



## Patient counselling

When a prescription is dispensed the pharmacist should be satisfied that the patient understands how to use the medication correctly.

The offer of counselling should be made on every occasion that a prescription is dispensed. The Board believes that as a minimum, where any of the following criteria are present, the patient should be counselled by a pharmacist:

- the patient is new to the pharmacy;
- the medication is new to the patient or there is a change in strength from a previous prescription;
- a prescription is for a child;
- where there is a lack of or inadequate directions for use (for example *mdu*);
- a prescription for a drug with a narrow therapeutic index (methotrexate, warfarin, digoxin, phenytoin) or;
- a prescription for a controlled drug.

Counselling provides an opportunity for the pharmacist to discuss all aspects of the prescribed medicine with the patient (or the patient's carer) to ensure the desired therapeutic effect is achieved. The APF 20<sup>th</sup> Ed states under Counselling and Additional Instructions for Dispensed Medicines that:

*It is the pharmacist's responsibility to ensure the patient receives the required information for the quality use of medicine. Counselling implies the communication of information that would encourage this outcome.*

The Board is aware that a lack of counselling can be significant contributor in dispensing errors and their detection.