

Clinical Pearls

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medication management training

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Each week we will aim to bring out a concise email that provides 4-5 key pieces of information addressing a specific issue in clinical therapeutics.

This week: Scheduling of Nicotine Vaping Products

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As of the 1st of October 2021, nicotine for use in e-cigarettes is now a Schedule 4 medicine. This means that the possession or use of nicotine vaping products without a prescription is illegal. E-cigarettes that do not contain nicotine remain unaffected by the scheduling. The long-term health effects of nicotine vaping products, and efficacy in smoking cessation, remains uncertain. They are not first line therapies but failing unsuccessful smoking cessation with approved pharmacotherapies, they may be an option with careful risk-benefit analysis. This change will provide greater opportunity for GPs to discuss smoking cessation with their patients.

- There are currently **no** nicotine vaping products that are approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA). This means that although these products can be prescribed, they have not been assessed by the TGA for efficacy, quality and safety.
- There is no change to nicotine replacement therapies, such as patches, gum and lozenges, which can still be purchased without a prescription. These products have been determined by the TGA as safe and effective.
- Nicotine vaping products **may** be prescribed through the **Authorised Prescriber (AP) Scheme, Special Access Scheme (SAS)** or the **Personal Importation Scheme**. If the consumer wishes to purchase their nicotine vaping product through an Australian pharmacy, the AP or SAS scheme must be used, and a prescriber must apply to be an authorised prescriber through the TGA.
- Any prescriber can supply a prescription for use through the Personal Importation Scheme, without prior TGA approval, which allows a consumer to purchase up to 3 months of nicotine vaping products from overseas.
- Regardless of how the nicotine vaping product is obtained it must be written on the residents medication chart as it is an S4 medication.

Please consider these issues when preparing or interpreting RMMR reports or education sessions. Contributions of content or suggested topics are welcome and should be sent directly to natalie@wardmm.com.au