



National Prescribing Service Limited

February 2010

### **New clinical program addresses sleep problems and therapy options**

The latest NPS education program '*Management options to maximise sleep*' encourages prescribers to recommend non-drug therapies as first-line treatment for insomnia and to discuss the importance of good sleep practices and the potential harms of hypnotic medicines with the patient before prescribing hypnotics.

The program encourages health professionals to:

- Explore patient concerns with sleep difficulties – identify and address causes
- Offer behavioural and cognitive therapies for insomnia
- Discuss and specify the duration of hypnotic medicines use
- Trial discontinuing hypnotic medicines in patients who have been using them for long periods
- Engage patient/carers in managing sleep difficulties

For patients who have been taking hypnotics for a prolonged time, prescribers are encouraged to develop a withdrawal plan to decrease their dose and review progress through the GP clinical audit tool provided by NPS.

The NPS has developed the following resources and activities about managing insomnia for health professionals:

- NPS News (67): *Addressing hypnotic medicines use in primary care*
- Prescribing Practice Review (49): *Management options for improving sleep*
- GP and GP Registrar Clinical Audit - *Use of benzodiazepines, zolpidem and zopiclone in insomnia*
- Case study (62): *Maximising sleep and minimising potential harms*
- Drug Use Evaluation (DUE) tool: *Benzodiazepine and non-benzodiazepine hypnotic medicines for insomnia in aged care facilities*
- One-on-one educational visiting by NPS facilitators
- Small group discussions led by NPS facilitators
- A sleep diary which can be ordered or downloaded from the NPS website and given to your patient's to assist in the assessment of their sleep complaints.
- A consumer resource on 'Good sleep practices which can be ordered from the NPS website.

Please ask your local NPS facilitator about the schedule of activities that are being provided, or visit [www.nps.org.au](http://www.nps.org.au).