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Misguidance by careers advisor

Nick O'Donoghue

SCHOOL CHILDREN are being put off pursuing careers in pharmacy because of misinformation about intern placements, delegates at the Pharmacy Guild's workforce symposium were told this week.

Guild president Kos Sclavos said a careers guidance counsellor at a private school in Brisbane was encouraging students to steer clear of the profession as there was no guarantee they would be able to find the relevant intern experience required for registration.

"A private school had passed on the incorrect information that pharmacy students may have difficulty getting intern positions. That is not correct," he told *Pharmacy eNews*.

Mr Sclavos said the misinformation regarding the availability could lead to serious problems for pharmacy, with students being turned off applying



CAREERS: Guild president Kos Sclavos says unis have responsibilities to students.

to study pharmacy, because of the perception there are no jobs available.

He urged the universities to take responsibility for ensuring students get the required supervised experience and to highlight the individual school's achievements in getting

placements to emphasise the opportunities available to students.

"The universities have a moral responsibility to get intern positions for students.

"They also have a responsibility to publicise their success rate at doing this. I would hope it always remains at 100 per cent," he said.

With state and territory governments holding the responsibility for ensuring students get their intern placements, Mr Sclavos expressed concern they were not committed to providing students with the hands-on training required for full registration.

"The state and territory governments have a responsibility to ensure intern positions are available in their hospitals.

"I am hearing there is a growing move from government to step back from their responsibilities," he said.

To comment [click here](#).

Post-pandemic swine flu still a danger

Nick O'Donoghue

AUSTRALIANS are being urged not to confuse the World Health Organization declaration the swine flu pandemic is over with the perception the virus is less dangerous.

Medical virologist at Sydney's Westmead Hospital, Professor Dominic Dwyer, told *Pharmacy eNews* the announcement that it was now "post-pandemic" had no bearing on the virus's clinical impact.

"I think people are confusing the WHO announcement with what the clinical relevance of it is.

"From a clinical point-of-view

it hasn't changed at all. Flu is still something that's important, we still have ill people in NSW at the moment.

"It's nothing to do with the clinical significance at all. We don't know if this virus will continue to cause problems in young people like it did last year or whether it might shift overtime to cause problems in the elderly like ordinary flu does," he said.

While Prof Dwyer expressed concerns people may assume the WHO declaration meant swine flu was less of a risk than last year, this flu season has been "quiet" despite the expectation of a second wave

of the virus.

"So far it's been quiet, it's been surprising in that we were expecting the wave to come this winter.

"I do know there have been a number of people in Sydney in intensive care with severe flu, but the community rate of flu is low," he said.

Prof Dwyer warned the severity of different waves of pandemic viruses have varied in intensity in the past and the risk from swine flu would remain if the need for vaccination and good hygiene were not reinforced regularly.

To comment [click here](#).

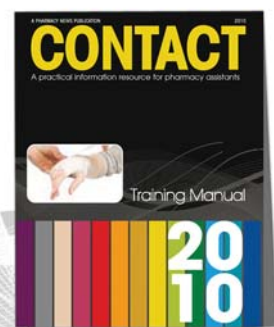
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Anti-fungal treatment switched to S2

Simone Roberts

PHARMACISTS will no longer have to be involved in the sale of Loceryl Nail Lacquer (amorolfine) following a decision to downschedule the antifungal treatment.

In its **record** of reasons released yesterday, the National Drugs and Poisons Schedule Committee (NDPSC) revealed its decision to reschedule all amorolfine topical preparations from Schedule 3 to Schedule 2 with the exception of

preparations for the treatment of tinea pedis which will remain on prescription.

The lacquer is a once-weekly treatment for fungal nail infection onychomycosis.

The committee agreed with the applicant's argument that amorolfine was suitable for self-treatment of onychomycosis, which they claimed was a minor ailment capable of being recognised and monitored by the consumer.

The applicant emphasised

that pharmacist intervention was not required with every sale of antifungal nail products but acknowledged the importance of pharmacist advice being available if required.

"The condition [is] easily recognisable by the consumer, [is] amenable to short-term treatment and [is] capable of being monitored and self-managed by the consumer, with advice and counselling if necessary," the applicant said.

Increased access to the

treatment would benefit those consumers who may be embarrassed by their condition and unwilling to discuss their symptoms with a pharmacist, they added.

While concerns were raised about the ability of consumers to self-diagnose, the committee felt misdiagnosis did not pose a significant risk to patients.

The decision will take effect from next month.

To comment [click here](#).

Clear and concise CMI needed

Jennifer Joseph

EXPLANATORY verbal counselling is the preferred choice over current written information by 44 per cent of pharmacy patients, a new project report into the limited use of Consumer Medicine Information (CMI) has found.

The Investigating Consumer Medicine Information (I-CMI) Project, funded as part of the Fourth Community Pharmacy Agreement Research and Development Program, discovered CMI would impact patients' medicine knowledge if improvements were made to readability and usability.

The project, which studied alternative CMI formats, aimed to consolidate the evidence related to CMI effectiveness; substantiate the validity of anecdotal evidence on CMI provision; and develop and evaluate alternative CMI formats to ensure optimal effectiveness and best practice delivery in community pharmacy.

Of the 1000 consumers surveyed nationally, 69 per cent had received a CMI in the six months prior to the

survey and 38 per cent in the month prior.

Increased consultation time with health care professionals focusing on CMI was a commonly cited consumer suggestion, with a shorter CMI version also requested.

Limited time and CMI awareness, consumers' difficulty reading CMI, increased questions from consumers after reading CMI and overall poor perceptions of CMI, were key consumer barriers to provision and use.

The negative impact that CMI can have on consumers' adherence to therapy was also raised, with a third of patients citing fears they may experience side effects that they read in a CMI.

While half of consumers reported wanting a CMI for their medicines, about 39 per cent had received a CMI directly from the pharmacist.

However, all-new CMI formats displayed superior performance to the current CMI, with improvements including the use of plain language, design principles, readability and reduced length.

To comment [click here](#).

COMMENTS

OVERSUPPLY MYTH [\(LINK\)](#)

The reality is that in the major capital cities there is an oversupply which is only going to get worse. Even Rhonda White can admit that in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne there is an oversupply of pharmacists. Those cities contain around 50 per cent of the nation's pharmacies.

If scheming industry leaders and the evil students are all conspiring to spread misinformation, then who are we to trust for balanced, honest information?

Oliver

The 'going rate' has plummeted to below \$25/hour in many Western Australian pharmacies due to the oversupply of pharmacists. This is only occurring because of a massive conflict of interest where the Guild wants to flood the pharmacist market to keep their pharmacy owner members happy by reducing their overheads.

Matthew Foster

Why didn't they invite recruitment agencies to the symposium? They are at the coalface of this whole

situation and can give a much better picture of the situation.

Sue Muller

The Pharmaceutical Locum Company

The Guild's response to an oversupply of pharmacists is highly predictable and highly offensive. Why would they want to advocate for employee pharmacists when it means their members will have to pay higher wages? Employee pharmacists are getting increasingly frustrated that there is no one to give them a strong voice and represent their real concerns. The most these advocates have done is set up token young pharmacist committees to make it appear like they are listening but the majority of members with serious leadership roles in these representative bodies are still older generation pharmacists that own their own pharmacies. The first step to representing the whole profession is to get rid of these start thinking how fresh brains can seriously reinvigorate and save the pharmacy profession as a whole.

Lena D