Pharmacists are key to cardiac rehabilitation

The importance of pharmacists in cardiac rehabilitation has been highlighted by the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) for Heart Week (1-7 May).

SHPA CEO Ms Kristin Michaels said, “For heart attack survivors, one of the important benefits of participating in cardiac rehabilitation is that they are more likely to take their medicines.”

“This helps recovery and reduces the chance of another heart attack,” she said.

Ms Michaels said that pharmacists have a key role in the interdisciplinary cardiac rehabilitation team.

“People who have had a heart attack will have an array of new medicines to take,” she said.

“Pharmacists help patients understand their new medicines, how to manage them and how get the most benefit from them.”

“Patients attending cardiac rehabilitation have been recently discharged from hospital and are faced with many new medicines. This is why the role of the pharmacist is critical.”

Ms Michaels said many patients attending cardiac rehabilitation have never taken medicines regularly.

“In this setting, pharmacists can help to improve adherence by demystifying patients’ fears, helping them to remember their medicines with daily reminder tools and suggesting suitable dose administration aids,” she said.

“Pharmacist can provide further education in a calm environment, help patients to understand possible side effects, identify any drug interactions, and clarify any misunderstanding about dosing.”

“They can also resolve any ongoing issues and concerns, by liaising with patients’ primary care providers and hospital specialists,” Ms Michaels said.

Ms Michaels said that cardiac rehabilitation is a proven method to help patients make lifestyle and other changes.
“It is an important step for patients who have survived a heart attack as it significantly reduces their risk of readmission to hospital or death from another heart attack. All health professionals have a role to play in encouraging heart attack survivors to attend cardiac rehabilitation,” she said.

“SHPA supports pharmacists to improve their ability to make a contribution to cardiac rehabilitation through our annual two-day Cardiology Seminar, our expert group, the Cardiology Committee of Specialty Practice, and the Cardiology Discussion Forum which provides an online community for members who have an interest in or work in cardiology,” Ms Michaels 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 responsibility 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.