Media Release
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SHPA Supports Campaign by Choosing Wisely Australia

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA), the first pharmacy organisation to join the world-wide Choosing Wisely initiative, today gave full support to Choosing Wisely Australia®: The Next Wave.

SHPA CEO Kristin Michaels said SHPA had a long tradition as an organisation focused on the best use of medicines and was keen to promote more effective and efficient patient care through better prescribing practices.

“A defining characteristic of the work of our members is getting medications right and the Choosing Wisely campaign supports their critically important roles in protecting the well-being of patients,” Ms Michaels said.

“We have identified five priority recommendations that, if widely supported, will contribute significantly to reducing unnecessary use of medicines and, consequently, will deliver more effective patient management by reducing potential for harm.”

“Our list was created by pharmacists and includes recommendations about the use of medicines towards the end of life, antibiotics, over-the-counter codeine, the use of antipsychotic medicines in dementia, and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medicines in older people.”

Ms Michaels said SHPA’s five recommendations are:

1. Don’t initiate and continue medicines for primary prevention, in individuals who have a limited life expectancy.
2. Don’t initiate an antibiotic without an identified indication and a predetermined length of treatment or review date.
3. Don’t initiate and continue antipsychotic medicines for behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia for more than 3 months.
4. Don’t recommend the regular use of oral non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medicines (NSAIDs) in older people.

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia

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5. Don’t recommend the use of medicines with sub-therapeutic doses of codeine (<30 mg for adults) for mild to moderate pain.

SHPA President Professor Michael Dooley said: “SHPA joined Choosing Wisely Australia because our vision and mission align with the aims of the Choosing Wisely initiative.”

“Our members are passionate about evidence-based medicine and minimising harm from medicines. By partnering with Choosing Wisely Australia our messages are amplified,” he said.

“Pharmacists are medicines experts and are ideally placed to improve medicines use by having conversations with patients, their carers and other health professionals including doctors about the optimal and evidence-based use of medicines in any practice setting.”

“SHPA is proud to lead the pharmacy profession by joining Choosing Wisely Australia,” Professor Dooley said.

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About SHPA

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) is the national professional organisation for more than 3,000 pharmacists, pharmacists in training, pharmacy technicians and associates working across Australia’s health system. SHPA is the only professional pharmacy organisation with a core base of members practising in public and private hospitals and other health service facilities.

SHPA is committed to facilitating the safe and effective use of medicines, which is the core business of pharmacists, especially in hospitals. SHPA supports pharmacists to meet medication and related service needs, so that both optimal health outcomes and economic objectives are achieved for Australians, as individuals, for the community as a whole and for healthcare facilities within our systems of healthcare.