

# Managing Similarities: LA/SA and PSPCS

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Look-alike sound-alike (LA/SA) and "produits de santé à présentation et à consonance semblables" (PSPCS) are terms that refer to medications or other health products with similar packaging, shapes, or names. This similarity can lead to medication errors, whether it's dispensing the wrong drug, making a dosage mistake, or an administration error. Who hasn't asked themselves: did the doctor prescribe LASIX\* or LOSEC\*? These resemblances are sometimes the source of errors with consequences ranging from mild side effects to much more serious outcomes, even fatal.

## Prevention and Awareness: Minimizing Medication Errors

- Raising awareness among healthcare professionals and patients about these risks
- Implementing preventive measures in pharmacies
- Careful verification of prescriptions and medication labels
- Clarification of names and dosages with healthcare professionals when needed
- Promoting the safe and effective use of medications
- Double-checking: identification of the product, dosage, and method of administration by different individuals

## Addressing PSPCS and LA/SA Challenges: Strategies to Reduce Errors

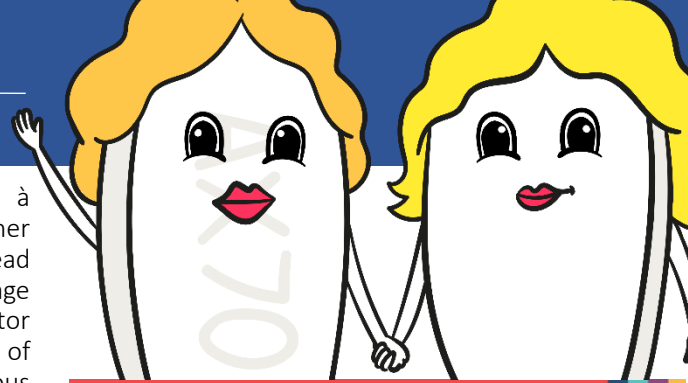
- Clear identification of high-risk medications using labels or distinctive signs
- Physical separation of products on shelves and in storage areas
- Writing brand names in uppercase and generic names in lowercase on labels
- Validating the DIN (Drug Identification Number) during medication dispensing (Comparing the DIN of the container with that of the pharmacy label)

The TALLman lettering system is another effective approach that offers a valuable visual cue to avoid confusion. By using uppercase for certain letters, it helps to distinguish between similar names, such as "hydroxyZINE" and "hydraLAzine".

We all have a role to play in preventing medication errors. **What actions are you taking to ensure the safety of your patients?** Do you consistently report incidents? Are these incidents documented to contribute to continuous improvement?



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Think you know the trade names of medications and their generic names? Test your knowledge with RxQuiz! Visit [www.RxQuiz.online](http://www.RxQuiz.online)

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RxVigilance Version March 2023 [Software]. Repentigny (Québec): Vigilance Santé Inc. [Accessed March 9, 2023].

Speaking of Names! Patients often surprise us with quirky names for medications. These humorous touches are always appreciated. If only the real names of medications could be just as entertaining! A big thank you to those who have shared these fun moments with us.

Here are some illustrated examples. Will you be able to recognize them?

Have you noticed ZOPI-CLOWN (zopiclone)? Follow us on Facebook to discover them all.

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