

# Prescription Errors



## The complexities of medication

Medication errors are sadly all too common in general practice in pharmacies and in a hospital setting.

Historically, the source of an error was often the prescriber's handwriting. However, with the advent of electronic prescribing, the error these days more commonly relates to accidentally clicking on the wrong drug or wrong dose from a drop down menu. This error can then be compounded if the medication is put on repeat prescription.

## Prescription errors can lead to serious injury or long-term disability

The most common drug-related errors are prescribing a drug to a patient with a known allergy, in particular penicillin's; prescribing the wrong drug (due to them having similar names; or prescribing the wrong dose of the drug (for example a twice-weekly drug being prescribed daily).

Other problems include failing to consider drug interactions, resulting in side effects. Claims also arise in relation to a failure to recognise, warn and act upon recognised side effects when evident such as renal impairment due to NSAIDs, or respiratory depression due to opiates.

Claims involving warfarin related to problems with INR measurement, as well as both bleeding and thrombosis also arise.

Pharmacies can also be negligent. The process of dispensing medicines in the UK is strictly controlled and designed to minimise the risk of mistakes. Pharmacies are required to keep a record of all medications they dispense, as well as to intervene when they believe a prescribed medication may pose a threat to a patient's health never the less mistakes are still made.

Instances of pharmacy negligence can include:

- Making an error reading a prescription and dispensing the wrong type or dose.
- Giving a patient incorrect advice about how, or how often, to take their medicine.
- Keeping inadequate records regarding medicine dispensed to individual patients.
- Failing to perform required legal and clinical checks for accuracy.
- Failing to have sufficient processes to ensure the integrity of products.
- Neglecting to advise patients about potential side effects.
- Storing medication incorrectly, such as at the wrong temperature. Failing to inform the patient of how to store medicine correctly at home.
- Allowing a repeat prescription to continue for an extended period without a patient re-visiting their GP.

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## Claiming compensation

Victims of medical negligence are often left suffering continued pain; they may require further medical treatment and are left worrying about the future for both themselves and their families. They may have suffered a loss of earnings and have significant care needs. They may require specialist interventions, therapies and support.

Clinical negligence compensation claims are designed to provide compensation to the victim for the physical and financial effects of their injuries. Damages if awarded will compensate for the injury and financial losses both past and future thereby meeting the costs of additional treatment, ongoing care, therapies and disability support along with any other financial losses. The aim being to put the victim back in the position they would have been but for the defendant's negligence so far as possible.

## Support for patients affected by negligence related to prescription errors

At Lester Aldridge we are highly experienced in investigating prescription error claims and in taking forward successful compensation claims. We have access to a panel of medical experts who are leaders in their field.

We know how devastating a medical mistake can be. No amount of compensation can put things right but it can result in essential provision for the cost of care, to support both you and your loved ones and meet your immediate and ongoing needs. Our experienced specialist lawyers utilise their expertise to maximize any compensation award.

If you have suffered injury, following a mistake made in treatment we can assist with your claim.

If you have concerns or questions, please contact our Personal Injury lawyers. Contact us by emailing: [online.enquiries@la-law.com](mailto:online.enquiries@la-law.com) or calling 0344 967 0791.

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