

Media release

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New Australian pharmacy standard for mental health published, as JPPR reach soars

An updated Australian pharmacy practice standard for mental health has been released by the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA), with new key features including a list of essential and emerging services, and guidance on the provision of mental health pharmacy services in diverse population groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The [Standard of practice in mental health for pharmacy services](#) leads the August issue of SHPA's flagship *Journal of Pharmacy Practice and Research (JPPR)*, which continues to show strong and consistent growth. [JPPR recently attained an Impact Factor of 2.1](#) with article downloads increasing 27% on the same time last year.

SHPA Mental Health Chair Viandro Borja says the updated standards reflect the often complex and evolving nature of mental health services.

'Pharmacy roles are changing and expanding, especially within mental health.

'This new Standard will support the progression and evolution of Mental Health Pharmacy services across Australia while shaping and contributing to continuing professional development strategies on a local, state and national level.

'We are excited to support pharmacists across the spectrum of experience – from those with an evolving interest in this area to pharmacists who have established expertise in this speciality.'

Lead author and former chair of the SHPA Mental Health Leadership Committee Helen Lowy says pharmacists are uniquely qualified to support multidisciplinary teams in optimising medication regimens for mental health patients and their carers, which are often complex.

'Pharmacists can support rationalising and deprescribing medicines upon transfer to the community setting, to minimise the risk of side effects, while optimising quality and safety of mental health treatment.

'Armed with their knowledge and access to relevant and appropriate medicines information, pharmacists can support patients, carers and their families in understanding, participating in and making decisions about medicines prescribed in mental health care.'

SHPA President Tom Simpson says there has never been a more important time to attract, upskill and integrate pharmacists into interdisciplinary mental health teams to achieve better patient outcomes.

'Over the past couple of years there has been an escalation in mental illness and psychological distress.

'Yet, the World Health Organization has identified healthcare workforce shortage as one of our most urgent global healthcare challenges over the next decade.'

'We can help strengthen the workforce by equipping every pharmacist with the necessary tools and information to ensure every mental health patient receives appropriate mental health pharmacy services, and by recognising these specialty skills in expert practitioners.'

The August 2023 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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