03.3 Counselling Protocols for Complementary Medicines in Community Pharmacy
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Objective. Complementary medicines, in particular herbal medicines and vitamins are being used by 49.7\% of patients in Australia concurrently with prescription medications. Since pharmacists have highlighted the lack of evidenced-based information, the objective of this research was to design a protocol for appropriate counselling of patients requesting a complementary medicine in a community pharmacy.

Methods. A questionnaire was administered to 350 community pharmacists in Queensland to determine the ten most commonly sold herbs in community pharmacy and the specific information required by pharmacists to effectively counsel patients. Counselling protocols were designed, evaluated using a focus group of pharmacists and are currently being trialled in 3 community pharmacies in Townsville.

Results. A response rate of greater than 30\% indicated this to be an area of interest for community pharmacists. Valerian, St John's Wort, Black Cohosh and Echinacea were all in the top ten herbs supplied in community pharmacy and were thus chosen to be candidates for the development of the counselling protocols. The information most sought by pharmacists on complementary medicines is: indications for use (81.7\%), adverse effects (81.7\%), contraindications (88.5\%), side effects (87.0\%) and drug interactions (93.0\%).

Discussion. This information was then used in the design of a one page counselling sheet for example for St John's Wort with headings: indications, mechanism of action dosage, latency period, side effects, interactions, contraindications, counselling points and questions for the patient. However after consultation with pharmacists in the focus group these headings were amended to questions to ask the patient, what St John's Wort is used for, how St John's Wort works, dosage, how long St John's Wort takes to work, side effects, interactions, when St John's Wort should be used with caution. This was done in order to maximise the usefulness of these counselling protocols in the front-shop of the Pharmacy.

03.4 Refinement of an innovative web-based anticoagulation resource
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Objective. Optimal management of warfarin therapy is dependent on maximising the amount of time a patient's international normalised ratio (INR) is maintained within their target range. This requires regular assessment of their INR results in conjunction with the corresponding warfarin doses, their lifestyle and other influences. INR histories are often incomplete, particularly for consumers who travel, see multiple healthcare professionals or who perform patient self-monitoring. Good INR control is also associated with high levels of patient knowledge regarding anticoagulation. The potential exists for the utilisation of information technology to address both of these issues.

Methods. www.anticoagulation.com.au, an online resource, was developed to fill a void in appropriate and accessible warfarin information for both healthcare professionals and consumers. This resource was first launched in October 2008 and was subsequently redeveloped and relaunched in October 2009 in response to feedback received via the site. A web-based platform for recording and electronic communication of INR results was included as an addition to the new site.

Results. The website received almost 500,000 'hits' in the 12 months following its launch. The relaunched site enables consumers to log on to a secure platform and record their INR results and warfarin doses. Time in therapeutic range is calculated and represented visually. Registration rates and examples of online resources will be reported. Qualitative feedback on the value of this resource will also be described.

Conclusion. This website has successfully fulfilled its role as a source of accurate, accessible and user-friendly anticoagulation information for Australian consumers and healthcare professionals. It is continuing to be improved and refined to meet the needs of its target audience.