

Practicing in the best interest of the patient

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Editor

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Practicing in the best interest of the patient requires one to always engage in practices which are ethical, professional and conducive to positive outcomes for the patient.

This edition of the journal opens with two papers addressing the issue of counterfeit medicines. The first paper gives an overview of the problem whilst the second specifically focuses on the availability of counterfeit medicines through the internet. These papers highlight the threat to patient safety which is of paramount importance. In addition, however, this phenomenon is attacking the most basic and fundamental function of the pharmacy profession, that of supplying safe and effective medicines to the public, especially when counterfeits infiltrate the legal supply chain. In our country medicines are only available through pharmacies. This is meant to provide patients with a safety net in terms of the quality of medicines available. It also provides the prescriber with the same guarantees. It is therefore of significant concern when prescribers and other health care professionals encourage patients to obtain their medicines outside the legitimate supply chain citing reasons related to the price or availability of medicines. When engaging in such practices, health care professionals are endangering patient's health in addition to undermining national and global efforts to combat this problem. Healthcare professionals should be part of the solution and actively engage in educating the public on the dangers involved in such practices.

The papers by Zammit and Grech address

health issues which are highly relevant to the summer months. While Zammit provides us with a comprehensive paper on photosensitivity incorporating phototoxicity and photoallergy, Grech gives an overview of common ailments encountered mainly in the summer months together with their management.

Cough is very often dismissed as just an annoying symptom and one that can be managed using basic over the counter preparations. West, provides evidence to dispel this notion and identifies various causes of cough which range from the trivial to the very serious. In practice these factors need to be taken into consideration as part of the management of this common presenting complaint.

The paper addressing the management of pain in palliative care by McClay primarily provides an overview of common analgesia used in the management of cancer pain highlighting their place in therapy.

Mallia discusses anti-retroviral therapy in the treatment of HIV in a highly informative and practical manner. This paper enables readers to become better acquainted with the various drugs used in the management of HIV.

The papers in this edition of the journal are diverse ranging from those with a regulatory aspect, to topical issues and clinically oriented papers mirroring the evolving educational and practice needs.

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