



(An electronic copy will be emailed to students each year)

School of Pharmacy

Confidentiality Agreement for all Pharmacy Students at the University of Otago

Welcome to the Pharmacy School. During your pharmacy course you will have access to health information about patients and access to individual patients, both in community pharmacy and hospital pharmacy. Such access is a privilege which health care professionals enjoy but it is accompanied by serious responsibilities. It is important that you are aware of these responsibilities from the first day of your pharmacy education and that you pay due regard to them throughout your career in the School of Pharmacy. Failure to keep to these guidelines might result in prosecution under both the Privacy Act and the Health and Disability Commissioner Act. Breaches will certainly invoke disciplinary procedures by the University, possibly resulting in the refusal of terms and the consequent termination of your pharmacy education.

Patient Co-operation

We are very grateful for the co-operation of patients in pharmacy education, without which such education could not proceed. Each patient will be made aware of the fact that, as a pharmacy student in a clinical area, you are a junior member of a health care team and that you are bound by the same strict conditions of confidentiality as other members of that team. Patients have the right to opt out of being involved in pharmacy education.

The University of Otago expects all students to follow these guidelines at all times in their dealings with patients. We ask that you read through these guidelines and sign this document at the bottom acknowledging your compliance with them. This form must be signed before you can begin your placements.

Guidelines

1. Legal requirements

As a pharmacy student you are considered to be subject to *the Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights* issued in relation to the Health and Disability Commissioner Act. We recommend that you read this carefully and become familiar with it. We also recommend that you consult the *Health Information Privacy Code* which is issued in connection with the Privacy Act. You will be studying these during our BPharm programme.

2. Confidentiality

Speaking about the patient

New Zealand is a small country and there is a real possibility that if you talk about patients to outsiders, the patients will be recognised, even if you do not mention their names. The best way to prevent details about the patient from being revealed is NOT to disclose any material about patient encounters to anyone beyond the health care provider who is caring for the patient, your teachers who will be guiding you through this course or those fellow students with whom you are expected to discuss such cases as part of your education.

P.T.O. ➡

Case Presentations

As part of your education you will be expected to write up or discuss particular cases. There are some precautions that you should take to prevent the identification of the patient. These are as follows:

- **DO NOT** use patients' names in your write up. Use initials **ONLY**, (e.g. Mr John Wilkinson would be referred to as Mr JW).
- Do not use any other identifying features of the patient **which are not relevant to the case**. These **might** include: age and sex of children, marital relationships, place of origin (some of the small towns that send patients to New Zealand hospitals are very small where everyone knows everyone else), sexual orientation, etc.

3. Student Role

While we encourage you to take the opportunity to speak to patients in many contexts, there are some limits to your role in these circumstances. At all times we expect you to be respectful to the patients. For example, you are not there to make judgements about the lifestyle of others. Neither are you to act in an advisory manner (even if you have some health professional training). We do not wish you to enter into discussions with patients about the appropriateness or otherwise of the treatment they are receiving. Nor are you to act as a patient advocate. If any concerns ever arise about the treatment which a patient is receiving, there will be appropriate channels for dealing with this. In the first instance you should discuss the matter with your preceptor. If not satisfied you may wish to take this matter to the placement co-ordinator. This matter is not to be discussed outside of these channels.

Student Declaration

I understand that it is a serious matter to breach the confidentiality of patient information and that my failure to observe the above guidelines might result in the termination of my pharmacy education.

Name (please print in full): _____
(First Name) (Surname)

ID Number: _____ P: 2, 3, 4 (circle one)

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please return this form to the School of Pharmacy Undergraduate Administrator's Office before your community or hospital placement each year.