

Information Design for Patient Safety

- How to apply the UK guideline
to Hong Kong -

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Information design for patient safety

A guide to the graphic design
of medication packaging

Information design for patient safety

- Published by the National Patient Safety Agency in 2006 as a guideline
- In collaboration with a design research centre of the Royal College of Art.
- The set of design has been tested on human subjects and found to be satisfactory.
- Can these principles be borrowed to Hong Kong to formulate a set of recommendation to local pharmaceutical suppliers (or even for hospital pharmacy repackaging) ?

Secondary package

11. Avoid irregular space between words of text

Generic Name 10 mg

GENERIC NAME 10MG	KEEP OUT OF THE REACH OF CHILDREN
Take FOUR tablets on alternate mornings	
Patient name	ANY PHARMACY ANYWHERE

Each tablet contains ingredient 0mg. See enclosed leaflet for further information. For oral administration. Take as directed by your doctor. Please read enclosed leaflet.

Keep out of sight and reach of children.



Generic Name 10 mg

GENERIC NAME 10MG	KEEP OUT OF THE REACH OF CHILDREN
Take FOUR tablets on alternate mornings	
Patient name	ANY PHARMACY ANYWHERE

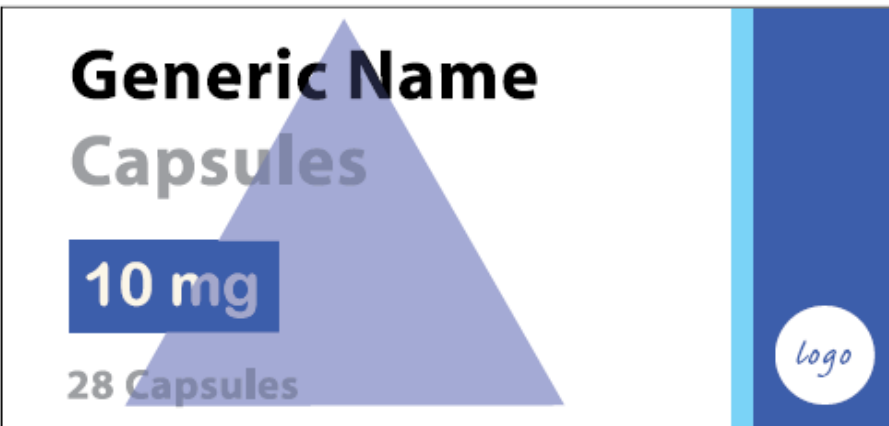
Each tablet contains ingredient 0mg. See enclosed leaflet for further information.

For oral administration. Take as directed by your doctor.

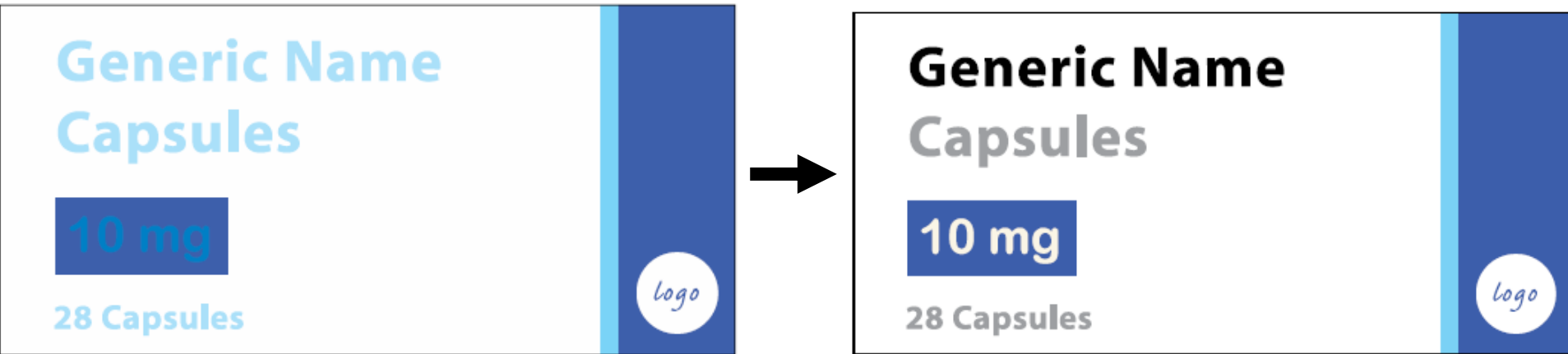
Please read enclosed leaflet.

