

MEDIA ALERT**1 February 2010*****Drug warnings, contrast media and testing for TB: the latest edition
of Australian Prescriber online now***

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

Adverse reaction updates return to *Australian Prescriber*

Information about adverse reactions will once again be included in a special section of *Australian Prescriber*. *Medicines Safety Update* will be prepared by the production team of the former ADRAC Bulletin under the guidance of the new Office of Medicines Safety Monitoring in the Therapeutic Goods Administration. As the electronic version of *Australian Prescriber* has many overseas readers, the new arrangements will deliver important information about adverse reactions to a wider audience.

Safe use of contrast media

When referring patients for imaging studies, it is important for GPs to know which patients are at risk of the adverse effects of contrast media. Kenneth Thomson, Director of Radiology, and Dinesh Varma, Head of Trauma and Emergency Radiology at The Alfred, discuss different types and uses of contrast media, and considerations for patients taking metformin.

Prescription drug subsidies in Australia and New Zealand

While GPs in Australia and New Zealand are responsible for most prescriptions, many are unaware of the processes their countries use to subsidise medicines. This editorial considers how both countries manage medicine expenditure and compares their approaches to price structures in Canada and the USA.

Point-of-care testing

Various point-of-care tests have been found to be non-inferior to laboratory testing for managing chronic conditions in general practice and Aboriginal medical services. Maintaining the analytical quality of devices and ensuring staff are properly trained are critical elements in sustaining a high quality point-of-care testing service.

Testing for tuberculosis

Dr Anastasios Konstantinos, Director of the Queensland Tuberculosis Control Centre, compares methods of testing for active and latent tuberculosis. Although most patients become infected overseas and transmission within Australia is limited to small clusters, fast and accurate diagnosis is still important as tuberculosis can be highly infectious.

For full copies of these and other articles, visit www.australianprescriber.com.

NPS News #66

The February edition of *NPS News* covers managing insomnia.

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