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Polypharmacy probs

RESIDENTS of aged care facilities who take multiple medications and have complex medication regimens are more likely to be hospitalised than those who don't, according to research out of Monash University.

A multidisciplinary team from Monash University led by Associate Professor Simon Bell, working in collaboration with Resthaven Incorporated, tracked 383 residents of six Australian long-term care facilities over a 12-month period.

The findings of this study have led to Resthaven reconsidering its approach to deprescribing.

Resthaven intends to explore the potential for medical reviews with GPs and pharmacists to reduce unwanted hospital stays.

Associate Professor Bell said that polypharmacy is not inherently bad but he advocates for medication regimens to be individually tailored to match each resident's specific goals of care.

"Some residents have medical conditions that are best managed by multiple medicines," Bell said.

However, "many older people take medicines that are either unnecessary or no longer appropriate, as the risk-to-benefit ratios for taking specific medicines changes as people age."

Pharmacy MyHR funding

THE Australian Digital Health Agency is offering community pharmacy software vendors grants of up to \$250,000 to upgrade their products to support the My Health Record (MyHR) system.

The agency has launched an 'Industry Partnership Offer' with the aim of encouraging dispensing software providers to "incorporate digital health functionality, and the

uptake of that functionality by their users".

The offer will see the Agency work collaboratively with the software providers and ensure they add the required functionality, and also "correct any perceived market advantage that may have been created previously, where only a small number of software developers have been engaged in Government digital health initiatives".

Previously Fred IT and Simple Retail have added My Health Record support under the former National E-Health Transition Authority's community pharmacy vendor panel.

The overall aim is to ensure that "high value consumers' health data is made available in the My Health Record to ensure consumers and their clinicians have access to this information".

Participants in the new initiative will agree to upgrade their existing systems to support the required functionality by 30 Jun 2018, including the ability to integrate the My Health Record system to enable viewing of customer information from within dispensing software.

See digitalhealth.gov.au.

Review of PAH meds

THE public submission process for Post-market Review of Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension (PAH) Medicines has been opened by the Health Department, inviting interested organisations and individuals to submit.

The submission process is open for six weeks and will close at 5pm AEDT Monday, 27 Mar 2017.

Visit pbs.gov.au for more information and to submit.

Pfizer pulls the pin on Adelaide plant

PHARMACEUTICAL giant Pfizer will close its Thebarton manufacturing plant in Adelaide by the end of 2021, despite announcing plans to expand the site into a "state-of-the-art" facility less than 12 months ago, reports *ABC News*.

The Thebarton factory employs 89 workers and makes pegfilgrastim, used in chemotherapy treatment and exported globally.

Pfizer acquired the factory in 2015 and in Mar last year announced plans to expand the site at a cost of \$21m, but now has announced the need to consolidate its global manufacturing capacity.

Four Corners targets pharmacists tonight

THE ABC's current affairs flagship *Four Corners* will tonight lift the lid on the regulation and marketing of complementary medicines - and "whether the credibility of chemists is threatened by selling them".

A preview of the program, titled *Swallowing It*, quotes the Australian Medical Association saying the trust placed by the public in doctors, nurses and pharmacists has been hard won, and is "put at risk if they're being seen to promote treatments that increasingly the average consumer recognises might be a load of rubbish".

The ABC show goes to air tonight, Mon 13 Feb 2017 at 8.30pm EDT.

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Chemsave car winner



A LUCKY long-time customer of Plevy's Pharmacy in NSW is now driving around in a brand new Ford Fiesta after winning a quarterly national Chemsave catalogue promotion.

Barbara McDonald, who has been a client of the pharmacy for almost 40 years, was selected from thousands of entries made through the 150 or so Chemsave pharmacies across the country.

She's **pictured** accepting the keys to the vehicle with pharmacist John Plevy and Dan Patton of Chemsave.

Meat-asthma link

HIGH intakes of cured meat have been associated with worsening asthma symptoms, according to a French study published in the *Thorax* journal which followed 971 participants over a seven year follow-up period.

See the article at thorax.bmj.com.

Emflaza FDA approval

THE US Food and Drug Administration has approved a new drug for the treatment of Duchenne muscular dystrophy (DMD).

Emflaza (deflazacort) tablets and oral suspension have been approved to treat patients five years and older suffering with DMD, a rare genetic disorder that causes progressive muscle deterioration.

Emflaza is a corticosteroid which works by decreasing inflammation and reducing immune system activity.

It's the first FDA approval of any corticosteroid to treat DMD, and the first approval of deflazacort for any use in the USA.

FDA granted the Emflaza application fast-track designation and priority review, and the drug has also received orphan drug designation and a rare paediatric disease priority review voucher.

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Genetic testing alert

THE National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) has released new publications recommending Australians exercise caution when ordering direct-to-consumer genetic tests.

The publications include a new NHMRC position statement and an accompanying information resource for consumers.

They come in response to the increased availability, some marketing activity and falling costs of genetic tests for the public.

NHMRC ceo Professor Warwick Anderson said the resources offered advice and would help Australians make informed decisions about purchasing such tests - visit nhmrc.gov.au to access.

Libra less than Carefree

AFTER several years as the most popular tampon brand in Australia, Libra has been overtaken by Carefree, according to the latest findings from Roy Morgan Research, while U by Kotex is also impacting the market with third place in the rankings.

In an average four weeks, said the report, 22% of Australian women aged 14+ (just over 2.2 million) purchase tampons, slightly up on 12 months ago (21%).

