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## DUSC to look at MS

**THE** Drug Utilisation Subcommittee has confirmed it will consider medicines for multiple sclerosis at a future meeting, including analysis of the use of the newer medicines dimethylfumarate and teriflunomide.

The DUSC will also look at the utilisation of ipilimumab and dabrafenib for melanoma, as well as pregabalin for neuropathic pain.

At its most recent meeting the committee looked at the utilisation rates of drugs for treatment of ADHD, wet age-related macular degeneration, dutasteride for benign prostatic hyperplasia, ibrutinib for hereditary angioedema and romiplostim and eltrombopag for idiopathic thrombocytopenic purpura (ITP).

Over the last five years the number of patients treated with PBS medicines for ADHD grew 31%.



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## S8 inconsistency slammed

**VARYING** prescription requirements for Schedule 8 drugs between Australia's states and territories have been criticised as creating unnecessary complexity for health professionals.

A report published this morning by the *Medical Journal of Australia* summarises the confusing regulations, with pharmacists cited as key to guiding prescribers on the "regulations and legality of prescriptions".

However the same confusion applies to pharmacists who move interstate - not to mention travelling patients who might discover that a legal prescription in one jurisdiction cannot be dispensed in another, potentially leading to treatment delays.

The paper was authored by pharmacists Andy Hua and Finna Shen as well as Xiaoting Ge from the medical school at Canberra's Australian National University.

The trio said legal requirements for prescribing S8 drugs are "not accessible in a prescriber-friendly manner," with no single, clear resource which documents the subtle nuances in each state or territory's regulations.

For example, S8 scripts in the ACT must be endorsed "standing short-term approval" for treatment of less than two months, while in NSW authority is required from the director-general of NSW health for psychostimulants, alprazolam,

methadone, buprenorphine, flunitrazepam and hydromorphone.

In SA, WA and Tasmania ministerial authority is required for more than two months of treatment, while in Vic prescribers may need a Drugs and Poisons Regulation Group permit to prescribe to drug-dependent patients.

There are also complex requirements for what is actually on the prescription, with some states and territories requiring varying details in the doctor's own handwriting rather than printed.

"Given that S4 requirements are standardised between the different states and territories, why are S8 requirements treated differently," the authors ask.

While it may be impractical to unify health care legislation across the country, the paper argues that all states and territories could maintain individual regulations but unify the S8 requirements.

In the meantime the paper includes a comprehensive quick reference guide - see [mja.com.au](http://mja.com.au).

## Mar PBAC documents

**THE** Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee has released additional public summary documents relating to its meeting during Mar 2015.

The documents summarise the committee's deliberations on a range of applications for new medications and indications - see [www.pbs.gov.au](http://www.pbs.gov.au).

## Blooms 5-Star Award

**RETAIL** pharmacy group, Blooms The Chemist, has won the Canstar Blue award for 'Most Satisfied Customers'.

Blooms The Chemist pharmacy group spokesperson, head of communications, Elise Turner, welcomed the award for the community-driven retail pharmacy group.

"It's an exceptional achievement that genuinely sets us apart from our competition, providing further testimony to the pivotal role that Blooms The Chemist pharmacies play in enhancing the health and wellbeing of our local communities," Turner said.

## AFS seeking director

**THE** Australian Friendly Societies Pharmacies Association has advertised for a new part-time executive director.

The peak national body for Friendly Society Pharmacies represents over 130 not-for-profit pharmacies with memberships totalling more than 900,000.

## TBN appointments

**TOTAL** Beauty Network has announced the appointment of Clare Lubrano di Diego as its new Marketing Manager.

The TBN team has also expanded with the addition of Senior Brand Manager Markeeta King as well as New Product Development Manager Emily Winterton.

CEO Tony Rechtman said the company, which has a portfolio including Designer Brands and Colour by TBN, was "thrilled with the three new additions".

## NPS sneezing posters

**NPS** MedicineWise has enlisted the support of "popular television GP" Dr John D'Arcy who appears in a new community service announcement which explains the concept of antibiotic resistance.

The campaign, to appear on TV and social media, is part of an NPS initiative which also includes new "don't pass on your germs" posters aiming to spread the knowledge that ordinary colds and flu can be managed without antibiotic intervention.

## Win with MOR

This week **Pharmacy Daily** and **MOR** are giving away an Essentials Reed Diffuser each day, valued at \$34.95.

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## Weekly Comment

Welcome to *PD's* weekly comment feature. This week's contributor is **Kirstie Galbraith** from **Monash University**.



### Workplace learning

AS pharmacists, we are continually learning, not just via scheduled continuing professional development opportunities, but also through our workplace experiences. This workplace learning is especially important for novice practitioners whether they are students, interns, foundation-practitioners in their first thousand days of practice, or more experienced practitioners gaining knowledge and skills in a new area of professional practice.

