Dispensing and community medicines

**Prescription and dispensing:**

**Prescription:**
Prescription is a written order or statement to pharmacy shop for the supply of pharmaceuticals, surgical dressings and appliances etc to the patient.

Prescription is a written order for compounding, dispensing and administrating drugs to a specific client or patient and once it is signed by the physician it becomes a legal document. Prescription are required for all medication that require the supervision of a physician, that must be controlled because they are addictive and they carry the potential of being abused, and that could cause health threats from side effects if taken incorrectly. For example heart medications, insulin and antibiotics.

Prescription is from the doctor, dentist or veterinary surgeon to the supply of medicine. Praescriptus is made up of two latin words, “prae” meaning before, and scribe, is a word root meaning to write. Putting it all together prescription means to “write before” which reflects the fact that a prescription traditionally has to be written before a drug could be mixed and administered to a patient.

**Dispensing:**
Dispensing means supply of medicine to an individual patient usually on response of prescription. If product is not available commercially then preparation and supply is done.

A pharmacist must have a throughout information about the following aspects of drugs.

- Stability of drug and excipients.
- Principle of compounding.
- Therapeutic, physical and chemical incompatibility.
- Dosage forms and strength of dispensed product.
- Labeling procedure.
- Packaging of pharmaceutical product.
- Legal requirements about drugs regarding purchases, sales and distribution.

**Parts of prescription:**
A proper medical prescription is consisted of the following sections.

1. Patient information
2. Superscription
3. Inscription
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4. Subscription
5. Signs
6. Refill instruction
7. Signature name and address of the prescriber.

Patient information:
This section contain some common information about the patient like patients name, his age address etc. age is especially important when age is below 18.

Superscription:
Superscription is an Rx symbol un the upper left corner of the prescription.

It is a latin world and is put in the memory of Jupi which is god of healing in Greek mythology.

Inscription:
Inscription is the main body of prescription. It contain name, dosage form, route of administration and strength of the product.

Subscription:
It contains addition instruction to the pharmacist regarding preparation and supply of medicine.

Refill instruction:
Refill instruction is important to determine how much time the container is refilled. Refill information is important especially when there is a long term therapy such as that of tuberculosis and in hypoglycemia.

Handling of prescription:
After prescription the patient has to take the medicine from any community pharmacy where a pharmacist should receive him. Pharmacist is responsible for delivering proper medication to the patient based upon the prescription of prescriber. The pharmacist should follow the sequence below from receiving the prescription to the dispensing of drugs.

- Reading the prescription.
- Pricing the prescription.
- Numbering and dating of prescription.
- Labeling of the dispensed product.
- Preparing and compounding of dispensed product.
- Rechecking the prescription with the dispensed product.
- Delivering the medicine.
- Recording the prescription for future legal purposes.

The most important step of them all is the reading of the prescription. The pharmacist must have knowledge about various abbreviations and short hand writings of the prescriber. A generic name if not fully understood should not be guessed from own. Instead it is recommended to confirm the drug from the physician. The pharmacist should be adequately qualified to have enough knowledge about the drugs available in the pharmacy. Pharmacist should check the prescription for any drug-drug
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interactions and contra-indications, in case if there are some serious contraindications or dosage errors the pharmacist must inform the prescriber about his/her error. A pharmacist may not change the drug classes and generic names as prescribed in prescription on his own, without doctor’s consent. If a doctor by mistake prescribes the wrong medicine and pharmacist delivers the same wrong medicine as prescribed, then both the doctor and pharmacist are liable for legal actions if something wrong happens.

Pharmacist should know about the stock available in his shop, so that he can confirm it in time, if the medicine prescribed in the prescription is available in his stock or not.

Pricing depends upon many factors. The basic aim to keep in mind before pricing a finished product is that the price should not be too high that the consumer does not come back, nor it should be too low that is not economical to sustain the dispensing of that product. In case of monotherapy the price is always on the label which is determined in the pharmaceuticals while in case of compounded drugs the price is determined by pharmacy. Cost of raw material, electric expenditure, labour cost and time taken for preparations of drugs are some of the key factors taking part in pricing the drugs.