Letters

Tertiary education institutions should not offer pseudoscientific medical courses

To the Editor: In their editorial, MacLennan and Morrison[1] listed Curtin University's Evidence Based Complementary Medicine as a pseudoscientific unit. This citation was completely unjustified.

The unit, which is part of both the Bachelor of Pharmacy and Master of Pharmacy (graduate entry) degrees, was developed for the sole purpose of providing pharmacy graduates with the knowledge, skills and ability to critically appraise the scientific evidence around the use of a range of complementary medicines. The unit helps graduates to play their role in achieving the goal of the National Strategy for Quality Use of Medicines[2] — that is, to make the best possible use of medicines to improve health outcomes for all Australians. Here, the term "medicine" includes prescription, non-prescription and complementary medicines. Offering the unit also ensures that our courses meet the accreditation standards of the Australian Pharmacy Council.[3]

Pharmacy has science as its core. MacLennan and Morrison's opinion of our unit is not evidence-based, and hence its validity should be judged accordingly.

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Competing interests: Liesl Blott is the Unit Coordinator of Evidence Based Complementary Medicine at Curtin University.

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1 MacLennan AH, Morrison RGB. Tertiary education institutions should not offer pseudoscientific medical courses. *Med J Aust* 2012; 196: 225-226.

2 Department of Health and Ageing. The national strategy for the quality use of medicines. Plain English edition. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2002. http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/nmp-pdf-natstrateng-cnt.htm (accessed Apr 2012).

3 Australian Pharmacy Council. Accreditation standards. December 2009, Version 1. Canberra: APC, 2009. http://pharmacycouncil.org.au/PD (accessed Apr 2012). ❑