



National Patient Safety Agency

National Patient Safety Agency

Wendy Harris
Senior Pharmacist

How Medication Errors Can Be Prevented – Experiences from UK

Danish Society for Patient Safety

Conference 2004

Contents

- **About us**
- **Safe medication pathway**
- **Problems with oral methotrexate**
- **Developing solutions**

About us ⁽ⁱ⁾

We:

- **were established July 2001;**
- **are a Special Health Authority;**
- **have been created to coordinate efforts to identify and learn from patient safety incidents**

About us ⁽ⁱⁱ⁾

Our purpose is:

- **to implement and operate a new national system for learning from adverse events and near misses in all sectors of the NHS with one core purpose – *to improve patient safety by reducing the risk of harm through error***

(source: Building a Safer NHS for Patients)

About us ⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾

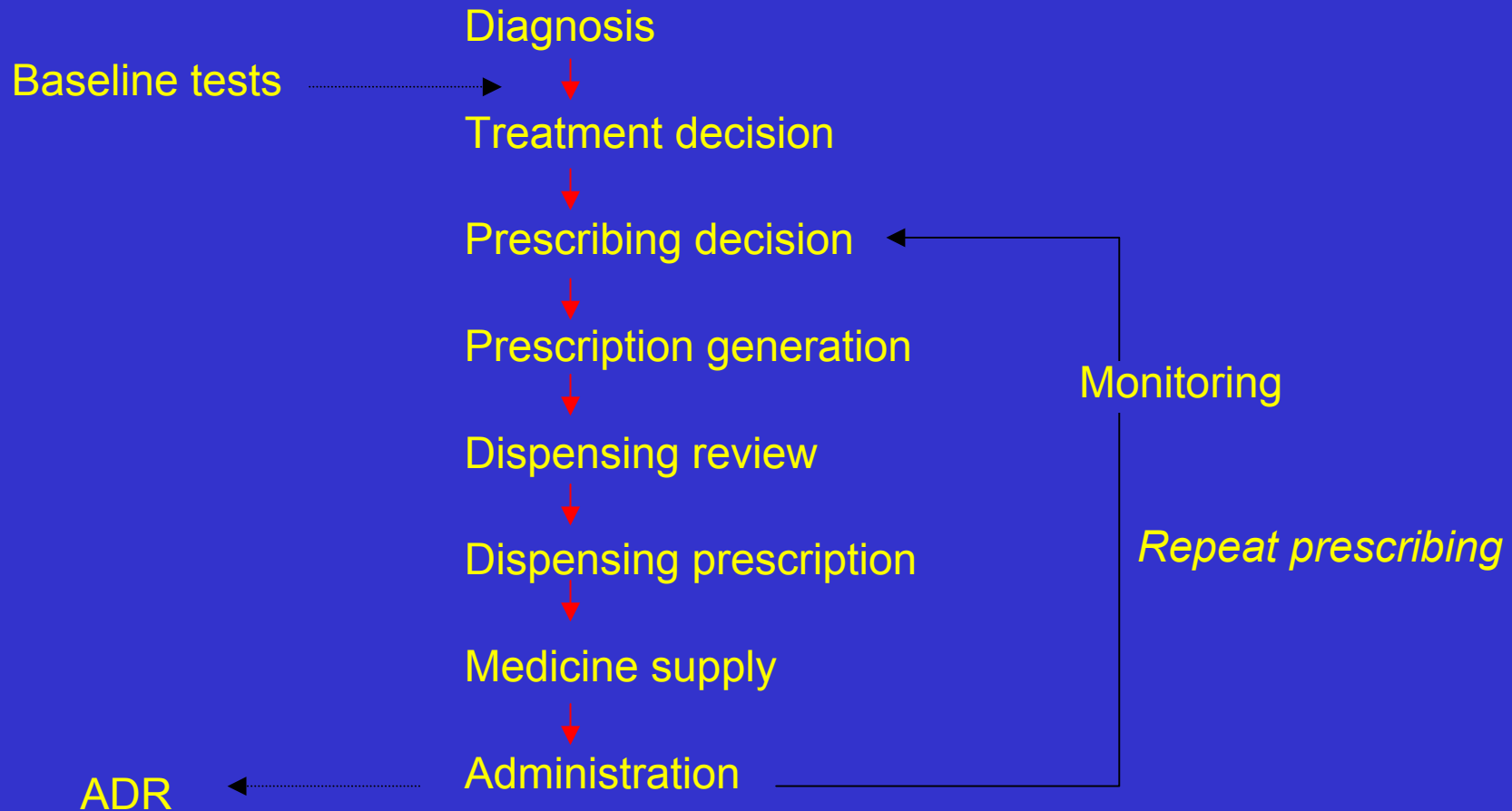
Our objectives are to:

- ***collect and analyse*** information on adverse events from local NHS organisations, NHS Staff and patients and carers;
- ***assimilate*** other safety-related information from a variety of existing reporting systems and other sources in this country and abroad
- ***learn lessons*** and ensure that they are fed back into practice, service organisation and deliver;
- where risks are identified, ***produce solutions*** to prevent harm, ***specify national goals and establish mechanisms to track progress***

