



COLLEGE OF PHARMACISTS OF MANITOBA



2022
WINTER NEWSLETTER

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This Newsletter is published four times per year by the College of Pharmacists of Manitoba (the College) and is forwarded to every licenced pharmacist and pharmacy owner in the Province of Manitoba. Decisions of the College of Pharmacists of Manitoba regarding all matters such as regulations, drug-related incidents, etc. are published in the newsletter. The College therefore expects that all pharmacists and pharmacy owners are aware of these matters.

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The mandate of the College is to serve and protect the public interest

Our mission is to protect the health and well-being of the public by ensuring and promoting safe, patient-centred and progressive pharmacy practice in collaboration with other health-care providers.

FEATURE

President's Message

Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of the College of Pharmacists of Manitoba (CPhM) Council and office staff, I would like to wish you and your loved ones a joyous, peaceful, and safe holiday season and New Year.

As we move into 2023, I recognize it's been quite a busy year here at CPhM. It was a year of reflection but also a year full of progress and change. In May, at its inaugural meeting, the new Council of CPhM elected officers to serve on Executive Committee for the 2022 – 2024 term. In addition, Council appointed a Public Representative to serve as a member of the Executive Committee, as we acknowledge the importance of public representation at all levels of its governance framework and strive toward transparent and accountable governance in the public interest. In August, Council appointed Mr. Kevin Hamilton to take on the position of Registrar and CEO to succeed Ms. Susan Lessard-Friesen, who retired at the end of September after 26 years at CPhM. We look forward to Mr. Hamilton's guidance and leadership to advance the regulation of pharmacy practice in Manitoba in support of the mandate to uphold the public interest.

I would like to encourage pharmacy professionals who provide care to rural, remote and underserved populations to participate in the consultation for feedback on the [Rural, Remote and Underserved Populations: Access to Prescribed Medications Joint Practice Statement](#) to gather valuable feedback on its use in pharmacy practice. Constructive feedback is important to making the necessary changes to evolve pharmacy practice in Manitoba. The consultation deadline has been extended to December 30, 2022, and can be accessed via the following link <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/6KST5MD>

If you or someone you know deserves recognition for their contributions to the pharmacy profession, submit a nomination or application for a CPhM Award or a Young Leader Award. Please see Page 8. for more information. These awards will be presented at the

145th Annual General Meeting in May. More information on this event will be available in future CPhM communications.

On October 4, 2022, CPhM hosted its fourth annual Medical Examiner Professional Development (PD) event, entitled Understanding the CPSM Standards of Practice to Provide Safer Care, and OAT Provision in the Context of Other Psychoactive Drugs, with guest speakers Talia Carter and Mike Sloan. If you were unable to attend the live PD event, I recommend viewing the recording found on the CPhM website under the [Recorded PD Programs section](#).

We hope to build on the strides we have made this past year and make 2023 another successful year for pharmacy practice in Manitoba.

Take the time to thank your team for their commitment and your family for their support. I hope you have time to celebrate the holidays safely with your family, make new memories, and take some personal time to relax and recharge.

Happy holidays and a happy New Year from my family to yours!

Jane Lamont



FOCUS ON PATIENT SAFETY

Education from the Adult Inquest Review Committee Meetings of the Chief Medical Examiner's Office

The College of Pharmacists of Manitoba attends Adult Inquest Review Committee meetings at the Chief Medical Examiner's Office to review deaths, which may have involved prescription drugs, focusing on opioids and other drugs of abuse. A de-identified case study based on information obtained from these meetings is presented in each Newsletter to provide an opportunity for education and self-reflection for all pharmacists.

Introduction

KE is a 29-year-old male who was found dead in his bed by his partner on December 17, 2020, after they failed to contact him earlier. He had last been known alive on the prior evening. He had a history of a seizure disorder, depression, anxiety, chronic alcohol use disorder, and a recent traumatic brain injury resulting from alcohol intoxication. An autopsy was performed, and the immediate cause of death was determined to be epilepsy, with venlafaxine toxicity identified as a significant contributor to his death. The death was ruled accidental by the medical examiner.

