



15 June 2019

Jo Wishart
Editor, Therapeutic Guidelines Limited
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West Melbourne, VIC 3003
jwishart@tg.org.au

Dear Ms Wishart

RE: Review of Management Guidelines: Developmental Disability

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) is the national, professional, for-purpose organisation for leading pharmacists and pharmacy technicians 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.

SHPA thanks Therapeutic Guidelines Limited (TGL) for giving us the opportunity to provide comments regarding Management Guidelines: Developmental Disability ahead of its revision for the next edition. This guideline is an essential reference for our members every day in a variety of clinical settings, as they carry out their responsibilities in developmental disability to improve the quality of life for patients. SHPA members have raised issues and considerations in the current version of Management Guidelines: Developmental Disability for the Editorial Board to review ahead of the next version.

General practice consultation

SHPA recommends the inclusion of the role of pharmacists in medication management under the heading 'Medication' on page 35. This section mentions the use of multiple medications by patients with developmental disabilities. An article from the Australian Journal of Pharmacy discusses the usefulness of medication review for people with an intellectual disability and cites the Therapeutic Guidelines as a valuable resource for pharmacists conducting medication reviews for this patient group¹. Appropriately skilled pharmacists can currently deliver their unique services during a medication review and this is funded via existing remuneration processes². It would be useful to highlight the role of pharmacists in this section by the way of medication management reviews to assist patients and their carers. Carers can often feel overwhelmed, especially when caring for patients with challenging behaviour, therefore being aware of the services a pharmacist can offer would be invaluable in ensuring medication use is optimised and safe.

Women's and Men's health

In 2005, the World Health Organization directed member countries to include a disability component in their reproductive healthcare programming. However, over a decade later, there are reports that both genders, particularly women, are poorly served in reproductive healthcare settings^{3,4}.

These individuals require sexual health education with tailored support beginning in early adolescence in relation to reproductive health issues. SHPA believes that pharmacists can assist in the development and delivery of counselling aids to support patients with a disability on medication prescribed or recommended in



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reproductive health e.g. contraceptives for women with disability, and this should be reflected in the guidelines. Particular areas of focus include:

- Women's health: Decision-making in relation to management and counselling with respect to contraception, menstrual disorders, prevention/screening/management of STIs, family planning (e.g. pre-conception folate/iodine), pregnancy antenatal and postnatal care and parenting, relief menopause symptoms
- Men's health: Decision-making in relation to management and counselling with respect to prevention/screening/management of STIs, parenting, conditions that impact adversely on sexual function and prostate disorders in later life.

Epilepsy and seizures

Under the heading 'Adverse effects' on page 217, SHPA recommends the addition of levetiracetam. This medicine is now much more commonly used and is has been associated with higher incidence of mood disorders.

Inclusion of additional disability resources

SHPA recommends the inclusion of the following Victorian resources under the section 'Disability resources' on page 355.

- [Disability Services Commissioner](#)
- [Better Health Channel- Disability groups and networks](#)
- [Consumer Affairs Victoria- Organisations that assist consumers with a disability](#)

If you have any queries or would like to discuss our submission further, please do not hesitate to contact Johanna de Wever, General Manager, Advocacy and Leadership on jdewever@shpa.org.au.

Yours sincerely,



Kristin Michaels
Chief Executive

References

¹ Haggan, M. (2015). Medication reviews for people with intellectual disability. *Australian Journal Of Pharmacy*.

² Department of Health. (2019). Medication management reviews. Retrieved from https://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/medication_management_reviews.htm

³ Walters, F.P., Gray, S.H. (2018). Addressing sexual and reproductive health in adolescents and young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. *Curr Opin Pediatr*; 30 (4): 451-8.

⁴ Brown, H.K., et al. (2019). Reproductive health in women with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Ontario: implications for policy and practice. *Healthcare Quarterly*;21: 6-9.