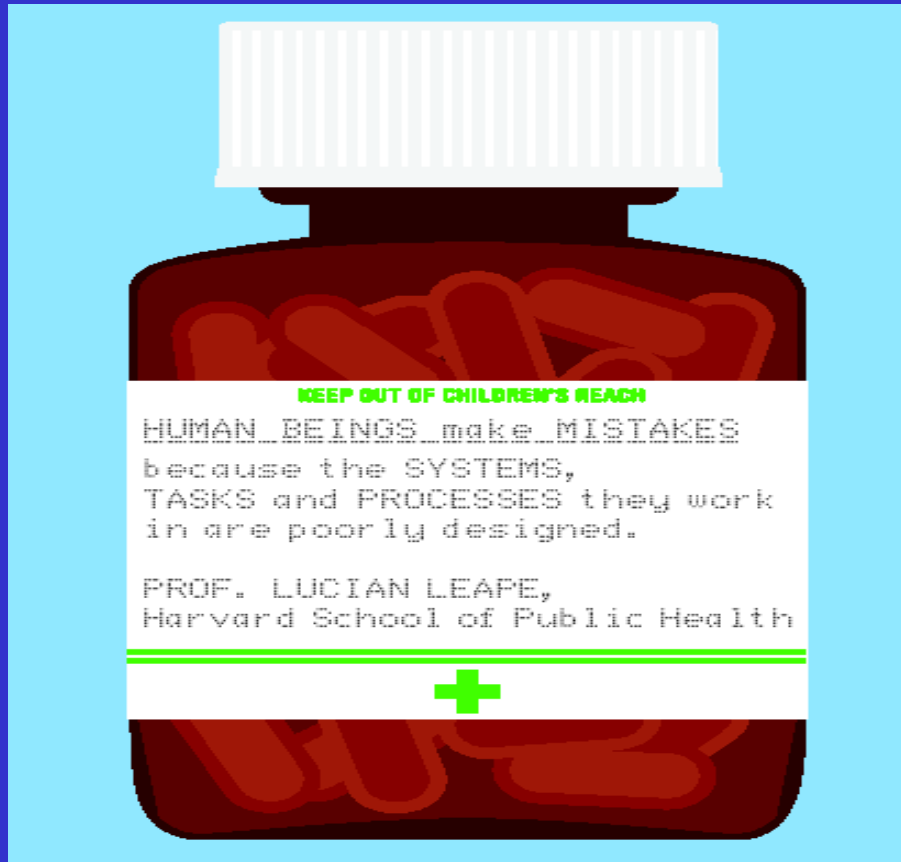
About us (iv)

- **Not a regulatory body**
- **Not performance management**
- **No disciplinary powers**
- **Share information**
- **Issue alerts/advice on good practice**

Safe medication pathway



Why do things go wrong?

