

Newsletter

August 2023



A message from our Chair

Welcome to our latest edition of the VicTAG newsletter.

Following on from our recent grants we are very pleased to be able to share with our members two new frameworks:

- **Implementation of smart infusion pumps** led by Madonna Khreish
- **Clinical decision support tools for anticoagulants** led by Viviane Khalil

Thank you to both project leads and to the many others who contributed in developing these documents. Find more information on page 3.

VicTAG will continue to support projects which benefit our members and I am pleased to say that we are now supporting two new grants for this year and look forward to your applications to take these forward.

Responding to reviews and medication safety issues is also a key function of VicTAG and we have continued to be proactive in this. Many of you will have had discussions about changes to packaging (some of which may be blue) and our response has had a lot of interest from others across the nation.

In the coming months we will be working closely with Safer Care Victoria in the planning for the long awaited return of a Medicines Roundtable. This is something which has been missing over the last few years and one which we know is extremely valuable. I look forward to seeing many of you there as the hottest topics are discussed.

Paul Toner
Chair, VicTAG

VicTAG 2023 Project Grants

Applications are now open for the VicTAG 2023 project grants.

There are two project streams in the grant round this year, with all submissions to be assessed by the VicTAG Management Committee to determine which projects will obtain funding of up to \$16,000 per project.

Stream One: Targeted project call to address common health service gaps. In this stream, VicTAG are seeking applications from health services to lead the following project:

- **Victorian Framework for the Management of Schedule 9, Schedule 8 and Schedule 4D Medications:**

This project will develop a framework and implementation tools to facilitate the management of Schedule 9, Schedule 8 and Schedule 4D medications that is consistent with legislation and best practice. The framework will include guidance on storage, auditing, incident management, recording of transactions, destruction and disposal, as well as a suite of easy to use implementation tools. The use of technologies available to facilitate management of processes will also be included. The framework will be developed in consultation with hospital representatives from across the State, Department of Health Victoria, Medicines and Poisons Regulation Unit and input from vendors of software and equipment relating to the management of these medications. Refer to the [VicTAG Projects and Research webpage](#) for more information.



Stream Two: Freestyle project for seed funding. In this stream, VicTAG are seeking applications for a novel or pilot program (12 months or less) that could be the focus of subsequent funding. The project method should include collaboration with one or more health services and have outcomes that are beneficial to the VicTAG membership.

To apply, go to the [VicTAG Projects and Research webpage](#) and complete the Research Grant Application Form and Referee Report Form and email submissions to professionalofficer@victag.org.au. Applications close **August 31, 2023.**

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VicTAG 2023 Membership Survey Results

Between March to May 2023, VicTAG members were invited to participate in a survey about VicTAG membership and activities. Here is a summary of the key results:

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Respondents completed the survey



Respondent roles:

- Pharmacy Director **36%**
- Clinician/Doctor **3%**
- QUM Pharmacist **35%**
- Clinical Pharmacist **10%**
- Other **16%**

Top **5** most useful VicTAG activities:

1. VicTAG QUM group
2. Maintenance of Emergency and Life Saving Medicines Register
3. Review and response to consultation papers on behalf of membership
4. Advocacy through relationships with other organisations/government bodies
5. Medication safety alerts



VicTAG funded projects

71% Respondents found the *Handling and disposal of pharmaceutical waste framework* extremely useful

Other extremely useful projects:

- *The safe handling of hazardous medicines framework* (67.7%)
- *Neuromuscular blocking agent advisory tool* (58.1%)



4.2/5

Average satisfaction rating for VicTAG communication, with email being the preferred method.



About the VicTAG website:

- “The website is not accessible to multiple members of our organisation.”
- “The login firewall is a practical barrier to distribution of your high quality work.”

“As a rural health service, it is useful to be able to access the medication safety tools and publications that VicTAG produce.”

“Keep up the fantastic work. It is a privilege to be involved with such a proactive group.”

“I would like to see standardisation of guidelines. The VicTAG smart pump statewide library is one example of how this can work.”