Keep out of sight and reach of children.

12. Do not place text over images or logos



13. Create sufficient contrast between text and background



Using color

Using colour

Colour can help correctly identify, classify and differentiate between medicines. However, relying totally on colour to do this can lead to mistakes. This is because colours look different in different lighting conditions; people have different perceptions of colour; and colour blindness means some people see colours differently.

If a single colour is used for a whole range of medicines it can be difficult to identify a specific product. This is compounded if medicines with similar names are stored next to one another.

If a patient is prescribed a number of medicines with the same colour packaging, there is an increased chance of them taking the wrong one.

Colour coding

A colour coding system allows people to memorise a colour and match it to a function. However, creating a shortcut for identifying a medicine without having to read the label can lead to mistakes. No colour coding system could differentiate between all 12,000 medicines authorised in the UK. Furthermore, in the absence of a national or international colour code, any UK system could become a barrier to trade.

One exception is the medicine warfarin, which is universally colour coded brown for strengths of 1mg, blue for strengths of 3mg, and red for strengths of 5mg.

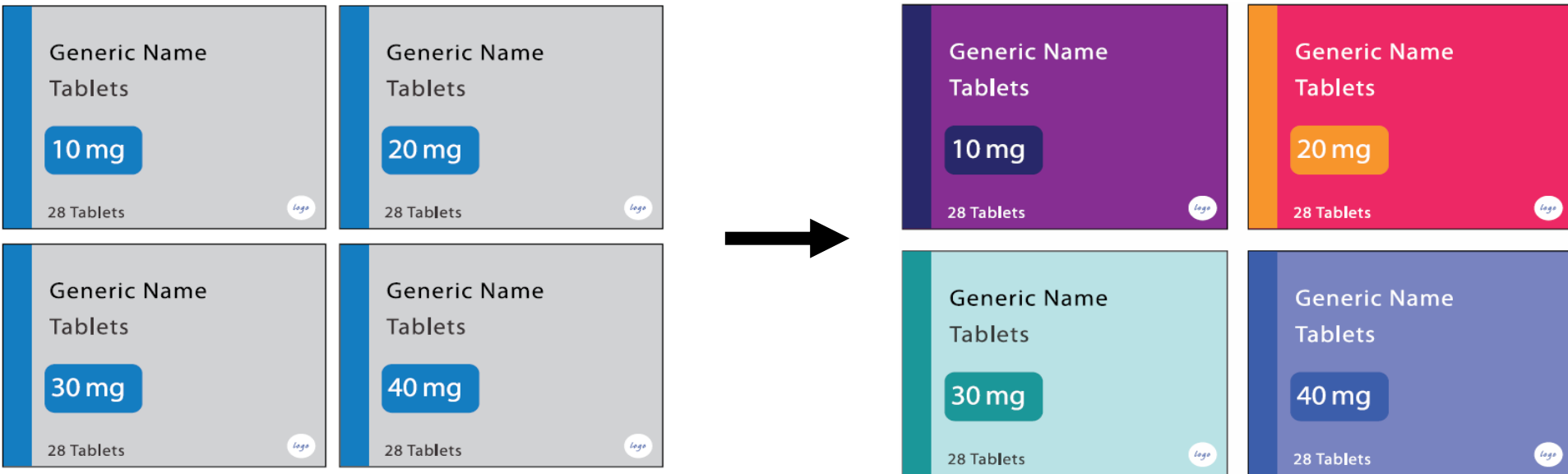
Colour differentiation

Colour differentiation is the recommended method. It uses colour to make features on a packet stand out or to help distinguish one item from another. The chosen colour is not associated with a particular feature. It is important that there is no pattern in the colour scheme.

Use meaningless color, and not to let color form a recognizable pattern.

