2016/17 Summer Scholarship Project

Project title: Opioid prescribing for surgical patients on discharge

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Project type: Observational clinical study with 3-month and 6-month follow up

Research theme: Health Services and Patient Safety

Project description:
The use of opioid analgesics has been increasing in Australia and internationally in recent years. This has led to concerns about the potential for increased harms and misuse from opioid consumption. Currently it is unclear as to whether opioid therapy after surgery contributes to the broader concerns about opioid-related potential harms, including dependence, or accidental overdose, particularly in the Australian context.

Primary objectives of this observational study of post-operative opioid naïve patients are:
1) Investigate how many post-operative patients are discharged on opioids, including what type, strength and quantity;
2) Investigate how many are still using opioids after 1-week, 1, 3, 6 months after discharge;
3) Investigate the association between opioid use, pain management and quality of life in this setting.

Role of the Summer Scholar: The current project is being conducted by the Pharmacy Honours Student with collaborators at Royal North Shore Hospital and Kolling Medical Institute. The Summer Scholar will contribute to data collection, in particular follow-up assessments (i.e. phone calls, email follow up or postal survey) at 3-months and 6-months after patient recruitment, data entry and data analysis. Relevant training and supervision will be provided. The student will also have an opportunity to contribute to a publication of an overall study in a peer-reviewed journal.