**Foreign Language Resources**

**Foreign Language Patient Information Leaflets**

The following resources (in no particular order) can be useful to try and find this information:

1. Certain NHS Trusts subscribe to ‘Choice and Medication’, which provides printable leaflets in different languages for some medicines.
   * Under ‘What are you looking for?’ chose ‘Translated Leaflets’.
   * Select the language in question and click search.
   * A list of medications with printable leaflets in that language will be displayed.
2. EU centrally-authorised medicines should always include the approved patient information leaflet in the respective European public assessment report (EPAR), although note that many older drugs do not have an EPAR.
   * Go to <https://www.ema.europa.eu/medicines/human>
   * Search for the drug in question.
   * Click on the link to the EPAR in the search results (if available).
   * Click on ‘Product Information’.
   * Click on ‘Available languages’ and chose the language you require.
   * The PIL will usually be the last section of the downloaded pdf.
3. The Heads of Medicines Agencies (HMA) is a network of the heads of the National Competent Authorities (NCA) whose organisations are responsible for the regulation of medicinal products for human and veterinary use in the European Economic Area. They provide:

* A list of NCA websites with links to their information on authorised human medicines (if available) <https://mri.cts-mrp.eu/Human/product-information>, with some (not all) providing PILs (and SPCs). Some can be viewed in English making them easier to navigate, although Google translate can be used with caution for the others (see note below). Some sites are not very intuitive and it can take a bit of time to find the appropriate search page.
* The Mutual Recognition Product Index, which includes medicines approved in the member states of the EU according to the mutual recognition or decentralised procedure
  + - The human product list can be searched using the search box at the bottom of this webpage <http://mri.cts-mrp.eu/Human>.
    - Results can be filtered to just show PILs by checking the ‘Final PL’ box at the top of the results page.
    - The advanced search allows the addition of columns (e.g. pharmaceutical form) to be displayed in the results.
    - Note that you cannot filter for language in either search function, and the package leaflet isn’t necessarily available in languages other than English.

1. Use Martindale (subscription required) to find the brand name of the drug in question e.g. Oxycardil is a Polish brand of diltiazem. Then use Google Translate to find the phrase for ‘patient information leaflet’ in the language in question e.g. ‘ulotka dla pacjenta’ is PIL in Polish. Use Google to search for both. This doesn’t always work, and can be labour intensive to search through the results. In addition, you obviously need to be very careful to ensure the validity of the information located.

**NOTE:** Although Google Translate is a useful resource, particularly for translating single words or simple phrases, it is not generally suitable for translating longer texts – e.g. translating an English PIL into another language – due to the inherent complexity of technical language and grammar and the need for complete accuracy in the healthcare environment [1].

It may, however, be useful to translate information from a foreign language into English, to enable pharmacy staff to check that a document in a foreign language in general says what they think it does.

1. The respective UK manufacturer can sometimes help in this situation.

**Foreign Language Pharmacy Labels**

1. Translabel (<http://www.translabel.co.uk>) - See the support section for how to use, and FAQs that discuss the limitations.
2. Martindale (subscription required) has a section called ‘Pharmaceutical Terms in Various Languages’ - Some of the commoner pharmaceutical forms and routes in English and a number of major European languages. It is provided as an aid to the non-native speaker in interpreting packaging, product information, or prescriptions written in another language. However caution is required, and the introduction should be read to highlight the limitations.

**NOTE:** Before using a translation resource (such as Translabel), check your organisation’s policies regarding such use; some organisations require use to be pre-approved by the organisation’s translation service. Even if this is not required, it is recommended that you check the translation by, for example:

* Copying into Google Translate to translate back to English.
* Asking a bilingual member of staff (or other person who speaks both languages) to confirm the accuracy of the translation.

Use of family members or bilingual staff members (who are not approved translators) to provide the initial translation may not always be appropriate [2] and generally should only take place if there is no more appropriate alternative. However, the risks in asking a non-professional translator to check a translation are likely to be lower than having no check at all.

**English translations of Foreign Language Patient Information Leaflets**

1. If the product has been imported via a specialist company (e.g. Mawdsley, Durbin, IDIS etc.), they can sometimes provide an English translation of the SPC and/or PIL
2. Products that have been through the mutual recognition pathway should be listed on the Heads of Medicines Agencies (HMA) website.
   * The human product list can be searched using the search box at the bottom of this webpage <http://mri.cts-mrp.eu/Human>.
   * Results can be filtered to just show PILs by checking the ‘Final PL’ box at the top of the results page.
   * The advanced search allows the addition of columns (e.g. pharmaceutical form) to be displayed in the results.
   * Note that you cannot filter for language in either search function, but the information provided for foreign products is sometimes only available in English.

**References**

1. Chen X, Acosta S, Barry AE. Evaluating the Accuracy of Google Translate for Diabetes Education Material. JMIR Diabetes. 2016;1(1):e3.
2. Flores G, Laws MB, Mayo SJ, Zuckerman B, Abreu M, Medina L, et al. Errors in medical interpretation and their potential clinical consequences in pediatric encounters. Pediatrics. 2003 Jan;111(1):6–14.

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