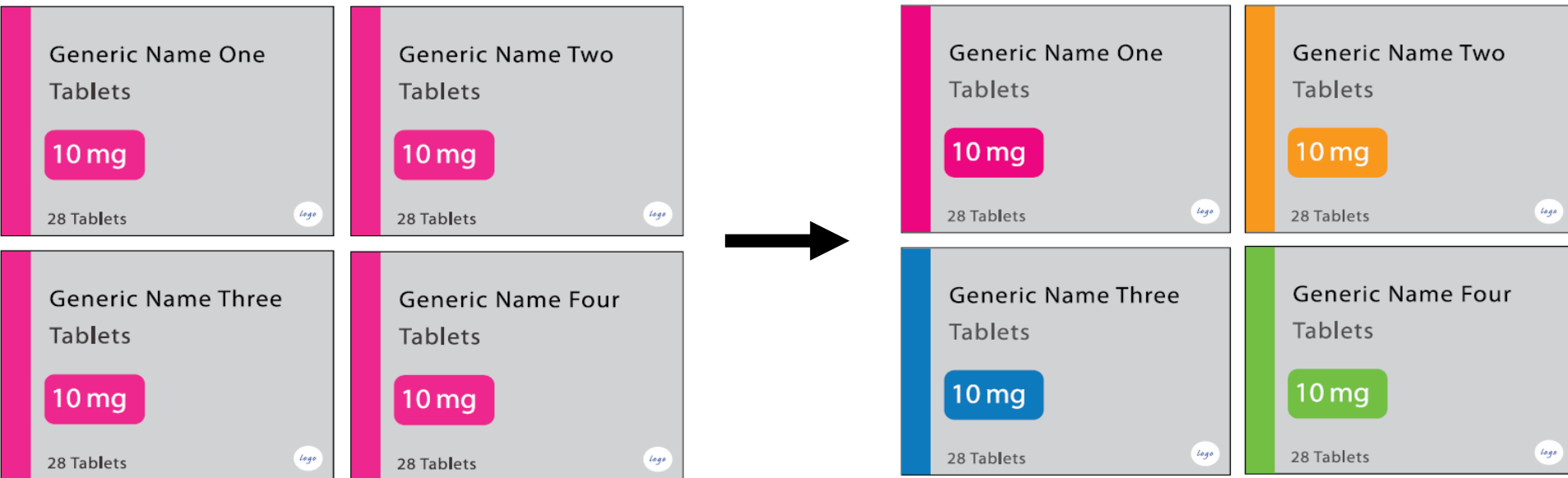
14. Use color differentiation

Different strengths



14. Use color differentiation

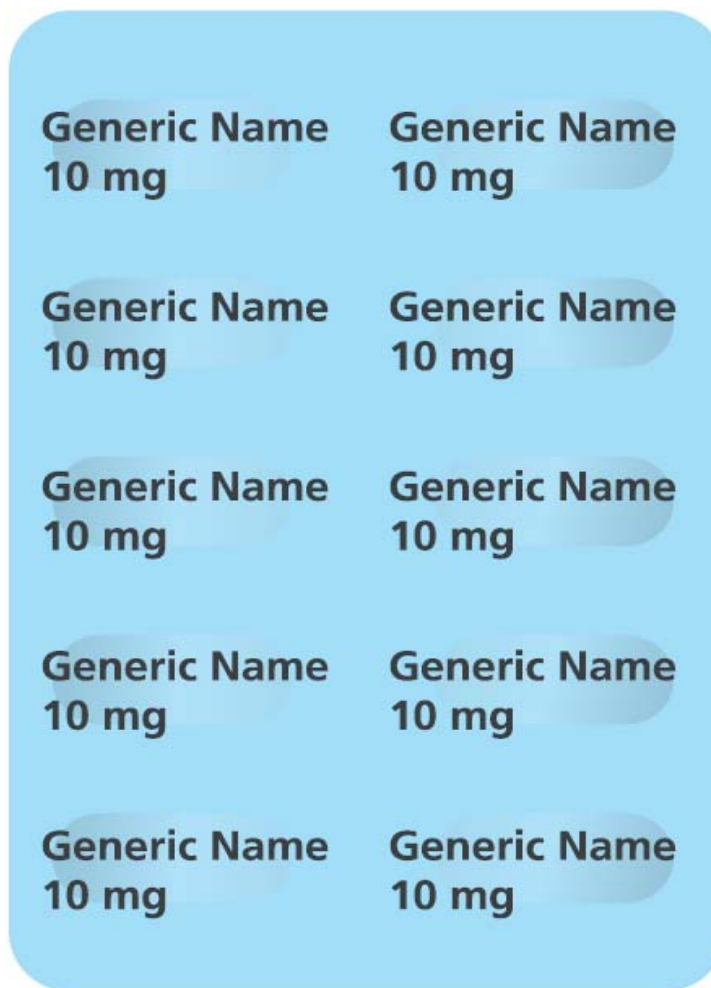
