

How Labels and Packages Can Cause Medication Error

The most common reports we received at SFDA from hospitals were look-alike medication and unclear information on the outer packages that may cause problems, and confusion between products.

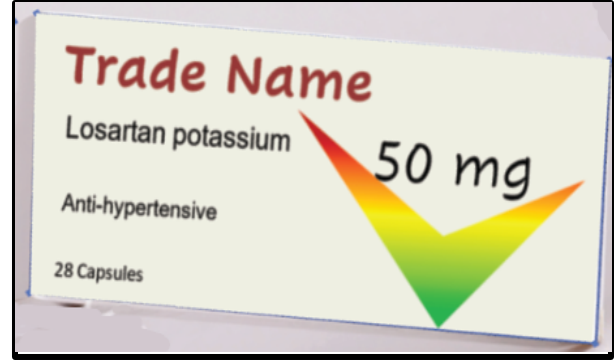
1. Look-Alike Packaging

Usually, the same drug has more than one strength. However, many drug manufacturers package these products in containers that look similar. For example, the two bottles in image (1) are alpha-blockers medicine that look almost identical, which can be mixed-up easily.



2. Misleading Information

There were a few incidents where some manufacturers wrote the indication of prescription medicine on the outer package, leading to confused patients when using the medication for another approved indication other than the one written on the package. Image (2) is an example where the package states that the medication is an antihypertensive medication while this drug used for other approved indications such as, diabetic nephropathy.



3. Foreign Languages

Critical information (brand name, generic name of the product, strength, dosage form, total volume or concentration of vial and bottle, and warning statements in some cases), must be written in both Arabic and English languages if the medication is used by patients. While it is acceptable to write the information only in the English language if the medication is used in hospitals by healthcare providers. All other foreign languages must be deleted from the outer and inner packages in order to leave the label clear and easy to read. Otherwise, it is considered a medication error, see image (1) and image (3).



SFDA would like to acknowledge all the reporters for sharing these important reports that might affect patient's safety and health care quality.