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## Quad flu vax for 2016

**NEXT** year's government influenza vaccination program will employ a quadrivalent vaccine, so that "the best possible protection will be available free to the people who most need it," the Minister for Health Sussan Ley has announced.

"It's also important to remember we may be seeing more cases because more people are taking their flu symptoms seriously and going to see their doctor."

Ley said the new 2016 vaccine would cover two A strains of influenza (California and Hong Kong) and two B strains of influenza (Brisbane and Phuket).

Influenza B viruses are estimated to have accounted for about 62% of flu cases in Australia this year, she said.

Australians not eligible for free vaccinations under the National Immunisation Program (NIP) would still be able to access seasonal flu vaccinations via the private market via their GP, other allied health professionals or their employer, the announcement said.

## Codeine critic misquotes

**VICTORIAN** pain specialist Dr Michael Vagg's arguments for up-scheduling of products containing codeine from OTC to prescription (**PD** Fri) are based on misquoted references to a study published in the *Medical Journal of Australia*, according to a Pharmacy Guild of Australia spokesperson.

Vagg made reference to *Trends and characteristics of accidental and intentional codeine overdose deaths in Australia*, in the September issue of the *MJA*, but quoted the study as saying "there was actually a doubling in codeine related deaths between 2000-2013".

An accurate reading of the study reveals the comparative death figures only extended to 2009 - an important distinction, the Guild says, because there were changes to codeine schedules and pack sizes in 2010 which may have affected subsequent years' statistics.

The Guild has made very strong representation to the Health Department in its submission

relating to the up-scheduling plan, saying it is a "blunt instrument to address misuse and abuse of these medicines" (**PD** 22 Oct) which is likely to increase MBS and PBS costs significantly.

The positive alternative proposal from the Guild is the urgent implementation of a mandatory real-time online recording of codeine dispensing.

Such a system has been developed by the Guild in partnership with the Australian Self Medication Industry (ASMI) and would be ready to implement within 12 months, the Guild said, calling for a moratorium on the S4 move in the meantime.

### Today's issue of PD

**Pharmacy Daily** today has two pages of news, plus a **full page from Monash University** highlighting its 2016 courses for which applications close at the end of this month.

## Dementia aid services

**WITH** the incidence of dementia in its many forms estimated to reach beyond one million patients in the next 40 years, Minister for Aged Care Sussan Ley said the government is determined to build "improved nationally consistent dementia support services for all Australians", following a report from KPMG.

The key issue the report highlighted was that current services lacked "consistency and coordination".

The government will announce its response by the end of the year.

## TGA on fake meds

**THE** Therapeutic Goods Administration has issued a formal warning to consumers about taking counterfeit medicines or medical devices, saying they carry a "high risk of unexpected or potentially serious reactions".

A new case study on sibutramine in illegal weight loss medicines has been published at [tga.gov.au](http://tga.gov.au).

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## Weekly Comment

Welcome to *PD's* weekly comment feature. This week's contributor is **Andrew Matthews, Director, Credentialing at Australian Pharmacy Council.**



### Why advanced pharmacy practice?

**IN PRACTICE**, how often do we as pharmacists have another practitioner give unbiased feedback on our professional performance? An evaluation using a robust methodology against a framework endorsed by all pharmacy organisations representing the profession in Australia? It's an exciting time for the participants in APC's Credentialing of advanced practice pharmacists pilot program. All of the participants have now received their 'Feedback and Outcomes' report and some have been formally credentialed as an Advanced Practice Pharmacist. The Report provides comprehensive feedback on practitioner performance following an independent evaluation against the Advanced Pharmacy Practice Framework for Australia (APPF). The Report identifies professional strengths and opportunities for further development against the 30 competencies in the APPF. For a maturing profession, there is no better grounding for establishment and recognition of a pharmacist's critical role in the medicine management team than a formalised practitioner development process. This is what the APPF provides, and an evaluation against the Framework is a way to quality assure your own practice. This will help you develop your CPD plan, a requirement recently announced by the Pharmacy Board. The Framework is sufficiently flexible to apply to pharmacists working in all practice environments.

