

Nurse Update

February 2010

Welcome to the [National Prescribing Service Limited](#) (NPS) *Nurse Update*.

Nurse Update is a digest of evidence based information to help you improve your knowledge of medicines use and prescribing practices.

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NPS actively engages with nurses to encourage a greater understanding of medicines by providing information and activities on various therapeutic programs.

1) Management options to maximise sleep

For some people, getting a good night's sleep can be a major problem. While the amount of sleep we need may decrease as we get older, *quality* of sleep is what will enable us to get the most out of the following day.

This latest therapeutic program encourages health professionals to recommend non-drug therapies as first-line treatment for sleeping problems and discuss the importance of good sleep practices with the patient before prescribing hypnotics.

Health professionals are encouraged to:

- Explore patient concerns with sleep difficulties – identify and address causes
- Offer behavioural and cognitive therapies for insomnia
- Discuss and specify the duration of hypnotic medicines use
- Trial discontinuing hypnotic medicines in patients who have been using them for long periods
- Engage patient/carers in managing sleep difficulties

As part of the therapeutic program, nurses can participate in:

- Case study (62): Maximising sleep and minimising potential harms
- Drug Use Evaluation (DUE) tool: Benzodiazepine and non-benzodiazepine hypnotic medicines for insomnia in aged care facilities
- Facilitated small group case study discussions with your peers

Publications focusing on insomnia include:

- NPS News (67): Addressing hypnotic medicines use in primary care
- Prescribing Practice Review (49): Management options for improving sleep

Find out more about [therapeutic information](#) and clinical activities to improve your practice.

2) Medicine Name Finder

To help people get to know their medicines, NPS has developed an online tool, [NPS Medicine Name Finder](#). This tool identifies the active ingredient in a prescription medicine and the brand names it is known as.

This search tool provides the active ingredient names and brand names of prescription medicines listed on the Schedule of Pharmaceutical Benefits, and it is updated by the PBS monthly. Please note that this tool is not intended to provide detailed information about medicine strengths or prices.

3) Education seminars with Chinese, Italian, Greek, Vietnamese, Arabic speaking seniors

NPS has engaged a number of ethno-specific organisations across the country to run education seminars from 1 March to 30 June with Chinese, Italian, Greek, Vietnamese and Arabic speaking seniors. The seminars are titled:

1. Safe and wise use of medicines
2. Sleep and ageing

If you are interested in finding out about education and media resources available, please contact Jackie Stephenson on jstephenson@nps.org.au.

4) Feed your competency

Case study

Complete a case study to help refine your clinical decision-making skills. You can download the latest [case study](#) or visit www.nps.org.au/healthpro.

Practice nurses

Remember you can participate in educational visits and facilitated small group case discussions. Just contact the NPS Facilitator at your local Division of General Practice.

Nurse Practitioners

Charles Darwin University and NPS have collaborated to produce a series of online case-based modules for Nurse Practitioners.

The [Quality Use of Medicines for Nurse Practitioners website](#) has been designed for the ongoing professional development of Nurse Practitioners. For access to case studies and resources [register now](#).

Residential aged care nurses

Visit the medication management website at <http://agedcare.nps.org.au/home> for useful resources and tools.

5) National Medicines Symposium (NMS) 2010

In the constantly evolving world of medicines, NPS is once again hosting the [National Medicines Symposium](#) and **abstracts CLOSE on 19 February 2010**.

This year's theme is *Medicines in people's lives*, which enables us to address [quality use of medicines](#) in the wider context of changes within the health sector, including reforms and new prescribers.

NMS 2010 will be held at the Melbourne Conference and Exhibition Centre from 26 - 28 May 2010. **Register now at** www.nms2010.org.au.

6) NPS publications

NPS News

Download the latest [NPS News](#) or visit www.nps.org.au/health_professionals/publications.

NPS News is a bi-monthly publication to keep you informed of quality use of medicines issues in relation to different therapeutic areas.

Prescribing Practice Review

Download the latest [Prescribing Practice Review](#) or visit www.nps.org.au/health_professionals/publications.

Prescribing Practice Review (PPR) provides key messages for quality prescribing on selected therapeutic topics and evidence-based prescribing information.

NPS RADAR

Download the latest [NPS RADAR](#) or visit www.nps.org.au/radar.

NPS RADAR offers you evidence-based information about new medicines, new Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) listings and research.

Australian Prescriber

Download the latest [Australian Prescriber](#) or visit www.australianprescriber.com

Australian Prescriber is a bi-monthly, independent publication that provides readily accessible information about drugs and therapeutics.

Medicines Talk

Download the latest [Medicines Talk](#) or visit www.nps.org.au/consumers/publications.

Medicines Talk is written by consumers for consumers. We invite you to print copies for use in doctors' rooms, hospital waiting rooms and visitors' areas.

Medicines Update

Download the latest [Medicines Update](#) or visit www.nps.org.au/consumers/publications.

Medicine Update lets you know about new medicines and new PBS listings. Each issue provides an independent assessment of current information and research about a different medicine.

7) NPS RSS feed

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National Prescribing Service Ltd (NPS) is an independent, non-profit organisation for Quality Use of Medicines. We provide accurate, balanced, evidence-based information and services to help people choose if, when and how to use medicines to improve their health and wellbeing. We are member-based and work in partnership with health professionals, government, pharmaceutical industry and consumers. NPS is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing.