



**The Patient Information Leaflet**  
from the Patient Engagement Interest Group

# The patient viewpoint...

*What is the one thing that you would like to ask the Pharmaceutical Industry to produce?*

*“ I think that the Pharmaceutical Industry should be looking at producing information different to the PIL that is not overly complicated to read, is not scary as this can even make people think that they would not want to take the medication that they have been prescribed as it appears it could do them more harm than good... ”*

**Sue Allen, patient**

# Patient Information Leaflets - the unmet need



## The PIL is not patient friendly

The Patient Information Leaflet (PIL) provided inside the packaging of medications dispensed from the Pharmacy is a legal requirement that cannot be influenced in terms of appearance and tone of voice despite this style not agreeing with what patients want

However, it's mostly ineffective at addressing it's core purpose – to inform patients about the medication they are taking



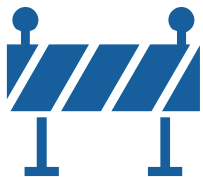
## Why is this important?

- Key information about the product is being overlooked
- An unmet need exists for pharmacists to provide a patient-appropriate version of the PIL to patients when dispensing medication to appropriately inform patients and their caregivers



## What can Pharmaceutical companies do to address this?

- Pharmaceutical companies are unable to influence the tone or appearance of the PIL
- They can provide product information 101 that the PIL contains but do it in a style and channel that aids understanding and is kept and referred back to by the patient



**So what challenges remain and why is the unmet need still not being addressed?**

# PIL - challenges to overcome



## 'Nice to have'

Patient information leaflets created by Pharma companies are often part of a suite of other medical materials developed within a certain budget. **Due to time pressures and available budget needed** for a host of other materials, it can mean patient materials are viewed as a 'nice to have' and not given the time or support needed



## Rushed

Patient materials can, therefore, be rushed and are **less likely to involve patient steering committees** or consultancy to inform and review the tone, appearance and content used. Regulatory and legal teams within Pharmaceutical companies are unlikely to impede the use of any patient-appropriate language and style if it is grounded in insight



## Not promoted

If patient-appropriate leaflets are created by Pharma companies then a major challenge lies in **making pharmacists aware** that they exist as an offering, as well as triggering them to provide this information to patients. Patient leaflets are generally not promoted to pharmacists and, therefore, they are often unaware of their existence or value to patients



## Avoided

If pharmacists are aware of patient leaflets developed by Pharma companies but perceive them to have been created **without patient appropriate language** or style in mind then they are likely to consciously avoid providing these materials to patients and any promotional effort would be wasted



The challenges are best addressed by taking the time to develop materials with patient input and insights taken into consideration on content, language and design / format. The patient leaflet then needs to be promoted appropriately to Pharmacists to ensure uptake and use

# Top tips for developing a patient information leaflet



Work with patients to determine need, focus and content



Use simple visuals and clear icons – sometimes it helps to show how something works

*e.g. the heart*, before you explain what is going wrong



Use a large font size – ideally 12 point – with good contrast – this will help the visually impaired



Keep content easy to read, with appropriate language and following literacy / numeracy guidelines (age 12 or below)



Never use all capitals in a title or in text – people with dyslexia find this especially difficult to read



Assume nothing – many people don't have a GCSE pass in double science, so their knowledge of how their bodies work or where organs are positioned may be limited



Where possible limit sentence length to 15 words or fewer and avoid conjunctions



Develop two patient leaflets wherever possible, for the less expert, and the expert patient



A glossary can help but use common words to help pronunciation  
*e.g. pro-nun-see-a-shun*



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