



# Australian Prescriber



AN INDEPENDENT REVIEW

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3/2001

February 2001

## PUSH TOWARDS ELECTRONIC PRESCRIBING IN HOSPITALS

With up to 50% of adverse events in hospitals considered highly preventable, how many could have been prevented by electronic prescribing?

In the latest edition of *Australian Prescriber*, Dr Hugo Stephenson says that public hospitals are lagging behind general practice in computerisation.

Dr Stephenson says that electronic prescribing has become commonplace in general practice, but our hospitals still rely on paper-based drug charts and outdated reference texts to support the treatment of inpatients. This can lead to errors in treatment.

While some of the errors are preventable, Dr Stephenson says the expensive computer systems currently used in hospitals may be incompatible with a standard electronic prescribing solution.

According to Dr Stephenson considerable efforts are now being made to implement electronic strategies in public hospitals, with several major hospitals evaluating prescribing packages to assess their suitability for hospital practice. Some overseas hospitals are adopting hand-held computers for use at the bedside, but additional funds may be needed for Australian hospitals to take advantage of this technology.

For a copy of the complete article or information about *Australian Prescriber*, visit the homepage at [http://www.australianprescriber.com/public\\_html/default.htm](http://www.australianprescriber.com/public_html/default.htm) or phone 02 6289 7038.

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*Australian Prescriber* is a national independent review of therapeutic topics, designed to assist health professionals in their duties. The journal provides independent comment - no advertising is accepted.

Among other articles, the current issue of *Australian Prescriber* also looks at:

- Treatments for heroin addiction
- Medications which affect epileptic seizures
- Celery seed tablet interactions with thyroxine