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## Appendix 7: Taking controlled drugs to other countries

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Some patients receiving palliative care travel to other countries and they will need to take their medicines with them. Practitioners can help ensure a trouble-free journey by advising them, if relevant, about controlled drugs (Box A7.A).<sup>1-4</sup> Travellers need to consider two sets of law, the law of the country they are in and the law of the country or countries to which they are travelling.

### **Box A7.A UK controlled drug Schedules<sup>5, a</sup>**

#### **Schedule 1 (CD Lic)**

Drugs with high abuse potential and no accepted medicinal use in the UK. Production, possession and supply illegal except for specially licensed individuals (e.g. researchers, police officers). Includes hallucinogens (e.g. lysergic acid diethylamide/LSD, 3,4-methylene-dioxymethamphetamine/ecstasy, cannabis).

#### **Schedule 2 (CD POM)**

Drugs with high abuse potential but recognized medical uses. Generally subject to full UK controlled drugs regulations. Includes most opioids (e.g. morphine, diamorphine, methadone), major stimulants (e.g. amphetamines and cocaine) and secobarbital.

#### **Schedule 3 (CD No Register)**

Drugs with less abuse potential than those in Schedules 1 and 2, and considered less harmful if abused. Includes most barbiturates, some opioids (e.g. buprenorphine, pentazocine), some minor stimulants (e.g. benzphetamine), appetite suppressants, meprobamate and temazepam.

#### **Schedule 4 Part I (CD Benz)**

Benzodiazepines (*except* temazepam), ketamine and zolpidem.

#### **Schedule 4 Part II (CD Anab)**

Hormones liable to abuse (e.g. androgenic and anabolic steroids, chorionic gonadotrophin, clenbuterol and growth hormone analogues).

#### **Schedule 5 (CD Inv)**

Preparations of controlled drugs in other schedules (e.g. morphine, codeine, pholcodine, cocaine) which, because of their low strength, are exempt from virtually all UK controlled drugs regulations.

a. see referenced source for complete list of drugs in each Schedule.

The following is general advice, based on regulations current in the UK in the first half of 2006, but should not be regarded as formal legal advice. Detailed advice can be obtained from the regulatory authorities in the relevant countries.

### **Guidelines for departure from and re-entry into the UK**

Although UK Schedule 2, 3, and 4 Part I controlled drugs (Box A7.A) are normally subject to stringent import and export licensing requirements, the UK Home Office has an Open General Licence which lists the permitted maximum quantities of controlled drugs which can be taken out of and brought back into the UK for personal use without a specific drugs export/import licence. Table A7.1 gives some examples but is not the full list.<sup>4,6</sup> If you are uncertain about the status of a drug, advice should be obtained directly from the Home Office:<sup>6</sup>

The Home Office  
Drugs Licensing Section  
6th Floor, Peel Building  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF  
UK  
Tel: +44 (0)20 7035 0472  
Fax: +44 (0)20 7035 6161  
e-mail: [licensing\\_enquiry.aadu@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:licensing_enquiry.aadu@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk)

For patients travelling with less than the permitted limit, a letter listing the drug regimen from their general practitioner or other involved doctor is sufficient. Drugs listed in Schedule 4 Part II (provided they are medicinal products for self-administration) and Schedule 5 do not require an export/import licence.<sup>3</sup>

An application form can be obtained from the Home Office Drugs website<sup>4</sup> or the above address. This must be completed by the patient's doctor and submitted with a covering letter on the doctor's headed note-paper to confirm that the details are correct. Alternatively, applications may be made by a letter from the patient's doctor stating:

- the patient's name and address
- names and quantities of drugs to be taken out of/brought into the UK
- strength and form of the drug preparations
- dates of travel from and back to the UK.

Doctors who need to take controlled drugs abroad when accompanying patients may also be issued with licences.

Ten working days should be allowed for processing the application. Once issued, the licence lasts for 3 months; if the patient is overseas for longer, or receives further prescriptions for controlled drugs while overseas, they should contact the Home Office on the telephone number above to arrange for a renewed licence to be faxed to them so that they can import the new supplies on their return to the UK.

Licences are issued to comply with the Misuse of Drugs Act and facilitate passage through UK customs control. Covering letters or licences should be carried in the patient's hand luggage in case the UK customs want to examine them. Medicines should be contained in their original packaging and also carried in the hand luggage. Personal drugs export/import licences have no legal status outside the UK.