Results

The following chart represents the results of the toxicology report. Diazepam, nordiazepam, temazepam, and oxazepam were found in his blood; however, the levels were below the sensitivity of the test. Drugs that were above the therapeutic range are indicated by an asterisk (*):

Drug	Level in blood	Therapeutic Range (if applicable)
Venlafaxine*	1500 ng/mL	62 – 138 ng/mL
O-desmethylvenlafaxine*	1000 ng/mL	118 – 252 ng/mL
Levetiracetam	7.7 ug/mL	3 – 32 ug/mL
Ethanol	12 mg/dL	--

Note: Serotonin and norepinephrine-reuptake inhibitors undergo post-mortem redistribution and levels may be slightly elevated in the toxicology report.

KE's DPIN history below only includes a summary of the medications relevant to his toxicology results:

Generic Name	Date Dispensed	Strength	Quantity	Days' Supply	Prescriber	Pharmacy
Venlafaxine	Nov 24, 2020	75	30	30	Dr. A	ABC
	Nov 24, 2020	37.5	30	30	Dr. A	ABC
	Oct 19, 2020	75	30	30	Dr. B	DEF
	Sep 1, 2020	75	30	30	Dr. B	DEF
	Jul 21, 2020	75	30	30	Dr. B	GHI
	Jun 11, 2020	75	30	30	Dr. B	GHI
	May 6, 2020	75	28	28	Dr. B	GHI

Levetiracetam	Nov 24, 2020	500	60	30	Dr. A	ABC
	Oct 19, 2020	500	44	22	Dr. B	DEF
	Sept 1, 2020	500	60	30	Dr. B	DEF
	Jul 21, 2020	500	60	30	Dr. B	GHI
	Jun 11, 2020	500	60	30	Dr. B	GHI
	May 7, 2020	500	56	28	Dr. B	GHI
Lamotrigine	Nov 24, 2020	100	60	30	Dr. A	ABC
	Oct 19, 2020	100	60	30	Dr. B	DEF
	Aug 1, 2020	100	60	30	Dr. B	DEF
	Jul 21, 2020	100	60	30	Dr. B	GHI
	Jun 11, 2020	100	60	30	Dr. B	GHI
	May 6, 2020	100	56	28	Dr. B	GHI
Zopiclone	Nov 24, 2020	7.5	30	30	Dr. A	ABC
	Sep 1, 2020	7.5	30	30	Dr. B	DEF
	Jul 21, 2020	7.5	30	30	Dr. B	GHI
	Jun 11, 2020	7.5	30	30	Dr. B	GHI
	May 6, 2020	7.5	28	28	Dr. B	GHI
Naltrexone	Nov 30, 2020	50 mg	30	30	Dr. A	ABC

Discussion

Antidepressants are commonly used in patients with epilepsy.^{1,2} Some caution should be exercised in selecting an antidepressant for patients with epilepsy especially in patients with concurrent alcohol use disorder, as some antidepressants are associated with an elevated risk of new onset seizures. For instance, tricyclic antidepressants should be avoided, and bupropion is contraindicated in patients with a history of seizures.^{3,4} Serotonin norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors, including venlafaxine, should also be used with caution in patients with a seizure history.^{5,6}

Venlafaxine toxicity was determined to be a critical contributing factor in this patient's death. Venlafaxine is commonly prescribed for the treatment of major depressive disorder (MDD) and/or anxiety.⁷ At high concentrations, this medication can cause hypotension, cardiac arrhythmias and seizures, which can lead to death.⁷ Furthermore, venlafaxine is associated with a low but elevated risk of seizure induction, meaning it can lower the seizure threshold and promote seizure activity in susceptible individuals.⁸ From a pre-clinical safety study, 0.26% of patients treated with venlafaxine were reported to have seizures.⁹ Therefore, it is advised that patients should be closely observed for 18 hours after overdosing on immediate-release venlafaxine and 21 hours for patients who have overdosed on the sustained-release formulation, as patients are prone to seizures within this time period.¹⁰

This patient was prescribed bupropion in the year prior to his death. Bupropion is a noradrenergic and dopaminergic antidepressant that is also used for the treatment of MDD.¹¹ A prospective study showed that the therapeutic use of bupropion at doses up to 300 mg/day in depressed patients without predisposition to seizures was associated with a seizure rate of 0.40% in the intermediate-release formulation and 0.10% in the sustained-release formulation.¹² Since this patient had epilepsy and alcohol use disorder, the probability of having seizures was increased when the patient was taking this medication. Due to bupropion's potential to lower seizure thresholds, concurrent administration with other medications that lower the seizure threshold should be avoided.¹¹

