

# Expanding Horizons and Improving Patient Outcomes:

## Integral Roles of Cancer Pharmacists in Verifying Clinical Trials

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### Background

- Chemotherapy is a vital, high-risk treatment option for cancer, where medication errors can have severe consequences.
- Clinical Oncological Society of Australia (COSA) guidelines recommend clinically verifying chemotherapy treatments by cancer-trained pharmacists.
- Clinical trials (CT) chemotherapy protocols, with their complex regimens and novel agents, are particularly prone to medication errors.
- Central Adelaide Local Health Network (CALHN) identified a need to develop a training module to upskill cancer pharmacists in CT to enable safe verification of CT chemotherapy protocols across two hospitals.

### Objectives

- To develop a training module to upskill cancer pharmacists in CT chemotherapy protocol verification to reduce errors, enhance patient safety, and standardise care for all cancer patients.

### Action

- A training module (Figure 1) and workflows were developed in collaboration with pharmacists (cancer, trials and manufacturing), prescribers and CT coordinators.
- Clinical tasks undertaken as part of routine chemotherapy verification, such as documentation, best possible medication histories, and interaction checks, were implemented for patients on CT chemotherapy.
- The additional workload was estimated to be 5 to 10 CT protocols per week, with staged rollout (Medical Oncology done first then Haematology protocols).
- Funding supported the 6-month training and implementation phase, with ongoing verification integrated into existing staffing.

### Evaluation

- Eleven cancer pharmacists completed the CT training module.
- A 6-month review demonstrated a 100% verification rate of within-scope CT protocols, without any reported medication errors.
- Reviews of the CT verification workload at two sites were conducted at the 4-month and 15-month marks (Figure 2).
- A 12-month review of the training module and associated workflows was conducted with all the stakeholders involved.

