Reforms To The Regulatory Framework For Complementary Medicines 2017 - Submission

Created – 22/2/2017
Updated – 22/2/2017

Submission

I agree with the concept of testing the efficacy of OTC (over the counter) and complementary medicines before making them publicly available, as is done with prescription medicines.

The proposal to restrict companies to only making pre-approved, "low-level" indications and claims for a product, such as "may relieve the pain of mild osteoarthritis", will minimise the risk of misleading consumers. However, as a consumer I find these statements to be useless. Any product "may" do something. Clearly, if a product "may" do something, the converse is also true; it "may not". I want something that has been proven to work in a statistically significant percentage of cases.

Currently, there is little incentive for the manufacturers of OTC and complementary medicines to research new innovative products or prove existing ones work. This leaves consumers at risk of wasting time and money, taking ineffective medicines, and potentially damaging their health.

The existing system of Aust L and Aust R labelling does little to inform consumers. In fact I believe the majority of consumers are unaware of the system, let alone the meanings of each category.

If there was a visible TGA (Therapeutic Goods Administration) "seal of approval", it would be very attractive to consumers and would encourage manufacturers to engage in research and innovation to qualify for it.

For this, the TGA would have to assess the evidence provided and either substantiate or dismiss the claim for a particular product. If the evidence is substantiated, the product could then carry a TGA "stamp of approval" on the label and any promotional material. This "stamp of approval" should be a combination of both text and symbol. An example of a potential stamp can be found in the source given at the end of this submission.

I also support the proposal that companies that develop a TGA approved evidence-based claim would be awarded a three-year period of data protection. This would stop others freeloading on their research.

Finally, the TGA's assessment of evidence for OTC and complementary

medicines should be made publicly available, as they are for prescription medicines.

Unofficial mock-up created by Ken Harvey
Source
http://theconversation.com/which-supplements-work-new-labels-may-help-separate-the-wheat-from-the-chaff-73189?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Latest+from+The+Conversation+for+February+21+2017+-+67984985&utm_content=Latest+from+The+Conversation+for+February+21+2017+-+67984985+CID_b4d9aaf291743e30541d8de680f1fa29&utm_source=campaign_monitor