
Where to find information about drugs*Aust Prescr 2016;39:152*<http://dx.doi.org/10.18773/austprescr.2016.075>

As the article by Richard Day and Leone Snowden¹ states, 'good medicines information is critical to medical practice'. It provides an excellent and comprehensive listing and discussion of available resources of drug information.

Beyond the scope of their article are telephone drug information services to which many healthcare providers may unknowingly have access. These services provide medicines advice and therapeutic information for free to healthcare professionals.

They are mostly located within hospitals and are staffed by pharmacists specially trained and experienced in the retrieval and analysis of medicines information.

Formal provision of medicines information by trained staff has been associated with positive impact on patient care, outcomes and medicines safety.² While it is important for individuals to know where and how to locate information, many may not possess the skills and knowledge to do so or have the time required to analyse, synthesise and construct a clinically relevant solution to a complex

medical dilemma.² When the authors note that 'further detail may need to be sought' or 'references from these sources require critical appraisal', trained medicines information pharmacists may be extremely helpful. They are the people to turn to when health professionals are unable to find the information they need.²

Telephone drug information services contribute to high-quality patient care and public health by promoting the quality use of medicines. They can be relied upon to provide accurate, current, unbiased, evidence-based therapeutic advice to healthcare professionals who may not have access to certain resources, or the necessary time or skills to use them to their best advantage.

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