

# **Consultation paper: *Review of Guidelines on practice-specific issues - Guideline 1 References***

## **Australian Pharmacy Council**

Response to the request for feedback from the Pharmacy Board of Australia (PBA) on the proposals to amend Guideline 1 of the *Guidelines on practice specific issues* first released by PBA on 12 August 2010.

### **Background**

The Australian Pharmacy Council (APC) is aware that many pharmacists maintain and have available to themselves and members of the community suitable reference material and texts that are appropriate to the area of in which the pharmacist practices.

However, APC understands that references are unlikely to be universal across the profession and that consistency and uniformity profession wide is highly desirable.

### **General comment**

The APC supports the concept that registered pharmacists have ready access to reference texts (in a format of their own choosing) appropriate to the area(s) in which the pharmacist practices. The availability of the reference texts not only offers the opportunity for decision support for the pharmacist concerned but also provides an opportunity for community members. Potential access to the same material by community members allows for community concerns to be managed and for assurances to be provided to individuals that can only be of benefit to all involved.

### **Specific Comments**

The PBA is seeking comment on three proposals for changes to Guideline 1. The first proposal is to remove the wording “for pharmacists undertaking medication reviews”. The APC agrees that the wording has the potential to cause confusion. Any clinical activity that a pharmacist undertakes will involve some form of evaluation of a patient’s medication(s). Any material offered as a means of guidance that could be misinterpreted to suggest that only a certain aspect of pharmacy practice or that a discrete number of pharmacists need to be able to access relevant reference material should be avoided.

The APC is also supportive of the second proposal for pharmacists not to become overly reliant on any specific reference material to the exclusion of other material. At any point in time the relative currency of reference material will vary and the ability to minimise this effect is important to the quality and veracity of dispensing, clinical assessment, reviewing and counseling processes. The community would expect and indeed demand that pharmacists consider using additional reference material to avoid the potential for over reliance on one source of reference material.

Just as critical is the need to ensure that reference material is relevant to the Australian context. The APC believes that any decision made by a pharmacist with regard to the choice of reference material that will form the basis of practice support as well as potentially being available to community members for their use should be undertaken bearing in mind the particular reference text’s relevance to the Australian context.

Finally, Martindale, the Complete Drug Reference has been and continues to be a worthy reference for use by pharmacists in many areas of pharmacy practice. Any pharmacist who chooses Martindale to assist in decision support for the area of practice in which they operate has made a sound choice. However, factors such as cost, flexibility and broad relevance to the Australian context mean that its suitability for recommendation as a required text is questionable.

### **Summary**

The Australian Pharmacy Council supports the 3 proposed changes outlined in the Pharmacy Board of Australia’s Review of *Guidelines on practice-specific issues – Guideline 1 References*.