

Education concerns for rural pharmacists

Nick O'Donoghue

ACCESS TO continuing education has been highlighted as a concern for early career pharmacists working in remote parts of the country.

A new survey carried out by the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia's (PSA) Early Career Pharmacists Working Group (ECPWG), which has yet to be published, found the education needs of rural pharmacists have not been met.

Former chairman of the group, David Peachey told *Pharmacy eNews*, pharmacists in remote areas have not been able to access training because the

majority of courses were in cities.

"Their education needs are not being met, as early career pharmacists, because they're not able to get into the large metropolitan centres where a lot of the education is provided.

"There are other avenues for getting continuing education in rural environments, but for rural pharmacists, clinical lectures are not provided as in depth as in the metropolitan areas," he said.

The survey also identified a lack of understand among young pharmacists about human resources issues, which Mr Peachey feels could be dealt with as part of university courses.

Concerns were also raised that the increased number of university places for pharmacy students was not matched with an increase in the number of intern training places.

The survey, which was discussed in depth at a meeting of the ECPWG in Canberra last week, also emphasised the lack of clear "career progression pathways" available to pharmacists, Mr Peachey told *Pharmacy eNews*.

During the meeting Queensland representative Justin Lee was chosen to replace Mr Peachey as the new chairman of the ECPWG.

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BRIEFS

QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS

The work of members of the pharmacy profession has been noted in this year's Queen's Birthday Honours list.

The Medal of the Order of Australia was awarded to two pharmacists for their work as pharmacists and within their local communities.

Edgar Small, from Pitt Town, NSW received the award for services to pharmacy and the community.

Duncan Stewart was given the honour for service to the community of Yeppoon, Queensland, and to pharmacy.

INDEMNITY INSURANCE

Pharmacists will no longer be required to hold Professional Indemnity Insurance (PII) in their own name, according to revised standards from the Pharmacy Board of Australia.

The Board reviewed its initial position that all registered pharmacists would be required to take out PII in their own name following advice from the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council.

According to the Board, the amended standard "appropriately accommodates pharmacists in all practice settings, including pharmacists who practise exclusively in an employed position who would meet the standard by being indemnified by their employers whose policies meet the level of cover specified in the standard."

The standard also highlights the need for pharmacists to consider PII arrangements separate to their employer's arrangements in cases where pharmacists practise in locations other than their principal place of employment.

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Australian researchers pave way for new vaccine

Nick O'Donoghue

RESULTS OF research carried out by the University of Sydney could help develop a vaccine to prevent Herpes Simplex Virus (HSV).

Findings published in the *Journal of Immunology* identified how skin cells are infected by the virus, which is associated with the promotion and transmission of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV).

Lead investigator Associated Professor Cheryl Jones said HSV was a medically significant virus that caused devastating disease



HSV: Researchers close to vaccine discovery

throughout life for sufferers.

"Potentially, we may be on the right track for a new discovery.

"The skin represents a major entry point; therefore

understanding how immune cells behave during the infection is of vital importance to researchers trying to find a cure for HSV.

"HSV infection of the skin and genital mucosa are important for the promotion and transmission of HIV, the virus that causes AIDS," she said.

The research carried out in mice found HSV can infect and kill Langerhans cells, the immune cell in the top layer of the skin, which should exit the skin to the lymph nodes to trigger a stronger immune response to infection.

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New guidelines split profession

Simone Roberts

THE BODIES representing pharmacy owners and employees are at loggerheads again, this time over the Pharmacy Board of Australia's proposed staffing ratios to meet dispensing workloads.

The Board's proposed new **guidelines**, due to come into effect on 1 July, stipulate that a pharmacist must supervise a dispensary technician but must not supervise more than one at a time.

The guidelines also state that if a pharmacy dispenses around 150 to 200 prescriptions daily, a trained dispensary assistant may assist but if the workload exceeds 200 daily, an additional pharmacist is required.

Pharmacy Guild of Australia president Kos Sclavos said the guidelines would have "significant ramifications" and urged the Board to defer implementation of the guidelines to allow for more thorough consultation.

Mr Sclavos said while the Guild acknowledged the importance of pharmacies being adequately staffed, it do not agree that this

concept should be "quantified inflexibly".

"The draft guidelines also impose a rigid ratio of dispensary assistants to pharmacists. The proposed guidelines will force some pharmacies to push the pharmacist back into the dispensary to engage in prescription preparation. This is contrary to the promotion of greater interaction between the pharmacist and the patient, with appropriately trained pharmacy assistants in the dispensary," Mr Sclavos said.

But the Pharmacist Division of APESMA has rejected the Guild's objections and said the same guideline had been operating successfully in Victoria for a number of years.

"Stressed, overworked pharmacists do not concentrate or do their job properly- this is an occupational health and safety issue that PDA will be investigating. The Pharmacy Board Guidelines will assist pharmacy owners meet their obligations to their patients and to their staff," PDA president Geoff March said.

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COMMENTS

FLU JAB MYTHS [\(LINK\)](#)

We also haven't been able to break people out of the perception that they have already had a head cold, which they think is influenza, and therefore don't need a flu vaccine.

I have been telling people for 20 years that their flu vaccine did not give them a cold, but it is an argument you just can't win and if this academic was on the frontline he would know that you just can't break people out of their pre-conceptions.

Sharon Baker

TEST DRUGS SOLD ONLINE: PSA [\(LINK\)](#)

Thanks for headlining this important article.

I was unaware that this was not already being done, and it should particularly apply to overseas drugs. I think the Guild should get behind this great initiative by the Society.

Trevor Coles

CPD COMPETITION [\(LINK\)](#)

Since CPD points can be accumulated from a number of different sources, and no one source will act as a collation point

for all the sources, why not let the new National Pharmacy Board collate the points for individuals?

The National Pharmacy Board can then monitor the CPD points for individuals and perhaps notify them from time to time if they look as though they might not achieve the required points in any one year.

Michael Knynenburg

TAX BREAK FOR DOCTORS [\(LINK\)](#)

I operate a review business in rural and remote areas, doing many kilometres and paying accommodation.

It would be good for someone to think about the professional service providers as well as shop owners.

Kerry Duprez



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