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Pharmaceutical Representative and Hospital Staff Liaison in Public Hospitals

A Position Statement of the NSW Therapeutic Advisory Group Inc.

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NSW Therapeutic Advisory Group Inc.

Statement on Pharmaceutical Representative and Hospital Staff Liaison in Public Hospitals

General Guidelines

1. All pharmaceutical representatives should comply with the Code of Conduct (latest Edition 14 January 2003) adopted by Medicines Australia.
2. Hospital staff, including Heads of Department, senior medical staff and the Director of Pharmacy should only be seen by appointment. Unsolicited e-mail is not to be used as a means of making contact or organising appointments.
3. All pharmaceutical representatives visiting the hospital should make themselves known to the Director of Pharmacy.
4. Patient care areas may not be used for interviews between pharmaceutical representatives and hospital staff.
5. Non-patient care areas on wards or staff facilities may be used for interviews provided that prior arrangements have been made with the relevant hospital staff.
6. Clinicians should not be paged by representatives unless that method of communication has been specifically requested.

Drug Displays / Educational Sessions

1. The main purpose of drug displays and education sessions is to enable pharmaceutical representatives to familiarise medical and other relevant staff with their products and the therapeutic use of these.
2. Staff members should understand that interactions with pharmaceutical representatives are likely to have promotional intent and are intended to have a direct influence on their subsequent practices. They should therefore also familiarise themselves with other objective information sources to ensure a balanced view of the topic under discussion.
3. Copies of approved product information and consumer medicine information should be made available to staff at such sessions.
4. No samples may be made available at such sessions.
5. Pharmaceutical representatives should not discuss their products with individual members of staff without prior arrangement. If such discussions occur, they should not be conducted at a time or place likely to interfere with the usual work of the individual staff member. Junior medical staff should be encouraged to attend displays and education sessions rather than individual discussion sessions.

6. Drug displays and education sessions for Resident Medical Staff should be organised with the Director of Clinical Training (for general education) or the Head of Department (for departmental education).
7. Education sessions for nursing staff must be approved by the Director of Pharmacy and the Department of Nursing Education. Only drugs which have been approved for hospital use by the Drug and Therapeutics Committee may be discussed at these sessions.
8. Educational sessions must include an opportunity for open discussion, where members of staff may express independent views relating to the topic.

Drug Samples / Starter Packs

1. The Pharmacy Department has the sole responsibility for the distribution of all drugs to patients within the hospital. Arrangements for distribution of all drug samples or starter packs must therefore be made via the Director of Pharmacy. Samples or starter packs, if approved for use, must be delivered directly to the Pharmacy Department.
2. Use of all samples or starter packs (including “familiarisation programs”) must be approved by the Drug and Therapeutics Committee. Use will only be approved after consideration of a formal written submission and/or formulary application.
3. Provision of samples or starter packs must be documented in accordance with the Code of Conduct of Medicines Australia (ie there must be an appropriately signed request/receipt for supply).
4. Samples intended for use in non-hospital patients must not be delivered to staff within the hospital and may not be used for hospital patients.

Drugs Undergoing Clinical Evaluation

1. The Pharmacy Department has the sole responsibility for the distribution of all drugs to patients within the hospital. All drugs to be used in clinical evaluations (including in clinical trials and under the Special Access Scheme) must therefore be distributed via the Pharmacy Department.
2. The Pharmacy Department should be provided with detailed information on the drug prior to or at the time of supply. Such information should include data on efficacy, toxicity and protocol for use.
3. All clinical trials must be approved by the Institutional Ethics Committee and may also require approval by the Drug and Therapeutics Committee.

New Drugs and Pharmaceutical Products

1. New products may not be used in the hospital unless approved by the Drug and Therapeutics Committee. This includes familiarisation programs and the use of existing drugs for new indications
2. Applications may be made by senior medical staff to the Secretary of the Drug and Therapeutics Committee.

Pharmacy Department

1. Representatives will be seen by the Director of Pharmacy by appointment only.
2. Appointments may be made with other pharmacy staff (eg Senior / Specialist Pharmacists or Stores staff) only with the approval of the Director of Pharmacy.

Special Note

Under no circumstances are pharmaceutical representatives permitted to canvass hospital staff on duty without prior appointment and outside the guidelines specified in this statement.

Representatives who fail to comply with these guidelines may be requested to no longer service the hospital.