While the overall sales have not changed much, there has been some significant movement at brand level, with the proportion of tampon buyers purchasing Libra tampons in an average four weeks dropping from 31% to 26% year-on-year - putting the brand just behind Carefree at 27%.

UK regulation plans

BRITISH pharmacists could be regulated by a single body also overseeing dentists, optometrists and chiropractors under a UK plan to merge nine British health regulators into one register covering "high street commercial premises"

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Dispensary Corner

COULD the peanut-shaped robot pillow pictured below be the answer to curing insomnia?

Known as Somnox, the cuddly electronic-equipped pillow tracks the speed of your breathing before creating its own steady breathing rhythm in response.

Apparently your body naturally adopts the steadier breathing pattern of the pillow, helping you to zen out and fall asleep.

High-sensitivity sensors can track the quality of the user's sleep and gather data to help provide customised treatment.

While Somnox is still in the prototype phase, the group of Dutch engineers behind it is trying to get enough funding to take it to market.



IN AN odd turn of events a Bangladeshi family has been arrested after using a fake penis to trick and convince villagers that a genie had performed a sex change on their daughter.

According to the *Hindustan Times*, the family was then able to set up a profitable business where they healed villagers with their 'genie'.

Police became suspicious and had the girl medically examined where it was revealed she had a fake penis tied to her waist.

The trio is now set to be charged with fraud.

Supercare Pharmacies tender

VICTORIAN Minister for Health Jill Hennessy has called for tenders for the next seven Supercare Pharmacies which will open 24-hours-a-day, every day, with a nurse on site from 6 to 10pm.

Victoria's first five 24-hour community Supercare Pharmacies have helped thousands of people get the care and advice they need from pharmacists late at

night in just the first seven months, said Hennessy, and with seven more on track to open mid this year, this number will only continue to grow.

A further \$25.7m has been tagged by the Victorian Government to open a total of 20 Supercare Pharmacies across the state.

The first five Supercare Pharmacies opened round-the-clock in July last year located in Ascot Vale, Craigieburn, Wantirna South, Yarraville and Ballarat, attracting more than 30,000 visits between 10.00pm and 7.00am, with patient numbers growing every month.

Supercare Pharmacies also

played an important role during the unprecedented thunderstorm asthma event late last year.

At that time there was a significant surge in demand after hours with more than three times greater than usual attendances on the evening of 21 Nov.

Ventolin and other asthma medications were most in demand and often precluded the need for hospital visits.

The free nursing service, provided in the 6 to 10 pm period, also assists with wound management, physical assessment, flu and

whooping cough immunisations, health screening, sexual health advice and referrals to other services.

These nurses have provided more than 1,700 episodes of care across the five sites since Aug, the Department of Health said.

"We are now looking for more pharmacies to open all day, every day to help families and people like shift workers who need non-emergency care and medicines after hours," Hennessy said.

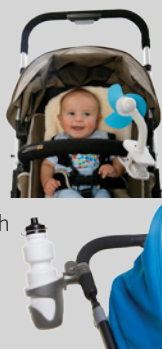


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The Dreambaby® Stroller Fan, with its soft foam fins, is ideal to safely keep your baby or toddler cool and is the must-have travel accessory this summer. The Dreambaby® Strollerbuddy® drink holder is perfect to carry water bottles, sports drinks, sippy cups or other cool beverages within reach while you push your bub in the stroller this season. Available in both grey with white trim and black with white trim. For more visit www.dreambaby.com.au

To win, be the first person from NSW or ACT to send the correct answer to the question below to comp@pharmacydaily.com.au



What colour is the Dreambaby® Stroller Fan?

Check here tomorrow for today's winner.



Weekly Comment

Welcome to *PD's* weekly comment feature. This week's contributor is **Li Yan, Research & Development Scientist, Digestive Health - Procter & Gamble.**

Dispelling common misconceptions about probiotics

WHILST there is a great appreciation for the health benefits of probiotics, many questions and misconceptions remain.

Misconception 1: All probiotics are the same.

Fact: Strain specificity is the key factor in determining the health benefit of a probiotic product. Different strains of even the same bacteria species can provide different beneficial effects, therefore it's critical for the labelled strain to be tested and shown in human studies to provide a health benefit. For example, *Bifidobacterium infantis* 35624 (Bifantis™) has been clinically proven for medically diagnosed Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) relief.

Misconception 2: More is better

Fact: Different probiotic strains have demonstrated efficacy at different optimal concentrations. There is no minimum or maximum number of bacteria that must be taken in order to achieve a beneficial effect. Similarly, a combination of multiple bacteria strains is not necessarily better than a single strain. They must instead be compatible and synergistic.

With an increasing number of probiotics in the market, it's critical that pharmacists recommend the right probiotics with the right strain and right dosage to support specific health conditions or symptoms.

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Postal address: PO Box 1010, Epping, NSW 1710 Australia

Street address: Level 2, Suite 1 64 Talavera Rd, Macquarie Park NSW 2113 Australia
P: 1300 799 220 (+61 2 8007 6760) F: 1300 799 221 (+61 2 8007 6769)

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Publisher/Editor in chief: Bruce Piper

Managing Editor: Jon Murrie

Reporter: Mal Smith

Contributors: Nathalie Craig, Jasmine O'Donoghue, Bonnie Tai

Advertising and Marketing: Sean Harrigan and Melanie Tchakmadjian advertising@pharmacydaily.com.au

Business Manager: Jenny Piper accounts@pharmacydaily.com.au

Editorial: info@pharmacydaily.com.au

