



Project Title: Complementary Medicines - Calls to an Australian Poisons Centre		Code: SPS9
Host School / Institute: Sydney Pharmacy School		Address: Pharmacy and Bank Building A15, Science Rd, Camperdown Campus
Certificates & Clearances required: No		
Primary Supervisor: Dr Joanna Harnett		
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Co-Supervisor/team: Dr Joanna Harnett and Dr Rose Cairns from the School of Pharmacy will co-lead this project.		
<p>Dr Joanna Harnett is a Lecturer at the Sydney School of Pharmacy, Faculty of Medicine and Health, where she conducts research and teaching in the broader area of complementary medicines. Dr Rose Cairns is a Lecturer at the School of Pharmacy, The University of Sydney. She has a clinical role as Senior Poisons Specialist (Research and Audit) at the New South Wales Poisons Information Centre.</p>		
Project Type: Data Analysis; Clinical; Literature Review		
Project Category: Pharmacy; Pharmacology		
Skills / Attributes of a successful student: While not essential, a student with some experience in data analysis would be an advantage. However, a willingness to learn data analysis is sufficient. A student with a keen interest in the appropriate and safe use of medicines is encouraged to apply.		
Project Keywords: Complementary Medicines; Toxicology; Pharmacology; Safety; Medicines		
Project Description: Australian Poison Centres (PICs) are staffed by pharmacists and clinical toxicologists, and take ~205,000 calls annually from healthcare professionals and members of the public. This project will involve the use of Australian PIC call data to comprehensively describe adverse events associated with complementary medicine (CM) use. This will include products involved/formulations, demographics, symptoms, disposition, and circumstances surrounding the exposure. The project will involve data cleaning, data entry, and statistical analysis and preparing a manuscript for publication.		
<p>Australian consumers spent over \$AU550 per capita on complementary medicines in 2016, which was an increase from \$AU472 from the previous five years. A 2009 study identified 43.6% of 4,500 Australians over the age of 50 as consuming at least one CM product in the previous 24 hour period, and of these, 86% were currently being treated with pharmaceutical medicines. More recent data shows Australians spend more out of pocket contribution to CM products than to pharmaceutical medicines.</p>		
<p>People use CM products as part of their self-care and make informed decisions about their use. However, reports suggest that a potentially substantial portion of people living with serious health conditions do not tell their medical doctors about their CM use. Reasons provided for not disclosing CM use are: they did not think it is relevant, that CM practices and products are safe, the doctor would not know about CM, and/or that they would be negatively judged for choosing to use CM. In light of this, it has been proposed that adverse events related to CM use are often not reported to health care professionals. Therefore there is currently limited published data regarding adverse events associated with CM use.</p>		
<p>During this summer scholarship, students will engage with experts in toxicology and complementary medicines to explore this important question. The findings of this project will contribute to a larger project that aims to foster the appropriate and safe use of complementary medicines by Australians.</p>		