Thank you to all the people who completed the survey. Your feedback is vital for shaping the focus and activities of VicTAG, many of which has or will be incorporated into the current and upcoming workplans. Some of the changes we have made already include updating our member contact lists and revamping the Emergency and Life Saving Medicines Register to improve usability. Please email professionalofficer@VicTAG.org.au if you have any more suggestions or would like to see our current workplan.

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Current Projects Update

Framework for the Implementation and Integration of Automated Dispensing Cabinets (ADCs) with Electronic Medication Management Systems

Julie Ngo from Monash Health is leading this project, which will provide guidance on the use and implementation of ADCs with electronic medication management systems (EMMS) such as Cerner and Epic.

Julie is part way through the consultation and planning stage. A literature search has begun and results from the survey sent to VicTAG and SHPA members are currently being analysed.

Member Resources

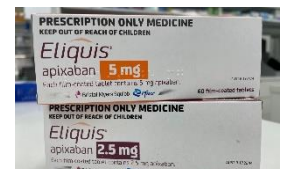
Victorian Framework for Implementation of Smart Infusion Pumps

This document is a framework to assist in the process of implementing and maintaining smart infusion pumps within Victorian and Tasmanian health services to ensure safe administration of medication and fluid infusions.

This VicTAG project was led by **Madonna Khreish** from Monash Health with stakeholders from metropolitan and rural health services. The framework includes guiding principles to developing, implementing and ongoing review of smart pump medication libraries, as well as provide guidance on aligning and integrating smart pumps with EMMS to allow bidirectional interoperability. The group have also developed a minimum data set with common adult and paediatric infusions. Find this framework and datasets [here](#).

Victorian Framework for Clinical Decision Support Tools for Anticoagulants

Inappropriate management of anticoagulant medications have been associated with medication errors of various severity at Australian health Services. This document provides a framework for developing and implementing various clinical decision support tools to prevent medication incidents related to prescribing, administering and management of anticoagulants for adult patients in common Electronic Medication Management systems implemented in Victorian hospitals. Thanks to **Viviane Khalil** for leading this VicTAG project, which is available [here](#).



Past Projects

Past projects are also available on the VicTAG Projects and Research page. These include:

- Pharmaceutical Waste Management – *now updated to include the new compliant pharmaceutical waste bins from Cleanaway Daniels*
- Handling of Hazardous Medicines
- Multi-language Medication Patient Information Leaflets
- Safe Management of Neuromuscular Blocking Agents
- Victorian Medication Incident Taxonomy

Consider these resources when reviewing your hospital's procedures, especially for Accreditation.

Emergency and Life Saving Medicines Register

The Emergency and Life Saving Medicines (ELSM) Register is being upgraded to improve usability. Please stay tuned for more updates.

As a reminder, each hospital is requested to regularly conduct a check of your hospital's stock levels against the list on the [ELSM Register](#) and email any changes or queries to vpic@austin.org.au. Many thanks to the Victorian Poisons Information Centre at Austin Health for maintaining the register.

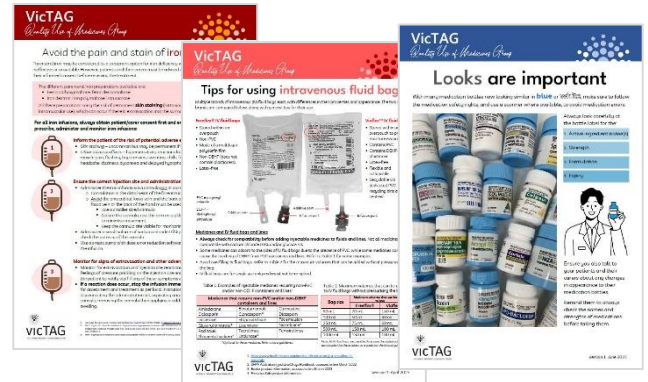
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Medication Safety Alerts

The Medication Safety Alerts Program continues, covering a broad range of topics including tips to avoid medication errors with similar looking medication bottles, TGA medication name changes, using intravenous fluid bags and avoiding the pain and stain of iron infusions. The alerts are available to members on the [Medication Safety Alerts](#) page.

