

MEDIA RELEASE

2 August 2010

August edition of *Australian Prescriber* out now

The latest edition of *Australian Prescriber* is out now and looks at topical issues including:

Can pharmaceutical companies contribute to the quality use of medicines?

Editorials by Dr Peter Mansfield and Mr Russell Edwards discuss the role of pharmaceutical companies and industry organisations in promoting quality use of medicines.

Vitamin D deficiency in adults

This is a common condition that affects a significant number of Australians, according to Dr Devina Joshi of Sydney's St Vincent's Hospital and the Garvan Institute, and her colleagues. Replacement needs to be tailored for each patient and monitored. In cases of persistently low concentrations, malabsorptive conditions (especially coeliac disease) should be excluded.

Drug treatment of high blood pressure

The decision about starting drug treatment for elevated blood pressure should be based on an individual's absolute risk of having an adverse cardiovascular event. Professor Mark Nelson of the University of Tasmania's School of Medicine gives guidelines individualising treatment for patients with co-morbidities and says the choice of drug should be based on safety and efficacy and its indications and contraindications for individual patients. Beta blockers are no longer recommended as first-line treatment for most patients.

Combination analgesics in adults

Many analgesic products contain combinations of different drugs. There are few direct comparisons of these combinations, but several appear to be no more effective than an appropriate dose of one of their individual analgesic components, says Dr Bridin Murnion of the Drug Health Service at Sydney's Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. She concludes that the recent rescheduling of codeine is unlikely to significantly affect our analgesic options, but may reduce harms from overuse.

Medication Safety Update

- Varenicline (Champix)
- Australian experience with non-adjuvant H1N1 vaccine (Panvax and Panvax Junior)

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