Can you crush the tablet?

Developing a manipulation guideline for solid oral dosage forms to ease swallowing

Objective
Examine whether various drugs in solid oral dosage forms may be manipulated to ease swallowing, develop a guideline and make this information readily available to healthcare providers at Oslo University Hospital.

Methods
Drugs in solid oral dosage forms were chosen based on relevance to Oslo University Hospital. Standardised log sheets with selected sources were developed and applied to each drug by a pharmacist. Based on the information gathered the pharmacist concluded with a recommendation concerning manipulation of each drug. A second pharmacist controlled the information and conclusions. The conclusions were harmonised according to formulation and Anatomical Therapeutic Chemical Classification (ATC) System.

Results
A list of 855 drugs in solid oral dosage forms, with recommendations on whether and how to manipulate them, was attached to a manipulation guideline. The list and guideline are available through the quality management system of Oslo University Hospital and online (List: http://ehandboken.ous-hf.no/api/File/GetFile?entityId=96773. Guideline: http://ehandboken.ous-hf.no/document/10301. Hospital staff can receive standardised short lectures by pharmacists concerning use of the guideline upon request.

Discussion
The use of enteral feeding tubes often calls for manipulation of solid oral dosage forms. Due to the resources required to consider the implications of food, diameter and placement of the feeding tube this was not studied for each individual drug. Some general aspects to consider when administering drugs by enteral feeding tubes were included in the guideline. Drugs may suffer degradation due to light and/or humidity. To minimise these effects the guideline recommends that manipulation should occur immediately before administration. Exact doses are not guaranteed upon manipulation. As a result the guideline recommends administration of whole doses.

Conclusions
A guideline comprising information on how to manipulate drugs in solid oral dosage forms to ease swallowing has been developed and made available to healthcare providers at Oslo University Hospital. Additional individual considerations may also be required.