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AIHW dementia report

MORE than half (52%) of all people in permanent residential aged care had a diagnosis of dementia according to a report released by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW).

While in the general population 3% of people aged between 65 and 74 are thought to have dementia, 43% of people in permanent residential aged care in the same age group had a diagnosis of dementia, said AIHW spokesperson Justine Boland.

At 30 June 2014, there were 263,788 government-funded aged care places, three-quarters (189,283) of which were in residential aged care, while the remaining 66,149 were in the Home Care Packages Programme.

CLICK HERE to access the report.

GMP clearance faster

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has updated details around its Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) clearance rates saying that the average time taken to complete an MRA GMP Clearance application has reduced from 16 weeks down to 11 weeks from date of payment.

Shared opioid approach

AN ONLINE authority system for prescribing of opioids would help reduce the regulatory burden of Authority Required scripts, but any changes to the system should not make it easier for patients to obtain the drugs, according to an opioids roundtable held earlier this year.

The outcomes statement from the meeting was made public on the PBS website on Fri, as part of a review of the PBS Authority System which aims to improve patient safety and care by reducing red tape.

About 30% of telephoned authority requests to Medicare - or 1.8 million calls per year - are for

increased quantities and/or repeats of eight opioids - representing a substantial regulatory burden.

The roundtable in May concluded that patients should be looked after under a comprehensive treatment plan with multimodal pain management strategies.

"Better system pathways and linkages between health professionals are needed to facilitate this shared care approach," the statement said.

Real-time script monitoring systems are an "excellent tool to support quality use of opioids," the statement said, citing the success of the system in Tasmania, adding that "additional support may be needed to allow all states and territories to implement similar systems".

For details see www.pbs.gov.au.

Prescriber update

NEW Zealand's Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Authority (MEDSAFE) has posted its latest Prescriber Update.

Products referenced include oxycodone, hydroxychloroquine, varicella vaccine, olive leaf extract, ibuprofen, clomifene, citalopram and melatonin.

Medically significant associations relate to serotonin syndrome, hyperkalaemia, cardiovascular risk, risk of stroke, QT prolongation and hallucinations.

1st ADHD drug in 5 yrs

EFFECTIVE 01 Sep, Vyvanse (lisdexamfetamine dimesilate), a once-daily treatment for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), has been listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS), the first ADHD treatment to be listed in five years.

The product is described as a 12 hour long-acting medication, suited to those patients needing continuous coverage.

More than 200,000 Australian children and adolescents are thought to be affected by the condition, according to the ABS.

Friday's comp winner

CONGRATULATIONS to Steph Myles from Chemmart Pharmacy, the winner of the Designer Brands pack on Friday.

This week HOYTS Corporate Solutions and PD are offering two tickets each day - see **page two**.

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today has two pages of news, plus a full page from **Symbion** inviting pharmacies to become part of the Pharmacy Choice network.

TGA KPI report

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has released its Key Performance Indicator (KPI) report for the period Jan to Jun, the results of which are benchmarked against the TGA strategic statement 2012-2015.

CLICK HERE for the details around the parameters and the strategy.

Suboptimal medicines cause hospitalisations

MORE than a quarter of hospitalisations of older Australians maybe caused by poor medication-related processes of care before admission, at an annual cost of \$300m, according to new research published in the Medical Journal of Australia (MJA).

Researchers at the University of South Australia and the BUPA Health Foundation used data from the Department of Veterans' Affairs from Jul 2007 to Jun 2012 to examine prevalence of suboptimal medication-related processes of care before hospitalisation of 83,430 older patients.

"The overall proportion of hospitalisations that were preceded by suboptimal medication-related processes of care was 25.2%," the authors reported.

Of patients hospitalised for fractures resulting from a fall, 85.4% were patients aged 65 years or older who had been prescribed a falls-risk medicine before admission.

Other examples involved renal and cardiovascular disease errors.



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References: 1. Ortiz R, Tobli JE, Romero JD et al. Efficacy and safety of oral iron(III) polymaltose complex versus ferrous sulphate in pregnant women with iron-deficiency anaemia: a multicentre, randomized, controlled study. J Matern Fetal Neonatal Med 2011;24:1-6. 2. Tobli JE, Brignoli R. Iron(III)-hydroxide polymaltose complex in iron deficiency anaemia / review and meta-analysis. Arzneimittelforschung 2007;57:431-438.

