

Better safe...

Selena Patel, international account manager for IVM Childsafe, explains why it is important that child resistant packaging is tested and certified by an accredited body

Keep out of the reach of children: this is good advice, but often it is not good enough. There are still too many reported and unreported cases of children ingesting tablets, powders or chemicals and suffering serious injuries and sometimes resulting in death. Children are curious and resourceful, this poses a problem for the companies that design, manufacture and supply these types of products.

Yes, there has been legislation passed to improve the situation and yes it has been proved that the frequency of incidents involving children has declined – but not far enough! Child resistant packaging (CRP) is clearly not a substitute for other safety measures such as locked medicine cupboards and a parent's watchful eye, but it can be regarded as the last line of defence against ingestion.

Traditionally we see 'push and turn' and 'squeeze and turn' for many closures, but nowadays we have blister packs, flow packs, cartons, sprays, sachets and single dose packs of liquids. How do we achieve CRP in these cases? One clear answer is to have the packaging tested (with real children) and certified.

There are examples on the market of packaging that have a child safety device but the question that must be asked is 'does it work?' and this can only be answered by having it tested and certified.

Now here comes the legislation. For the European Union, there are two main pieces



Pharmaceuticals can look like sweets to young eyes



Children are curious and resourceful

in this area: Directive 1999/45/EC and Directive 1967/548/ECC. However, we must now take note of regulation 1272/2008 as it replaces certain provisions of 1967/548/EEC and 1999/45/EC relating to the classification, packaging and labelling of substances and preparations.

Many European countries find that the scope of these directives does not go far enough and so have also implemented their own domestic legislation in addition which, of course, differs from country to country.

For example, in the UK the Medicines (Child Safety) regulations 2003 is applicable. However, what is universal for member states, are the standards that the packaging must fulfil in order to be classified as child resistant – ISO 8317 (2003) for re-closable CRP; EN 862 (2005) for non-reclosable CRP for non-pharmaceutical products; and EN 14375 (2003) for non-reclosable CRP for pharmaceutical products.

Ensuring that a package meets the required standards must be conducted by an accredited body according to EN 45011. IVM is such an accredited body to perform the testing and certification.

One difficulty we often see is when only one part of the pack is child resistant then, when combined with another part, the whole system then fails. There are examples of cases where a closure has been wonderfully developed, passed testing and given certification and then, when the closure is attached to the unit, it fails the

testing, as it was so simple for a child to just screw the closure off the unit.

The best solution is to have complete and finished packaging testing as a whole. This is a message that all too often is not considered by manufacturers. Directive 1999/45/EC tells us that the distributor has to ensure that all requirements regarding childproof packaging are being met. In the case of dangerous substances and preparations, it is mostly the bottlers or packagers that meet this requirement.

Over the last few years, user friendliness for senior citizens has increasingly been brought into focus. With many countries experiencing an aging population, this has become more of a priority for designers and manufacturers. The difficulty here is the balance between child resistant and senior friendly packaging. Manufacturers now often use a more cognitive based approach rather than strength based. Early testing at conceptual design stage for pharmaceutical and chemical companies is a must to aid compliance with the legislation in this area and ultimately produce a suitable solution.

When considering the balance between safety and senior usability we should always tip towards child safety. ★



Household products must be protected

Contact

» www.ivm-childsafe.com
info@ivm-childsafe.de