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[Protecting against medicine shortages: ACCC extends approval for key collaboration](#)

For the last 18 months, the collaboration of two peak medical bodies has helped protect Australian patients against medicine shortages. In light of this successful collaboration and the ongoing global health and economic crisis, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) has granted further conditional interim authorisation for Medicines Australia (MA) and the Generic and Biosimilar Medicines Association (GBMA) to continue to work together.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, this collaboration has involved MA and GBMA working with the Australian government to secure supply of essential medicines. Any emerging medicine shortages have been more quickly and efficiently identified and managed by virtue of the collaboration.

Elizabeth de Somer, CEO of Medicines Australia, stated, "The highly skilled, talented people, who work for the industry, have worked tirelessly so we can protect ourselves against this virus and still receive other critical medicines, but we are not out of the woods yet."

"As the spread of the Delta variant continues to put pressure on our healthcare system, it is critical that we work together to secure the supply of vital prescription medicines, including those needed for patients in ICU," she said.

The ACCC's conditional interim authorisation for the collaboration will continue until it makes its final determination which is scheduled for February 2022, or until it revokes its interim authorisation.

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The ACCC's decision can be found [here](#) and MA's full media release can be found [here](#).

[Consultation opens on the Draft National Obesity Prevention Strategy 2022-2032](#)

Obesity is a complex condition which affects the whole Australian community. It is estimated that if the current obesity trend continues, more than 18 million Australians will be overweight or obese by 2030. In response, the Australian and state and territory governments have agreed to develop a National Obesity Prevention Strategy 2022-2032 (**Strategy**).

The draft Strategy was informed, in part, by more than 2,000 individuals and organisations who engaged in consultation on the proposed framework during November 2019 and February 2020. The Consultation Report and associated documents may be accessed [here](#).

The national obesity strategy Working Group is now inviting the Australian community to take part in a national consultation on the draft Strategy. Submissions can be made via an online seven-part survey which opened on 23 September 2021 and closes on 3 November 2021.

The survey may be accessed [here](#) and the draft Strategy may be accessed [here](#).

[Alcohol and weight gain lead to shocking rise in breast cancer](#)

Rates of breast cancer amongst Australian women have risen by 50% since the 1980s, and it is expected to become the most commonly diagnosed cancer in Australia this year. Contributing to this rise is increased alcohol consumption, being overweight, a lack of exercise and other lifestyle factors, according to Dr Heidi Peverill, a breast and melanoma surgeon at Mater.

Dr Peverill notes what is particularly alarming is that alcohol consumption during teenage years and the early 20s has a significant impact on the development of breast cancer. Women in this age group tend to consume higher amounts of alcohol and are not usually considering breast cancer prevention yet.

Actively changing day-to-day behaviours such as increasing incidental exercise, monitoring weight and opting for non-alcohol beverages can reduce the risk of developing breast cancer.

Dr Chris Pyke, a breast and endocrine surgeon at Mater, notes that advances in diagnostic and treatment technologies continue to improve outcomes for patients, but prevention is always better than cure. Dr Peverill echoed the sentiment of prevention, recognising education and early detection as means to reduce the current rate of breast cancer in Australia.

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Health Alert - Medical Colleges deal with bullying, discrimination and sexual harassment

15 Feb 2024

Much has been made in recent years of the pervasive nature of bullying, discrimination and sexual harassment (BDSH) in the medical profession, and in particular in medical training.

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A recent article in the International Journal for Quality in Healthcare (2024,36(1)), by Michael and David Greenfield (School of Population Health, UniNSW), highlights the challenges for improving the ...

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