

Labelling and Packaging of Cough and Cold Medicines
Stakeholder and Public Consultation October – December 2009
Submission received from the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM)

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the TGA's review of labelling of packaging of cough and cold medicines for children aged 2-12 years.

I have collated and summarised the response from our membership in the following points:

- members generally point to a lack of objective evidence that over-the-counter cough and cold medicines are effective for children (or adults)
- no members have advised that they prescribe these medicines
- dismissive terms, such as 'concoctions' were noted
- Dextromethorphan appears mainly safe with very modest efficacy/effectiveness in adults only
- Nasal drops (xylometazoline and oxymetazoline) have proven very safe and effective, provided use is brief and infrequent, even in children 2-12 years
- The use of antihistamines seems illogical. Like antibiotics, and the marginal drying effect may be of statistical note but is of no practical significance.
- Oral decongestants were described as 'uniformly useless, with substantial side effects'. One practitioner said "I'm impressed with the frequency of fatalities in children. They only had colds!"

General comments:

- I would like to see the great majority of these quack treatments removed from the market.
- Their only benefit is to the shareholders in the Companies that make them.
- Some (preparations) are plain illogical.
- Paracetamol in proper doses, and saline or occ Xylo/oxymetazoline are recommended and for all ages.

While brief, the comments indicate that, at the very least, the responding membership does not place much trust in the reviewed range of medicines. ACRRM does not support the proposed changes or the products.