Different drugs



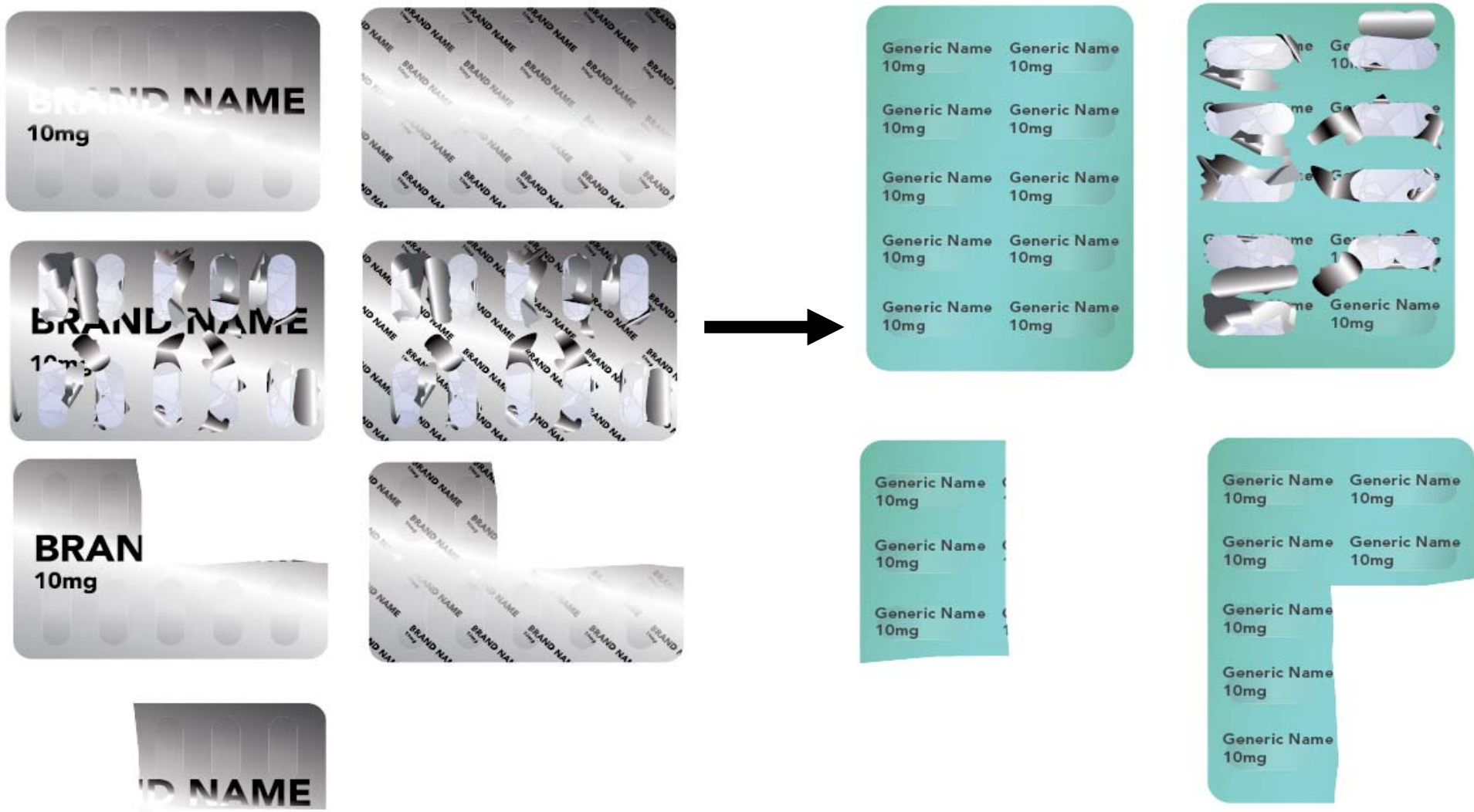
What are the **same** should look the **same**;
What are **different** should look **different**.