If you have any ideas for new alerts or suggestions for the program, or require word versions of the alerts for co-branding, please email connie.yin@victag.org.au.



VicTAG QUM Group

The VicTAG QUM group provides a support network for VicTAG member hospitals to identify issues which increase the risk of medication error, determine practices to improve medication safety and discuss the National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards. The group meets every 2 months, currently via Microsoft Teams.

Collated hospital responses on medication safety topics from the group can also be found in the [Quality Use of Medicines](#) page on the VicTAG website. Recent topics include pharmacy intervention reports, partnering with consumers, medication storage and security, and nursing home discharges.

If you are interested in joining, please email Wendy Ewing, VicTAG QUM chair, via wendy.ewing@monashhealth.org.

More VicTAG activities

In the last 5 months, VicTAG has advocated for members and sent responses for the following medication safety issues or consultation papers:

- DPCS Amendment Regulations 2023: Addition of pregabalin, gabapentin and tramadol in SafeScript (Department of Health)
- DPCS Amendment MDMA and psilocybine (Department of Health)
- Accreditation standards for pharmacist prescriber education programs (Australian Pharmacy Council)
- Juno® potassium chloride ampoules (Juno Pharmaceuticals)
- Viatrix (Mylan) change in packaging to medication bottles (Viatrix)

Council of Australian Therapeutic Advisory Groups (CATAG) Update

The Australian Living Guideline for the Pharmacological Management of Inflammatory Arthritis was developed to present the best available, current scientific evidence for pharmacological management of the most common forms of inflammatory arthritis, namely rheumatoid arthritis (RA), psoriatic arthritis (PsA) and axial spondyloarthritis (SpA), including choice of disease-modifying antirheumatic drug (DMARD), switching, combination therapy and down-titration of treatment.

Recently new recommendations have been made regarding:

- Initial DMARD therapy for people with rheumatoid arthritis
- Subcutaneous/intramuscular methotrexate versus oral methotrexate for people with rheumatoid arthritis
- Choice of DMARD in people with rheumatoid arthritis who have not responded to TNF-alpha antagonists
- Perioperative use of DMARDs in people with inflammatory arthritis.

These have been summarised in the CATAG document '*Facilitating the translation of evidence into best practice: Optimising the pharmacological management of inflammatory arthritis*' on the [CATAG website](#).

This will assist good governance and decision-making for health service organisations, medicines governance committees and health professionals. It can be used in conjunction with formulary decisions and recommendations.

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Upcoming events



Medicines Stewardship: Getting It Right free webinar

Presented by CATAG to launch the [CATAG Guiding for Medicines Stewardship Programs](#) and [Toolkit](#).



The graphic features the CATAG logo (Council of Australian Therapeutic Advisory Groups) on the left. The main title is 'MEDICINES STEWARDSHIP: GETTING IT RIGHT'. Below the title, it specifies the date '2 AUGUST 2023' and the time '1:00PM - 2:00PM (AEST)'. On the right side, there are four circular headshots of the speakers: Prof Andrew McLachlan, A/Prof Bhavini Patel, Linda Graudins, and Dr David Liew.

The webinar will explore the concept of medicine stewardship, emphasising the importance of safe and quality use of medicines and its impact on patient care, public health, and sustainability. During this webinar, participants will gain insights into the Guiding Principles and implementation of medicines stewardship programs.

Whether you are a healthcare provider, pharmacist, policymaker, or simply interested in improving medication management, this webinar will equip you with valuable insights and practical strategies. Join us as we delve into the realm of medicines stewardship and discover how to get it right for better patient outcomes and sustainable healthcare systems.

When: August 2nd at 1pm (AEST)

Zoom link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83777437016>



VicTAG and Safer Care Victoria Medicines Roundtable

Details to be announced soon.