### Results

Figure 1: Training requirements

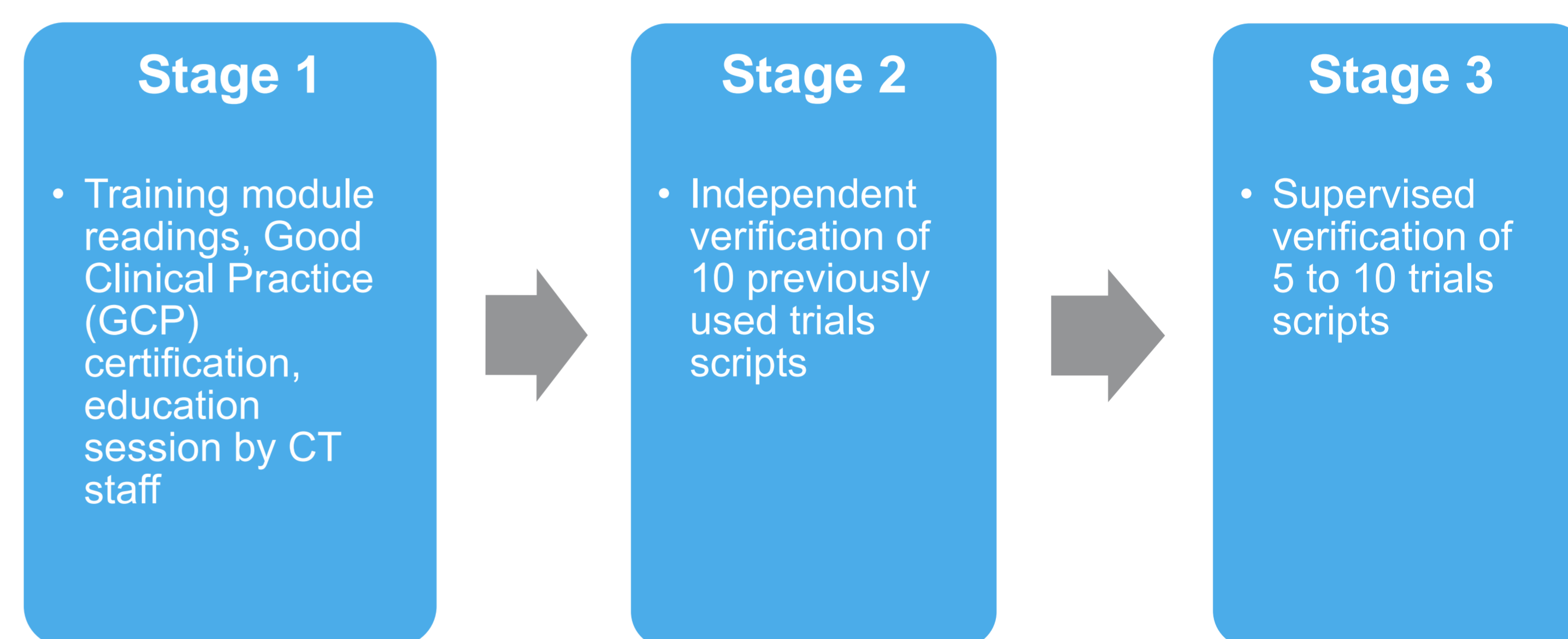
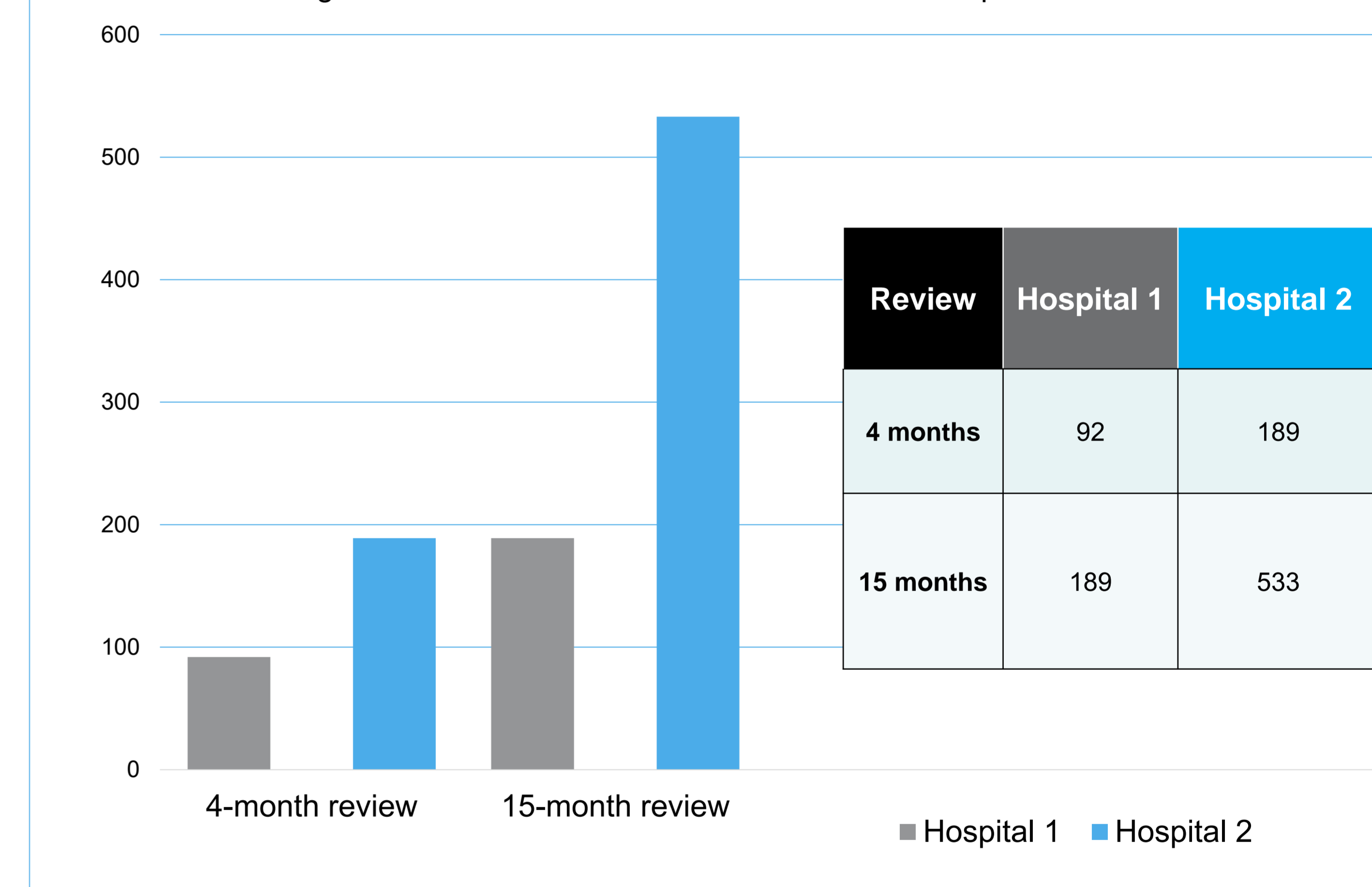


Figure 2: Review of the CT verifications at two hospitals



### Discussion

- This project successfully developed a CT training module for cancer pharmacists across SA Pharmacy within CALHN.
- An emphasis on multidisciplinary cooperation was integral to optimal implementation, ensuring safety and accountability, and ultimately enhancing cancer patient outcomes.
- This sets the groundwork for a statewide rollout and further improvements in CT chemotherapy safety, including oral chemotherapy verification.
- Ongoing improvement of the module and evaluation of performance indicators will follow.

For more information

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