Pharmacists should be mindful of the potential for seizures as an adverse effect of venlafaxine, even at low doses.¹³ Asking patients about the use of other substances can help identify potential drug interactions and determine whether safer pharmacotherapy options are available for the patient. It is crucial for pharmacists to consider the synergistic effects of venlafaxine when combined with medications that lower the seizure threshold, such as bupropion, as both drugs may simultaneously increase the frequency of seizures. Moreover, the combination of sedating anti-seizure medications,

zopiclone, plus alcohol use, puts the patient at an increased risk of falls and injury, which the patient experienced in the previous year. Thus, pharmacists must thoroughly counsel patients on the risks of pharmacotherapy in the setting of alcohol use disorder and seizure disorder and re-assess the efficacy and safety of the patient's medications to determine the need for continued use.

It is a pharmacist's primary responsibility to ensure patient safety when dispensing a prescription medication and they do not have the obligation to dispense medications they believe may cause patient harm. All members are reminded of their professional obligation to ensure that each prescription is reviewed thoroughly, and potential issues addressed, even if it means there may be a difficult patient encounter. Measures must be taken to address issues with appropriateness of drug therapy, drug interactions, therapeutic duplication, and inappropriate or unsafe dosing.

References:

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2023 CPhM AWARDS

Call For Award Nominations

The College of Pharmacists of Manitoba (CPhM) is now accepting nominations for the 2023 CPhM Awards. If you or a pharmacist you know has made a noteworthy contribution to patient care and safety or the practice of pharmacy, please consider submitting a nomination or application for one of the awards listed in the CPhM [Awards brochure](#).

CPhM has created [award submission guidelines](#) for your consideration prior to forwarding your nomination to the Awards & Nominating Committee.

Young Leader Awards

The Young Leader Awards celebrate the efforts of up to ten leaders in pharmacy practice. The recipients will receive a plaque to commemorate their contributions to the pharmacy profession and a \$500 cash prize.

The Young Leader Awards are open to recently licensed pharmacists (practicing one to five years post-graduation) and to pharmacy students (interns) in their final year of study who have made a professional contribution to patient care, the pharmacy profession or amongst their colleagues and peers at the University of Manitoba's College of Pharmacy.

If you or someone you know meet these criteria, please submit a nomination or application package including the nominee or applicant's Curriculum Vitae and a summary of their activities and contributions within pharmacy practice or within the College of Pharmacy, University of Manitoba. Awards will be presented during the 2023 Awards Presentation in May 2023.



Submissions

Please submit all nominations or applications to the College of Pharmacists of Manitoba by regular mail or email.

Mail: College of Pharmacists of Manitoba

Attention: The Awards & Nominating Committee – Young Leader Awards

200 Taché Avenue Winnipeg,
MB R2H 1A7

Email: info@cphm.ca with the subject line: "Attention: The Awards & Nominating Committee – Young Leader Awards"

The deadline for nominations or applications is Friday, January 13, 2023.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In Case You Missed It

On October 4 2022, the College of Pharmacists of Manitoba (CPhM) hosted its fourth annual Medical Examiner (ME) Professional Development (PD) event entitled, Understanding the CPSM Standards of Practice to Provide Safer Care, and OAT Provision in the Context of Other Psychoactive Drugs.

The first program segment, The Tale of Two Standards: The Opioid & Benzodiazepine Saga Continues, Two Years Later, was presented by Talia Carter. Her presentation reviewed the intent and essence of the Standards of Practice (SOPs) for Prescribing Opioids and Benzodiazepines/Z-drugs and reviewed how the College of Physicians and Surgeons ME work relates to SOPs.

