

## Event: Medicines Roundtable 2018

VicTAG together with Safer Care Victoria will be hosting a Medicines Roundtable at the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons on Monday 7th May 2018.

The roundtable is for Victorian clinicians with an interest in medication safety and quality. It will provide an opportunity to contribute to the development of state priorities and activities in medicines, to discuss and debate how we best learn from medication errors and to hear about the latest news on some Victorian medicines programs and initiatives.

Places are limited. In order to ensure broad representation across Victoria, we kindly ask that you restrict attendance to 4 representatives per hospital initially. [Click here for further details and to register.](#)

## Time for Change: Improving the safety of Neuromuscular Blocking Agents in Australia

In February 2015 the VicTAG QUM Group, led by senior QUM pharmacist Amy McRae submitted the report Time for change: Proposed safety improvements to the labelling and packaging of Neuromuscular Blocking Agents (NMBA) in Australia to the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA). The report was developed to proactively provide information and start the conversation about standardising the Australian labelling and packaging of NMBA's in order to reduce the occurrence of incorrect medication selection errors involving this high-risk medicine class.

The 'Time for change' report was developed in consultation with specialist anaesthetist Dr David Bramley, where support from Australia's largest user group of NMBAs the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (ANZCA) was obtained. Through VicTAG, it was advocated by the NSW Therapeutic Advisory Group (NSWTAG), the NSW Clinical Excellence Committee (CEC) and the Council of Australian Therapeutic Advisory Groups (CATAG).

Further correspondence followed and in November 2017, the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) hosted the preliminary round table meeting: 'Neuromuscular Blocking Agents – Labelling, Packaging and Administration Errors', where representatives included VicTAG, NSWTAG, ANZCA, Society of Hospital Pharmacists Australia (SHPA), the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (ACSQHC), the Deputy Secretary of Health A.Professor John Skerritt and Australian manufacturers of neuromuscular blocking agents (NMBAs).

The round table concluded that standardisation of NMBA labelling with a colour coded warning label is a positive step forward to improve the safety of NMBAs in Australia. The TGA agreed they have responsibility in this space and will look at the various options within their legislation. A public consultation will also be conducted by the TGA to ensure all stakeholders are involved.

Whilst this is a promising step forward, the VicTAG Management Committee and QUM Group agreed it is imperative to progress development of the guideline: 'Safe management of Neuromuscular Blocking Agents (NMBAs) in Victorian hospitals (a VicTAG funded project). This is due to the considerable time it will take to implement a national labelling change and that a labelling improvement is only one factor in the complex medication -use -process of this high-risk medicine class.

VicTAG would like to acknowledge and commend Amy McRae, Dr David Bramley, the VicTAG QUM group and all involved in this work for their continued commitment to advocate change in medication safety at a national level.

The reports and a summary of the TGA meeting can be found on the [VicTAG website](#).

# Newsletter

April 2018



## Annual General Meeting 2017

The AGM held in November 2017 resulted in the nomination of the VicTAG Management Committee. This resulted in re-election of all previous members, with the exception of Sue Kirsa who elected not to re-nominate. VicTAG would like to take this opportunity to thank Sue for her valuable contribution. The Management Committee can be found on the [VicTAG website](#).

Following the AGM, Jackie Kearney (Project Director, End of Life Care, Health and Wellbeing Division, Department of Health and Human Services, Victoria) provided members with a comprehensive overview of the then Proposed Legislation for Assisted Dying. [Click here](#) to access her presentation.

## SafeScript

The Victorian Department of Health and Human Services is aiming to reduce the harm from high-risk prescription medicines by implementing SafeScript, a real-time prescription monitoring system. In March 2018, VicTAG and SHPA submitted a joint response to the Regulatory Impact Statement.

[Click here](#) to view this response and further information regarding SafeScript are available on the VicTAG website.

## VicTAG Recommendation: Schedule 4 drugs of dependence

VicTAG endorses the recommendation from the Drugs and Poisons Regulation, Department of Health and Human Services, that drugs of dependence, which are also Schedule 4 medicines, be referred to as *Schedule 4 drugs of dependence (S4D)*. Some VicTAG member health services have indicated that they will adopt the S4D terminology to ensure consistency of terminology. To avoid confusion, VicTAG recommends that Victorian health services either adopt the recommended terminology, or include statements within their policies and procedures to define their chosen terminology, including reference to the recommended terminology.

The full recommendation, including further information is available on the [VicTAG website](#).

## Changes to Emergency Life Saving Medicines (ELSM) Register

Following member feedback, the following medicines will soon be added to the register:

- C1 esterase inhibitor (Berinert<sup>®</sup>) for the treatment of acute attacks of hereditary angioedema
- idarucizumab (Praxbind<sup>®</sup>) a non-vitamin K antagonist oral anticoagulant (NOAC) reversal agent

The [ELSM](#) is available directly from the VicTAG website and a link to the website has also been added to the Clinicians Health Channel.

## Medication Safety Alerts

This project is an ongoing VicTAG funded project led by Jan DeClifford and the VicTAG QUM Group. A series of Medication Safety Alerts have been produced and published and are available to VicTAG members via the website.

**New posters available:** *1,000mL Water for Injection Bag, Some Medicine Names are Changing, Hydromorphone and Terminology, Abbreviations and Symbols*

**Upcoming posters:** *Weight Matters, Dose Form Abbreviations*

[Click here](#) to access the posters.

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## Chemotherapy Audit Project Update

Shaun O'Connor has been appointed as Project Manager for this joint VicTAG and Department of Health and Human Services, Victoria project. Shaun commenced in late November 2017 and has set up the Steering Committee and the Project Reference Group who are meeting regularly. The first iteration of the audit tool is currently being piloted at Barwon Health. For further information, please see the [Chemotherapy Audit Project](#) page on the VicTAG website.

## VicTAG Funded Projects Update

Project funding is a key way in which VicTAG aims to give back to its members. Two projects were funded by VicTAG in 2016, one is completed and the other will be completed in April. Select the project below for access to the final documents.

[Project 1: Management of hazardous non-cytotoxic medicines in the inpatient setting - led by Jane Booth \(Austin Health\)](#) – completed

[Project 2: Victorian Medication Error Taxonomy - led by Jo Young \(The Royal Melbourne Hospital\) and Jennifer Tio \(The Royal Women's Hospital\)](#) - Near completion, members will be notified when final documents are available.

In 2017, two further projects were selected for funding. Select the project below for the latest updates

[Project 1: Deprescribing Potentially Inappropriate Medications in Memory clinic patients \(DePIMM\) – led by Dr Rohan Elliott, Austin Health](#)

[Project 2: Safe management of Neuromuscular Blocking Agents \(NMBAs\) in Victorian Hospitals – led by Amy McRae, Alfred Health](#)

## New Grant Round 2018

VicTAG is seeking applications for research and/or quality projects that will benefit hospitals across Victoria and drive state-wide improvements in medicine access quality and safety. Up to \$20,000 is available per project.

Applications can now be completed and submitted from the [Projects and Research](#) page on the website.

## 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 and determine practices to improve medication safety. The group meets every 2 months, alternating between face to face meetings and teleconferences and has an active email discussion forum. If you are interested in participating, please email Wendy Ewing, VicTAG QUM chair [wendy.ewing@monashhealth.org](mailto:wendy.ewing@monashhealth.org)