## Pharmacist numbers up 2.6%

**WITH** more than 637,218 health practitioners registered to practise in Australia at the end of June this year, 29,014 are practising pharmacists, up 2.6% from the previous year, according to data published in the annual report from the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA).

The report stated that for the pharmacy profession there were 246 notifications (concerns/complaints) received about practitioners - excluding NSW where there is a co-regulatory system.

Of 323 notifications closed in the period, no further action was warranted in 147 cases, conditions were imposed on practitioners' registration in 43 cases and cautions issued in 106 cases.

Tribunals, on referral of matters from the Board, determined that a pharmacist's registration be suspended or cancelled in six cases.

Registration standards were revised during the year (**PD** 02 Nov), guidelines were updated and the Pharmacy Board of Australia engaged with stakeholders around opportunities for pharmacists to administer vaccines to the public.

Pharmacy Board of Australia chair William Kelly said public assurance and proportionate regulation

remained the Board's focus.

"We strive to continually improve patient safety and the quality of pharmacists' regulation," he said.

A report presenting the data specific to pharmacy practice will be published on the Pharmacy Board of Australia's website before the end of the calendar year.

Kelly also acknowledged Adjunct Associate Professor Stephen Marty, the inaugural chair of the Board until 30 Aug 2015, for assisting the Board in meeting its objectives and responsibilities in 2014/15.

## Gardasil vax cleared

**THE** European Medicines Agency's Pharmacovigilance Risk Assessment Committee has given the all clear to the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine following a detailed scientific review of the evidence surrounding reports of two syndromes, complex regional pain syndrome (CRPS) and postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome (POTS) in young women vaccinated against HPV.

The review demonstrated that there is no evidence there is a causal link between the vaccines (Cervarix, Gardasil/Silgard and Gardasil-9) and CRPS or POTS.

## DISPENSARY CORNER



**DON'T** be fooled by all those cuddles and purring - your cat may actually want to kill you, according to a study published recently in the *Journal of Comparative Psychology*. Scientists from Scotland's University of Edinburgh and the Bronx Zoo in New York compared psychological characteristics of house cats with their larger, wild cousins, finding strong correlations between your fluffy kitten and a ferocious African lion.

There were "high inclinations towards dominance, impulsiveness and neuroticism" - but the news wasn't all bad; they're also playful and excitable, albeit somewhat unpredictable.

As well as lions the study considered similarities with snow leopards, clouded leopards and Scottish wildcats.

**BLIND** short back and sides.

Legally blind but still barbering on, a Boston hairdresser has been awarded \$100,000 by a Massachusetts commission against discrimination on the basis of wrongful dismissal, reports the *Boston Herald*.

Accused of tripping over customers' feet and a chair, 29-year-old Joel Nixon was sacked by his employer, who said he wasn't pulling his weight.

Nixon suffers from retinitis pigmentosa, which affects his peripheral vision and makes it hard for him to see at night, and means he may one day lose his sight completely - but he says it hasn't affected his work.

After losing his job Nixon found it hard to get employment and fell on hard times, and was awarded \$75,000 for lost wages and \$25,000 for emotional distress.

However he's still cutting hair for a few loyal customers who call him the "Blind Barber".

## Win with DESIGNER BRANDS

This week Pharmacy Daily and Designer Brands are giving away each day a prize pack with all six flavours of Designer Brands Balm Balls.

With a cult celebrity following, the secret to the Designer Brands Balm Balls is they are hygienic. The balm sits in a sphere outside the tub so you're not dipping your finger in it! With 100 per cent natural ingredients including Vitamin E, Honeysuckle, Shea Butter, Peppermint and JoJoba, they are available in six flavours to soften and moisturise your lips. Visit [www.dbcosmetics.com.au](http://www.dbcosmetics.com.au)

To win, be the first from **NSW** or **ACT** to send the correct answer to [comp@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:comp@pharmacydaily.com.au)

Where does the balm sit?

Check here tomorrow for today's winner.

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