



National Prescribing Service Limited

Antiplatelet and anticoagulant therapy in stroke prevention: new NPS program

The South East Alliance of General Practice (Brisbane) will be participating in a new National Prescribing Service Limited (NPS) therapeutic education program, "Antiplatelet and anticoagulant therapy in stroke prevention".

Stroke is the second leading cause of death in Australia and often results in significant long-term disability. Antiplatelet and anticoagulant therapies have an important role in primary and secondary prevention.

This latest program focuses on:

- Assessing absolute cardiovascular risk to establish which patients would benefit from aspirin in primary prevention of cardiovascular events
- Deciphering the evidence behind aspirin, aspirin plus dipyridamole and clopidogrel to choose the appropriate antiplatelet to prevent recurrent stroke and TIA
- Using scoring of risk factors in patients with atrial fibrillation to stratify stroke risk and decide between warfarin and aspirin
- Assessing risk factors for bleeding in patients with atrial fibrillation before commencing warfarin therapy
- Strategies that will help increase patient concordance with warfarin and educate patients on the safe use of warfarin
- The importance of maintaining INR within therapeutic range.

"This program focuses on the importance of assessing a person's risk of stroke to help decide on appropriateness of prescribing warfarin or aspirin. It is well documented that warfarin is underutilized in atrial fibrillation, yet it reduces the relative risk of stroke in patients with atrial fibrillation by 64%, while aspirin reduces the relative risk by 22%," says NPS clinical expert, Education and Quality Assurance Program Manager, Ms Judith Mackson.

This educational program will provide for GPs, physicians, pharmacists and general practice nurses:

- Educational resources including *NPS News (62)* and *Prescribing Practice Review (44)*
- Prescribing feedback for GPs
- GP clinical audit
- Case study
- One-to-one educational visits from NPS facilitators in Divisions of General Practice
- Small group, case-based peer meetings for GPs, pharmacists and general practice nurses

GPs and GP Registrars will also be able to review practice by participating in a clinical audit. The audit, '*Antiplatelet and anticoagulant therapy in stroke prevention*' will be available from 2 March 2009.

To enrol, visit www.nps.org.au/health_professionals.

The audit is recognised by the RACGP Quality Assurance & Continuing Professional Development Program, total points 40 (category 1) and in the ACRRM Professional Development Program, 30 points (extended skills). It also qualifies as an activity for QPI of the PIP (Quality Prescribing Initiative of the Practice Incentives Program), year ending April 2010.

For more information on the clinical audit contact NPS on (02) 8217 8700 or email info@nps.org.au.

For more information on the educational program contact Michael Copestake at the Alliance on Ph: 3163 6150 or email mcopestake@seagp.org.au