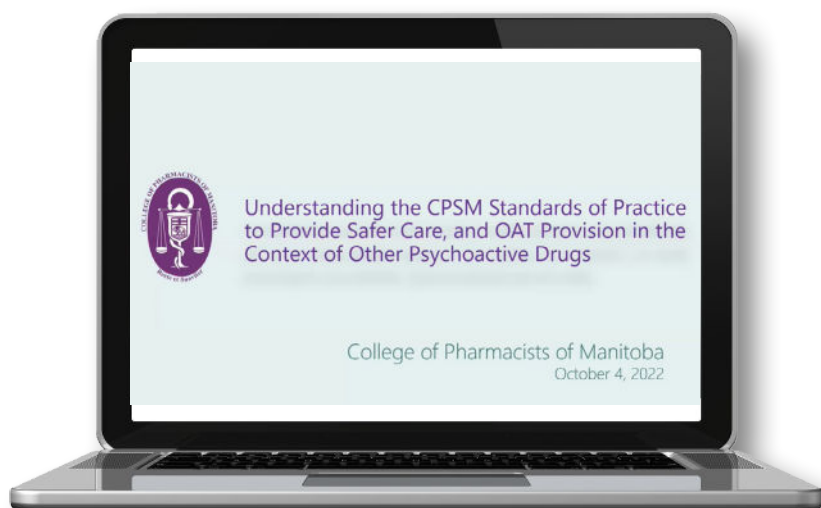
The second program segment, Analyzing Medical Examiner Files, presented Mike Sloan, reviewed and analyzed two medical examiner case files linked to

suspected opioid overdoses in OAT patients and discussed the current practice standards related to the dispensing of OAT concurrently with psychoactive medications.

If you were unable to attend the live PD event, the recording is now available on the CPhM [website](#) under the Recorded PD Programs section.

Answers to questions that were not answered during the live session due to time constraints are also available on the website. To receive your statement of participation for 1.5 CEUs, please fill out the [evaluation form](#).

CPhM would like to extend its sincere gratitude and thanks to the presenters, as well as those who participated in the program.



Resources:

- Recording link: [Understanding the CPSM Standards of Practice to Provide Safer Care, and OAT Provision in the Context of Other Psychoactive Drugs](#)
- [Questions and Answers](#)
- [Evaluation Form](#)

DISCIPLINE DECISIONS/SUSPENSIONS

Pharmacist Licensure Decisions

1. Effective April 29, 2022, the Complaints Committee has directed the Registrar to maintain the interim suspension of the practicing license of Mr. Peter Kovac (College Licence No. 14915) pending the outcome of the proceedings of the matter, in accordance with section 40(1) of *The Pharmaceutical Act*.

Publication of this notice is pursuant to section 132(2) of the Pharmaceutical Regulation.

The interim suspension by the Registrar pending review of the matter by the Complaints Committee was previously published in the Fall 2022 Newsletter.

2. Effective May 12, 2022, the Complaints Committee has directed the Registrar to maintain the interim suspension of the practicing license of Mr. Garth Yelland (College Licence No. 24501) pending the outcome of the proceedings of the matter, in accordance with section 40(1) of *The Pharmaceutical Act*.

Publication of this notice is pursuant to section 132(2) of the Pharmaceutical Regulation.

The interim suspension by the Registrar pending review of the matter by the Complaints Committee was previously published in the Fall 2022 Newsletter.

3. Effective November 4, 2022, the Registrar has issued an interim suspension of the practicing license of Mr. Michael Watts (College Licence No. 31891) under section 24(1) of *The Pharmaceutical Act*, pending review of the matter by the Complaints Committee.

Publication of this notice is pursuant to section 132(3) of the Pharmaceutical Regulation.

4. Effective December 16, 2022, the Complaints Committee has directed the Registrar to maintain the interim suspension of the practicing license of Mr. Michael Watts (College Licence No. 31891) pending the outcome of the proceedings of the matter, in accordance with section 40(1) of *The Pharmaceutical Act*.

Publication of this notice is pursuant to section 132(2) of the Pharmaceutical Regulation.

The profession was previously advised of the interim suspension by the Registrar on November 4, 2022.

HOLIDAY MESSAGE

Season's Greetings from CPhM

Dear Pharmacy Professional,

The end of the year is an opportunity to reflect on the successes and challenges of providing care to your patients during stressful times, look back at the challenges that foster your resilience, take pleasure in the appreciation you received from those you served, and celebrate your successes and important milestones.

We see evidence of your exceptional care each and every day of the year. Thank you for your compassion, skill, and dedication to the health and safety of the patients we are privileged to serve.

On behalf of the College of Pharmacists of Manitoba Council and staff, we are pleased to extend to you our best wishes for a happy and healthy holiday season and New Year!

Note: The CPhM office will be closed Monday, December 26, 2022, through Monday, January 2, 2023. Regular office hours resume on Tuesday, January 3, 2023, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Sincerely,

College of Pharmacists of Manitoba