Primary packaging

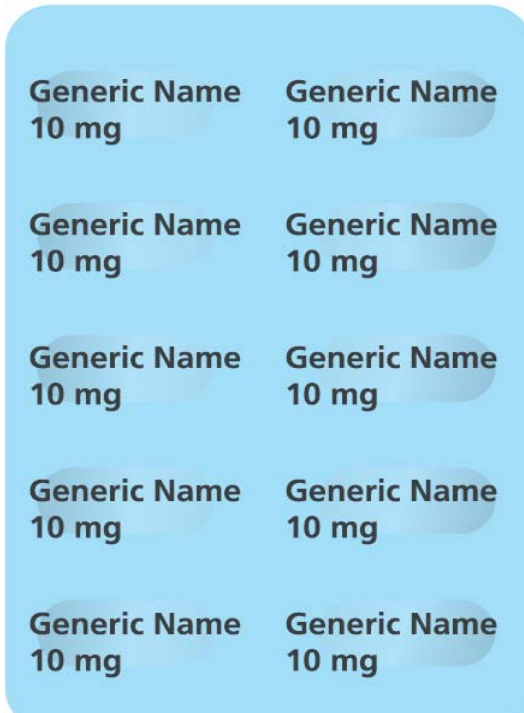
15. Avoid reflective surface



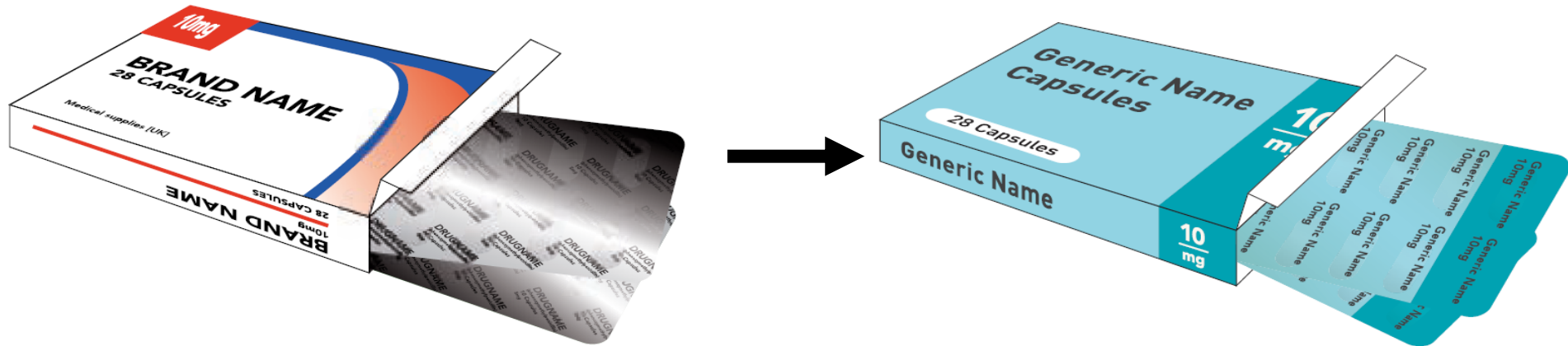
16. Critical information should appear on every blister



17. Use bold type and print with sharp contrast against background



18. Match style of primary and secondary package



Situation in Hong Kong

- We do not usually have original pack dispensing
- HK is a small market worldwide
- Some recommendations are ideal
- Need to apply to bottles and other containers too
- Can influence local generic manufacturers
- May borrow some of the principles

Applicable principles

- Clear generic name
- Proper use of font size and print type
- Background contrast
- Color differentiation
- Complete information on individual blister

The Best and the Worst packaging

- You are invited to take pictures and send them to me of any good, better, and best examples
- Of course any bad, worse and worst examples and send them to me
- Next time we will vote on the good, the bad and the ugly.