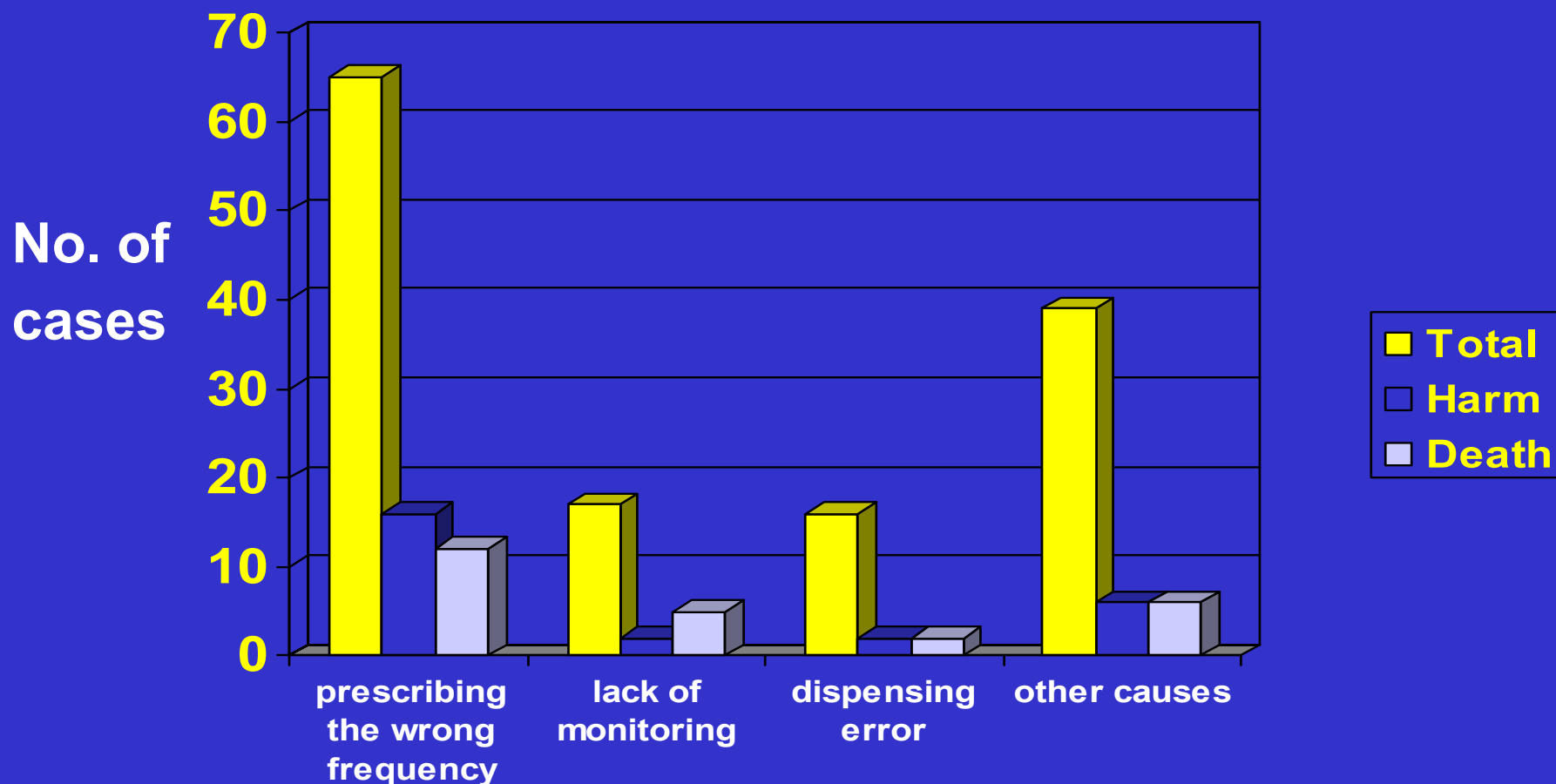


*Design for Patient Safety
Design Council &
Department of Health,
London, 2004*

Methotrexate – defining the risks (1)

- data for 10 year period (1993 – 2002)
- 137 cases in England
- 25 patient deaths and 26 cases of serious, long-term harm
- identical problems in US and Australian literature

Methotrexate – defining the risks (2)



Methotrexate – scoping the problems and finding the solutions

- **External Professional Reference Group**
- **Pharmaceutical Industry Reference Group**
- **Database & System Suppliers Reference Group**
- **Patient Reference Group**

Methotrexate – conclusions drawn from the groups

- **better informed patients (and timeliness)**
- **better informed and supported clinicians**
- **clarity of monitoring and responsibilities**
- **early distinguishable packaging with clear warnings**

Methotrexate – proposed patient safety solutions

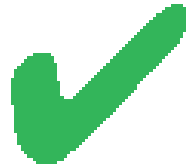
- **patient-held treatment record and information sheet**
- **changes to IT prescribing support systems**
- **repackaging the tablets**

Patient-held information

Once a week

oral methotrexate diary

It is very important that you take the right amount of oral methotrexate



Once a week

Monitoring results

test date				
Hb				
MCV				
WBC				
Platelets				
Neutrophils				
Lymphocytes				
ALT				
Alk phos.				
CRP				
ESR				
Urea				
Creatinine				
next test date				

NPSA alert test design



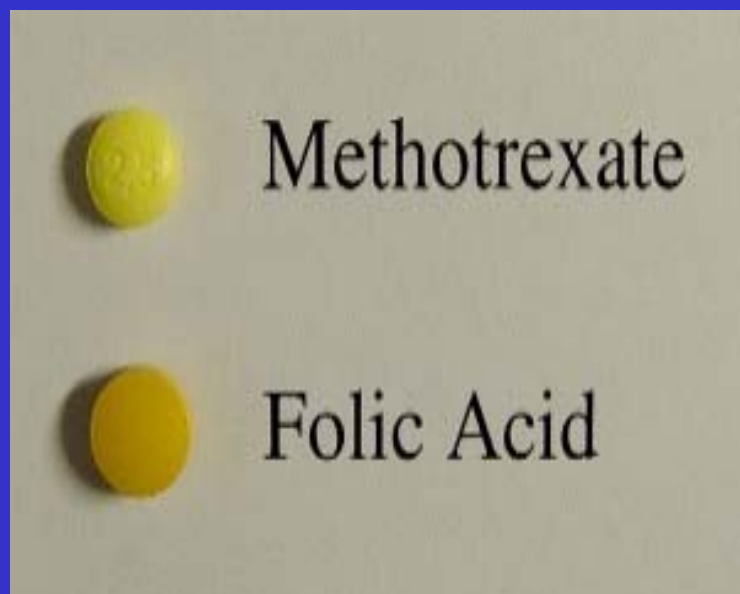
Packaging, labelling and information?



But what do the patients receive?



Patient safety barriers.....?



Working with pharmaceutical industry

- **Making packaging distinct - different strengths and different drugs**
- **Information on and with the packaging**
- **Openability by patients**

Next steps

- **Complete evaluation of developing and testing phases**
- **Final recommendations**
- **Launch to the NHS**

- **International collaboration**



National Patient Safety Agency

QUESTIONS

www.npsa.nhs.uk

4 – 8 Maple Street, London W1T 5HD

020 7927 9500