Monash University
School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine

2015 Summer Vacation Scholarship Programme
Final Report

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In applying for the SPHPM Summer Vacation Scholarship, I hoped to gain experience in public health policy and advocacy. For this reason, I am incredibly grateful to have had the opportunity to work with Associate Professor Ken Harvey; a formidable public health physician and consumer advocate. Working with Professor Harvey, the importance of diligently applying scientific evidence to protect the public from unnecessary, often harmful, interventions quickly became apparent.

Indeed, it was eye opening to see that organisations in which the public invest near-total trust, namely the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) and the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) often struggle to deter and detect unscrupulous practices. We first encountered this when we investigated and subsequently submitted an official complaint about *EaseaCold* - a drug that claimed to be '*clinically proven'* based on an unpublished study that was conducted on different ingredients.

The fact that previous complaints about other non-compliant products had taken many months to be actioned brought into frustrating relief the relative powerlessness of a regulator hamstrung by a lack of resources and statutory power. Co-authoring an article in *The Conversation* about the need for regulatory reform with Professor Harvey and fellow student, Amy Yan, provided a valuable opportunity to practice concisely writing about a public health topic for a general audience.

During the programme, I also assisted Professor Harvey's investigations into the C*hiropractic Board of Australia* and *iv.me Australia.* Links to media reports generated by these investigations are listed below.

Appendix A: Media

TGA Regulation & EaseaCold Complaint

The Conversation

Australian Doctor

Chiropractic Board Complaint

Medical Journal of Australia

The Age

The Guardian Australia

The Conversation

Australian Doctor

ABC (Australia)

Medical Observer

The Project (Channel Ten Australia)

iv.me Australia Complaint

The Sydney Morning Herald

Australian Journal of Pharmacy

ACCOMPANYING VIDEO

Please note that the following video contains sensitive information and is not to be shared outside of the Monash University School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine, as requested by Associate Professor Ken Harvey.

The video is 'unlisted' on YouTube, meaning it is only available to those with the below link and will not appear if searched for.

To maintain privacy link has been removed.