

Friday, October 2, 2015

## **Pain medicine specialists welcome proposed codeine ban**

A recommendation yesterday by Australia's medicines regulator, the Therapeutics Goods Administration (TGA), that all over the counter medicines containing codeine be rescheduled to become prescription-only, has been welcomed by leading pain medicine specialists at the Faculty of Pain Medicine.

"Codeine has potential issues with toxicity and dependency, while having limited analgesic benefits," said Professor Ted Shipton, Dean of the Faculty of Pain Medicine at its annual Spring Meeting being held this weekend in Queenstown (New Zealand).

"It can be unpredictable in its pain relieving effects and carries risks even when its use is considered appropriate. Even in combination with paracetamol, its pain relief is poor.

"Codeine metabolises into morphine so people can get addicted to it very easily. Caution in its use is needed, especially as the rate of opioid dependency is rising in Australia. Most Australians would still be able to access over-the-counter preparations of paracetamol and ibuprofen combinations that offer better pain relief."

Earlier this year, FPM was one of several organisations that made submissions to the TGA calling for codeine to be reclassified as a prescription only drug (see May 1 [media release](#)).

The TGA published an [interim decision](#) yesterday (October 1) recommending that all over the counter medicines containing codeine be rescheduled to become prescription-only medicines. The TGA is taking submissions on the interim decision until October 15 and will make a final decision in November. The earliest possible implementation for any final decision is June 1, 2016.

- **For more information or to request interviews, please contact ANZCA NZ Communications Manager Susan Ewart on +64 274 152 815 or [sewart@anzca.org.nz](mailto:sewart@anzca.org.nz) . Follow us on Twitter [@ANZCA](#).**