

**December edition of *Australian Prescriber* out now**

The last edition of *Australian Prescriber* for 2010 is out now and looks at topical issues including:

**Editorial – non-medical prescribing in Australia**

Associate Professors Lisa Nissen of the University of Queensland and Greg Kyle from the University of Canberra discuss the importance of training when granting prescribing rights to non-medical professionals. They discuss training programs, state legislation and national registration. The focus of prescribing models must be on patient safety and access to medicines.

**Managing menopausal symptoms**

Despite potential side effects, hormone replacement therapies remain a useful option for women with significant menopausal symptoms, writes Dr Terri Foran, sexual health physician. Although many women regard complementary therapy as safer than hormone replacement therapy, there is limited evidence as to its effectiveness and long-term safety. Management approaches should be decided jointly between the clinician and patient, based on evidence and the woman's individual needs.

**Drug interactions with complementary medicines**

Taking complementary medicines with conventional medicines is increasingly common. Knowing the interactions associated with commonly used complementary medicines helps to reduce the risk of drug interactions. Evidence about these interactions comes from case reports and independent research. To prevent interactions, patients should inform their doctors about any complementary medicines they take, say authors Geraldine Moses and Associate Professor Treasure McGuire of Mater Health Services, Brisbane.

**Compression therapy for venous disease**

Compression therapy, by bandaging or stockings, is routine for thromboprophylaxis and for chronic venous disease and its complications. The degree of compression depends on the condition being treated and underlying patient factors. Thorough clinical vascular examination, with or without vascular investigations, aims to rule out significant arterial disease that may contraindicate the use of compression therapy.

**Collaboration between doctors and pharmacists in the community**

Debbie Rigby, a consultant clinical pharmacist, discusses the need for interprofessional collaboration between general practitioners and pharmacists to meet the medication management and healthcare needs of the community now and in the future. Key to this is interdisciplinary clinical teaching, communication and relationships. Medication reviews are an example of how pharmacists can assist general practitioners. Joint training and co-location of practices should encourage increased collaboration between the professions.

**Medication safety update**

- Lamotrigine and serious skin reactions
- Serotonin syndrome: a reminder
- Drug-induced acute akathisia
- Interactions between etonogestrel implant (Implanon) and carbamazepine

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