



10 July 2014

Dear Sir / Madam

Re: The standardisation of the CPR renewal requirements of podiatrists to match the requirements of the majority of those professions regulated by AHPRA.

I was surprised to learn early last year that podiatrists are only one of the four (but possibly five) of the fourteen AHPRA regulated professions that are required to update their CPR training annually. I am advised that this anomaly exists because of the consequences of importing / merging the standards for registration from each state into the one, national structure regulated by AHPRA. For reasons that remain a mystery to me, annual CPR updating was once a requirement of registration of the NSW Podiatry Board. I am more recently advised that the biennial requirement for dentists to renew their CPR qualification was, with the advent of AHPRA, increased to their current requirement for triennial renewal.

I have been a practising podiatrist for over 30 years. I have worked in community health centres, hospitals and primarily private practice. Of the very, very conservatively estimated 120,000 patient contacts I have had over those three decades, I have had only two patients for whom immediate emergency help was required / considered.

Only once have I had to actively participate in CPR and this was on a sunny Sunday on the steps that lead to the beach near to where I live. Whilst the poor fellow was ultimately deemed to be well beyond help, with the assistance of a bystander, CPR (with breaths) was conducted for 10 minutes until the ambulance arrived. And all this happened before AHPRA and its regulations for annual CPR renewal came into effect.

My point is that I would not think that my professional and life experiences are unusual. Whilst it is comforting to know that there are highly trained health care providers who can perform CPR in their work places and in the community, I cannot see why it is that podiatrists would require annual training in CPR whilst dentists, doctors and physiotherapists require a three year update. Are our risk profiles so much greater? Even my patients who are dentists, doctors and physiotherapists think this is a very strange anomaly. So too do my patients who are unregulated members of the public.

I understand that our registration standards are soon due for review. This is the time for all podiatrists to reflect upon what is / should be required by AHPRA for regulated health care professionals to retain their right to practise. We must of course remember AHPRA's role is to protect our patients' from rogue and / or incompetent practitioners.

I would be surprised if I am the only podiatrist who feels this annual CPR renewal is an unnecessary impost on time (and money) for little - if any - quantifiable benefit for the community.

Now is also the time for the discussion to continue (if it has not already begun) to determine if the current CPD requirements are reasonable and reflect the standards that we expect of our colleagues and that the public expect of us. Whilst I do not know if the requirement of three year CPR renewal should be standardised across all of the AHPRA regulated professions, I know that it should be for our profession.

Chris Wheeler
Accredited Podiatrist