**Table A7.1** Some of the controlled drugs and their permitted quantities on the Open General Licence list<sup>4,6</sup>

|   |       |
|---|-------|
| Amfetamine                                      | 300mg |
| Buprenorphine hydrochloride (Temgesic®)         | 24mg  |
| Dexamfetamine sulphate                          | 900mg |
| Dextromoramide tartrate                         | 900mg |
| Diamorphine hydrochloride ampoules <sup>a</sup> | 1.35g |
| Diazepam  | 900mg |
| Dihydrocodeine tartrate <sup>b</sup>            | 3.6g  |
| Dipipanone                                      | 600mg |
| Fentanyl  | 45mg  |
| Hydrocodone                                     | 675mg |
| Hydromorphone                                   | 360mg |
| Ketamine  | 900mg |
| Methadone <sup>c</sup>                          | 500mg |
| Metamfetamine                                   | 900mg |
| Methylphenidate                                 | 900mg |
| Morphine  | 1.2g  |
| Oxycodone                                       | 900mg |
| Phenobarbital                                   | 2.7g  |
| Phenobarbital sodium                            | 1.2g  |
| Temazepam                                       | 900mg |

- medicinal diamorphine is available only in the UK. The following countries do not permit patients from the UK to bring in their own supply: Australia, Greece, Italy, Germany, France, Japan, the Netherlands, South Africa, the USA and Zimbabwe.
- controlled only if injectable, or if tablets contain >100mg.
- if >2g, the Home Office requires a written statement by the patient's doctor confirming that the travel documents (e.g. air tickets) have been seen.

### Travelling to or through other countries

It is important to fulfil the controlled drug import/export requirements for *all* the countries in which the patient will have to pass through customs. The International Narcotics Control Board has produced a list of suggested maximum quantities for personal import/export of internationally controlled substances (Table A7.2) and a model import/export certificate (Box A7.B). It is also advisable to carry a duplicate copy of the prescription, preferably stamped by the pharmacy from which the drugs were obtained. *However, patients should check exact legal details and the quantities they are allowed to import/export with the relevant Embassies or High Commissions before travelling.* For example, some of the quantities suggested in Table A7.2 differ from those on the UK Open General Licence list in Table A7.1. A list of Embassy contact details can be downloaded from the Home Office Drugs website.<sup>4</sup>

**Table A7.2** Suggested maximum quantities of controlled substances for international travellers <sup>2a</sup>

| <i>Drug</i>                   | <i>Quantity</i> |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| Buprenorphine                 | 300mg           |
| Codeine                       | 12g             |
| Diazepam                      | 300mg           |
| Dihydrocodeine                | 12g             |
| Fentanyl transdermal patches  | 100mg           |
| Fentanyl (other formulations) | 20mg            |
| Hydromorphone                 | 300mg           |
| Lorazepam                     | 75mg            |
| Methadone                     | 2g              |
| Morphine                      | 3g              |
| Oxycodone                     | 1g              |

a. this is not a complete list; see referenced source for further details.

**Box A7.B** Model certificate for personal import/export of internationally controlled substances<sup>2</sup>

**Country and place of issue**

Country of issue  
Place of issue  
Date of issue  
Period of validity<sup>a</sup>

**Prescribing physician**

Last name, first name  
Address  
Telephone (including country code)  
Professional licence number

**Patient**

Last name, first name  
Sex  
Place of birth  
Date of birth  
Home address  
Passport or identity card number  
Intended country of destination

**Prescribed medical preparation**

Trade name of drug (or composition)  
Formulation (ampoules, tablets, etc.)  
Number of tablets, etc.  
rINN of the active substance  
Concentration of the active substance  
Total quantity of the active substance  
Instructions for use  
Duration of prescription in days  
Remarks

**Issuing authority**

Official name of the authority  
Address  
Telephone (country code, local code, number)  
Official seal of the authority  
Signature of the responsible officer

a. the recommended duration is 3 months.

- 1 Myers K (1999) Flying home: Helping patients to arrange international air travel. *European Journal of Palliative Care*. **6**: 158–161.
- 2 International Narcotics Control Board (2004) *Guidelines for travelers*. Available at [www.incb.org/incb/guidelines\\_travellers.html](http://www.incb.org/incb/guidelines_travellers.html) (last accessed June 2005).

- 3 British National Formulary (2006) Controlled drugs and drug dependence. In: *British National Formulary* (No. 51). British Medical Association and Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, London, pp.8-9.
- 4 Home Office Drugs website (2006) *Drug Laws and Licensing*. Available at <http://www.drugs.gov.uk/drugs-laws/licensing/personal/> (last accessed May 2006).
- 5 Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain (2005) *Medicines, Ethics and Practice. A guide for pharmacists*. Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, London, pp.23-57.
- 6 Home Office (2006) Personal communication.