Analgesics: Making choices

Analgesics and NSAIDs are the first choice for pain. But which should your customers choose when they have joint pain or a soft tissue injury like a strain or sprain?

Paracetamol?

Paracetamol reduces pain but not inflammation. However, because it's less irritating to the stomach than aspirin and NSAIDs, it's recommended as a first-line treatment for joint or muscle pain, especially in the elderly. Side effects are rare, although paracetamol causes liver damage on overdose.

Aspirin?

Aspirin reduces pain, fever and inflammation, but carries a risk of gastric bleeding. It also interacts with various drugs (e.g. warfarin) and isn't suitable for the under-16s. Other NSAIDs are usually recommended for inflammatory conditions, as these are better tolerated.

Compound analgesics?

These contain a simple analgesic (e.g. paracetamol) plus a low-dose opioid like codeine or dihydrocodeine. Low doses of opioids may cause side effects (e.g. constipation), especially in the elderly.

NSAIDs?

Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs or NSAIDs (e.g. ibuprofen or diclofenac) are suitable for acute and chronic inflammatory conditions. They can be taken orally or topically.

- Oral versions are easier to take but they have a higher risk of gastric bleeding than the topical versions.

- Topical NSAIDs (such as new Mobigel Paineze Spray containing 4% diclofenac) go straight to the target area, so a lower dose of NSAID is required, reducing unwanted side effects.

Mobigel Paineze Spray offers three times the strength of other topical diclofenac products on the market and is proven to penetrate deeper.* Containing 4% diclofenac Mobigel Paineze Spray is the highest concentration of diclofenac available without prescription offering targeted pain relief in a convenient-to-use gel spray format.

*Artmann et al. 1997, study no 96014 MIKA Pharma data.

Mobigel® Paineze Spray 4% w/w cutaneous spray, solution. Contains Diclofenac sodium 40mg per 1g spray. For the local symptomatic relief of mild to moderate pain and inflammation following acute blunt trauma of small and medium-sized joints and periarticular structures such as trauma of the tendons, ligaments, muscles and joints e.g. due to sprains and strains. Carefully read instructions contained before use.

For further information contact Goldshield Medical Information on 08700 70 30 33 or by email on Medicalinformation@goldshieldplc.com



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