

# Media release

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## Updated Australian pharmacy standard for pain management now available in Feb JPPR

An updated Australian practice standard in pain management for pharmacy services has been released by the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA), detailing current best practice for the provision of pain management services, including analgesic stewardship services.

The *Standard of practice in pain management for pharmacy services* is now available in the [February issue of SHPA's flagship Journal of Pharmacy Practice and Research \(JPPR\)](#). The Standard should be read in conjunction with the SHPA Standards of practice for clinical pharmacy services and other relevant standards (e.g. Standard of practice in dispensing and distribution for pharmacy services, Standard of practice in mental health for pharmacy services).

Lead author and former chair of the Pain Management Leadership Committee, Shania Liu, says the updated Standard shows how best practice pain management is achieved through an interdisciplinary, collaborative, person-centred approach where pharmacists leverage their skills to benefit patients, healthcare providers and the operation of the health service.

'The role of pharmacists in the management of pain is always evolving. It's therefore important to ensure current standards are guided by the latest evidence and reflect the changing nature of this critical area of healthcare.

'Evidence shows that pharmacist involvement in pain management multidisciplinary teams, including pharmacist-led clinics for persistent pain, reduces adverse events, improves patient satisfaction, lessens pain intensity, improves physical functioning and reduces the need for a secondary health care.

'Furthermore, it has been shown that specific education delivered by the hospital analgesic stewardship pharmacist, to clinicians and pharmacists about appropriate analgesic prescribing for surgical patients, helps to reduce prescribing of opioids at discharge and improve opioid de-escalation plans.'

SHPA President Tom Simpson says while opioid use is only one component of pain management, pharmacist-led inpatient opioid de-escalation has demonstrated a significant reduction in opioid use and side effects without adversely affecting patient-reported pain control.

'Opioid harm in Australia results in nearly 150 hospitalisations every day, many of which can be attributed to adverse effects from intended use of prescription opioids, rather than misuse or illicit use.

'This Standard highlights the important roles the pain management pharmacist and analgesic stewardship pharmacist can play in improving the appropriate use of opioids and therefore, reducing hospitalisations.'

Mr Simpson says that draft versions of the updated Pain Management Standard have been reviewed by numerous health organisations.

'This Standard wouldn't be possible without the support of our colleagues at the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists and Faculty of Pain Medicine, Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care, Clinical Excellence Commission, Safer Care Victoria and the Australian Pain Society and we'd like to thank them for their contribution.'

The February 2024 issue of *JPPR* is now available, [free – as always – for SHPA members](#).

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**About SHPA**

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) is the national, professional organisation for the 6,100+ Hospital Pharmacists, and their Hospital Pharmacist Intern and Hospital Pharmacy Technician colleagues working across Australia's health system, advocating for their pivotal role improving the safety and quality of medicines use. Embedded in multidisciplinary medical teams and equipped with exceptional medicines management expertise, SHPA members are progressive advocates for clinical excellence, committed to evidence-based practice and passionate about patient care.

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