



NEWS RELEASE

Australian Divisions of General Practice Ltd.

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Medication misadventure: tackling the problem

ADGP Chair Dr Rob Walter said today that Pharmacy Week was an ideal time to draw attention to the huge costs of medication mishaps and the importance of promoting the safe and effective use of medicines.

“Every year there are around 140,000 hospital admissions because of medication mishaps, such as adverse reactions caused by multiple medication use. Many of these people’s lives have been put at risk, unnecessarily, because of avoidable medication complications. Each hospital admission costs money and saps medical and health professionals of valuable time, not to mention the pain and suffering of the patient,” Dr Walters said.

ADGP CEO Kate Carnell said the hospital admission statistics highlighted the importance of the Home Medicines Review Program (HMR), funded through the Pharmacy Guild Third Agreement and implemented by ADGP and the Divisions Network.

“The HMR program is an innovative and cooperative primary health care project. It encourages GPs and pharmacists to work together to achieve better patient care through better medication management,” Ms Carnell said.

“The enormous value of HMRs is that they can more often than not solve medication problems that patients may be having, such as side effects caused by interactions and dosage, before any serious complications arise.

“HMRs promote medication awareness in patients – which can only be a good thing – and discourage potentially dangerous medication use.”

Some key points about medicine management and the HMR initiative:

- Patients will often see a range of health specialists, and also a number of different GPs, over a given period. Each of these practitioners may prescribe, supply or suggestion prescription and over-the-counter medicines to the patient.
- All medicines have the potential to interact and cause side effects.
- An HMR is a quick and easy way for a GP, in conjunction with a designated pharmacist, to find out exactly what medicines a patient is taking, and ensure that the medication regimen is safe and effective.
- The pharmacists prepares a report for the GP, which details the medications being taken, any possible problems, and recommended alterations to the regimen (if required).

For more information about the HMR program go to <http://www.adgp.com.au/site/index.cfm?display=348> or contact Jane Castles, ADGP National Communications Coordinator, on 02 6228 0822 or 0412 392 577.

WHAT IS ADGP?

- ADGP is the peak body representing 119 Divisions of General Practice and eight State-based offices (SBOs) around Australia. The Divisions Network supports general practice and their practice teams and drives the implementation of innovative health strategies.
- ADGP, through the Divisions Network, works to integrate general practice with other sectors of the health system, both government and non-government, to deliver high quality care to the Australian community.
 - ADGP is committed to promoting the health of all Australians by supporting the role of Divisions in the nation’s primary health care system.



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