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Weekly Comment

Welcome to *PD's* weekly comment feature. This week's contributor is

Diana Bicopoulos, Managing Editor of MedicalDirector, the publisher of AusDI Medicines Information.



Collaboration and the future of pharmacy practice

THE interface between pharmacy and general practice has gained a renewed media focus in recent months. Community pharmacy has always played a vital role in supporting quality health in Australia, and pharmacists have long been the providers of easily accessible, trusted information and advice.

Frameworks such as the Community Pharmacy Agreement (CPA) continue to formalise collaborative platforms helping to reinforce the value of community pharmacy as part of the front line in tackling chronic disease in Australia.

New research continues to support the value of community pharmacy in facilitating good clinical outcomes. For example, a recent article in the *IJPP* focussed on the role Australian pharmacies play in the prevention of warfarin related adverse events. It concluded in an anonymised evaluation of 170 pharmacies, 97% of patients enquiring about concomitant use of OTC analgesics with warfarin had direct access to the pharmacist, and 100% recommended an OTC that was less likely to cause adverse events¹.

In addition eHealth will also play a vital role in enabling these outcomes, whether it's via delivery of quality integrated decision support content or efficient sharing of patient information.

¹ MacFarlane B et al International Journal of Pharmacy Practice 2015; 23, pp. 167-172

Hospital antibiotic usage

ALTHOUGH antibiotic usage rates in Australian hospitals has declined in recent years, there is "wide variation" in usage between hospitals according to a new report released by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care.

The report, the outcome of the National Antimicrobial Utilisation Surveillance Program (NAUSP), summarises how antimicrobials are being used in Australian hospitals.

The Commission's senior medical advisor, Professor John Turnidge, said "Antimicrobial resistance is a serious threat to public health.

"The NAUSP report provides rich data on usage patterns which can be used to develop effective antimicrobial stewardship

strategies."

The NAUSP is a passive surveillance system examining data from 129 participating acute care hospitals across Australia - 111 public and 18 private facilities.

This represents more than 90 per cent of principal referral hospital beds and 82 per cent of total beds in public hospitals, the report said.

CLICK HERE to access the report.

NSAID-antidepressant combination risk

COMBINED use of non steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) and antidepressants was associated with an increased risk of intracranial haemorrhage within 30 days of combination, according to new research out of South Korea, and published in the *BMJ*.

The retrospective nationwide propensity score matched cohort study scanned the Korean health insurance database between 01 Jan 2009 and 31 Dec 2013, to examine the data on 4,145,226 patients.

The combined use of NSAIDs with antidepressants was 60% more likely to cause haemorrhage and the result was not dependent on which class of antidepressant was involved, the authors said.

CLICK HERE to access the study.

DDS \$15k for charity

DISCOUNT Drug Stores has raised more than \$15,000 for its charity partner Free To Be as part of its flu vaccination program.

About 7,000 influenza immunisations were administered through the group's 135 stores, with funds from each shot donated to Free To Be which vaccinates children living in Kolkata against serious conditions including hepatitis B, typhoid and tetanus.

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EVEN the Pope needs to slip away sometime.

A Rome optometrist was somewhat surprised to see the pontiff at his front door, wanting a new pair of spectacles.

Allessandro Spiezia, owner of Ottica Spiezia on the Via del Babuino supplies the Pope's glasses, but normally has them delivered to the Vatican.

According to *Reuters* His Holiness drew a large crowd of curious tourists when he arrived at the store in his Ford Focus with some staff and several security officers.

"He had told me to use the old frames again because he did not want to spend much money and insisted on paying for them," Spiezia said during a TV interview.

Last year the Pope confided that since his election in 2013 he missed being able to walk around Rome on his own - and particularly missed not being able to go out for a pizza.

BRITAIN'S BBC is to help out with some scientific research, with Radio 3 set to broadcast a new eight-hour composition as part of a sleep experiment.

Intended as a "lullaby for adults," the piece by Max Richter will be the longest continuous item of music to ever be performed live on air.

A soprano accompanied by an ensemble orchestra will perform the piece from London's Wellcome Collection as part of the three day Why Music? festival.

Listeners to the piece will be asked to participate in a study of how music affects the mind, reporting whether it helped them to fall asleep more easily, enjoyed unusual dreams or deliberately stayed awake to hear the piece.

It's hoped the musicians will also be able to stay awake while playing.

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