

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors



UTAS asthma research promoted in nation's top medical journal

Unique asthma management research at the University of Tasmania has been promoted in the country's leading medical practitioners' publication, the *Medical Journal of Australia*.

The five-page feature article in the current edition of *MJA*, details the School of Pharmacy's innovative software application which could benefit at least 150,000 Australians predicted to have poorly controlled asthma.

The project, funded by Asthma Foundations Australia and conducted at the School's Unit for Medication Outcomes Research and Education, was trialled in Tasmania and designed for national implementation.

Clinical Research Pharmacist and PhD Candidate, Bonnie Bereznicki, said the software was designed to assist community pharmacists in managing the condition now recognised as a national health priority, affecting more than 2 million Australians.

Testing of the 'data-mining' software found more than 1500 Tasmanians have asthma management problems, with participants using an average of seven puffs of reliever medication each day compared with the maximum level of three per week as recommended by the National Asthma Council.

The software study, involving Tasmanian pharmacists and their medication records, resulted in a three-fold improvement in the management of asthma, measured by a significant shift towards patients using preventer medication and relying less on reliever medications.

Ms Bereznicki said there is enormous scope for community pharmacists to become the feedback link between patients and GPs which would answer the societal need for improved asthma management.

“The community pharmacist is the most accessible health professional given their frequent contact with patients and this simple pharmacist intervention should be instituted as a routine part of the dispensing of inhaled asthma medications.”

“This would result in better health outcomes for patients, and ultimately less burden on the health system.”

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