Novice practitioners need good role models and mentors; they need to work with experienced preceptors who understand their learning needs and they need constructive feedback and evaluation. These skills are not necessarily inherent in pharmacists and it is unrealistic to expect that all pharmacists will be good mentors and preceptors. Many hospital pharmacy departments and community pharmacy groups now have dedicated pharmacy educators with responsibility for interns, students, and general staff development. There is increasing recognition that these pharmacists need specific training themselves to provide a good experience for their learners. While it is not yet compulsory for preceptors to undergo any formal training, many in the profession have realised the importance of upskilling and have undertaken one of the courses available for clinical supervision. Being a preceptor or mentor is a great way to build evidence for this domain of practice and the Advanced Pharmacy Practice Framework (APPF) recognises the importance of being an educator.

## Advanced practice papers

THE development of a framework for advanced pharmacy practice in Australia is a key tool for "assuring members of the public of the competence of an advanced practice pharmacist and the quality and safety of the services they deliver".

That's one of the conclusions of a paper published this month in the peer-reviewed journal *Pharmacy*.

The paper, titled *An Advanced Pharmacy Practice Framework for Australia*, is an outline of the profession-wide efforts of the Australian Pharmacy Liaison Forum (APLF) which has culminated in the development of an agreed framework of advanced level competencies relevant to Australian pharmacists - assisting in the development of the profession.

The APLF hailed the publication, as well as another paper on the same topic published in the *Journal of Pharmacy Practice* which reports

on the outcome of a survey to gauge the perspectives of the profession on advanced practice, in order to inform the design of the recognition model.

Interestingly, the poll revealed that a high proportion of pharmacists who responded considered that they were already working at, or working towards achieving, an advanced level of practice.

They showed a clear preference for submission of a professional portfolio as an assessment method rather than a written examination.

### Heparin USP update

THE US Food and Drug Administration has issued a draft guidance document on heparin, with the aim of reducing medication errors and ensure the safety of product containing the blood thinning drug.

Comment is being sought on the update, titled *Heparin-Containing Medical Devices and Combination Products: Recommendations for Labeling and Safety Testing*, which follows recent revisions to the United States Pharmacopoeia monograph for Heparin Sodium, Heparin Lock Flush Solution and Heparin Sodium Injection.

Proposed labelling changes follow a "recurring trend of medication errors related to misinterpretation of the expression of concentration on the labelling of injectable products, resulting in serious consequences to patients, including death," the FDA said - [CLICK HERE](#).

### EMA extension

THE European Medicines Agency has voted to prolong the mandates of Dr June Raine and Dr Almath Spooner as Chair and Vice-chair of its Pharmacovigilance Risk Committee.

Both terms have been extended by another three years from Sep 15.

### Get the hyphen right

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration has published a clarification document detailing the correct use of hyphens in ingredient names.

Although the *TGA approved terminology for medicines (July 1999)* document contains obsolete entries, the rules remain current and must be applied - in particular rules relating to the use of hyphens in approved names.

Where a hyphen does not include a space on the sides - e.g. 'cod-liver oil' - the lack of spaces indicates it is part of the ingredient name and should be retained on labels.

If there is a space on either side - for example 'starch - maize' then the hyphen is for "alphabetical indexing purposes only" and should not be retained when the name is included on labels, in Product Information or other documentation.

For details see [www.tga.gov.au](http://www.tga.gov.au).

## DISPENSARY CORNER



HEATWAVE conditions in Italy have seen significant health concerns emerge - not least for the country's farm animals.

Farmers are reportedly busily installing air conditioning and showers in barns and pigsties as Italy experiences its hottest summer in over a decade.

"The situation is worrying, particularly in the Po Valley which has the highest concentration of barns that have been kitted out with fans, small showers and air conditioners to cool down cows and pigs," said a formal statement from farming group Coldiretti.

The heat has seen production plummet, with milk supplies down more than 50 million litres over the first two weeks of the month, while chickens also laid about 10% fewer eggs.

And pigs are also perspiring, with swine losing their appetite in the warm temperatures meaning they eat up to 40% less than usual.

FORGET peanut allergies - a school in the UK has banned a spicy variety of corn chips after a student stopped breathing from eating one of them.

Doritos Roulette contains chips that are ten times hotter than a jalapeno chilli, with the George Pindar school in Scarborough saying they're a health risk.

According to a warning in the school newsletter, parents and carers were advised that the product is not recommended for children.

Although the product contains a variety of flavours most of which are cooler, there's a handful in each pack coated in an "invisible chilli powder" with Doritos boasting on its website, apparently accurately, the snack will "leave you close to tears".

The super hot chips have already been outlawed in the USA.

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