

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today has
three pages of news plus a full
page from Pharmacy 4 Less.

FDA opioid training

IN AN effort to reduce the scope of "the epidemic of opioid addiction", US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) commissioner Scott Gottlieb has announced new training initiatives for pharmacists and other non-physician providers. "The training will continue to be provided by accredited continuing education providers, but we have proposed that the training include broader information on pain management and enhanced information about the safe use of opioid analgesics, basic elements of addiction medicine, and opioid use disorders," he said in an official statement.

Consideration will be given to making the education mandatory to ensure "providers are properly informed about the risks and benefits of these drugs," he added.

Mental health prescription

IMPROVING medication safety in mental health will require a systems approach and involvement of all stakeholders, especially pharmacy services, according to a new report prepared for the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care by the University of South Australia.

Systems identified for involvement include medication reconciliation services, standardised systems for medication ordering and administration, electronic medication management, patient supply systems, multidisciplinary team care, and collaborative home medicines reviews.

Clinical pharmacy services were referenced 172 times in the report, tagged as critical to mental health units and prioritised for early integration with other services in the mental health care setting.

The report grew out of consultation with consumers and carers, nurses, pharmacists, psychiatrists, psychologists and

policy makers from across Australia.

Between three and five medication-related problems are identified per person during pharmacist reviews in the community setting, including adverse reactions, under-use or over-use of medicines, and the need for information or other support services, such as DAAs.

In the hospital setting, as in the community, one study found 52% of people indicated there were discrepancies between the medication history documented in their general practitioners' case notes and what they were taking.

The report recommended that to improve accuracy of medications, a "pharmacist-led medication reconciliation service" should be standard, as well as contact with the patient's own community pharmacy.

It also summarised literature supporting the role of pharmacists in management of mental health - see safetyandquality.gov.au.

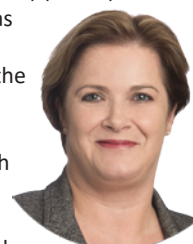
MA welcomes PBAC appointment

MEDICINES Australia (MA) has said it welcomes the appointment of Michelle Burke (**pictured**) to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) (**PD** Fri).

"Ms Burke has enormous experience in the sector and has a long history of working with multinational bio-pharmaceutical companies and contributing to significant policy issues such as PBS reform and industry development.

"Ms Burke has three times been the recipient of industry recognition through the prestigious Pat Clear Award, for her contributions to broader industry policy."

MA said the appointment showed the PBAC had a "willingness to engage with the medicines industry and has a deep understanding of the issues impacting on our sector."



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Mystery shopper study flawed

THE Australian College of Pharmacy has challenged the validity of conclusions drawn from the recent *International Journal of Clinical Pharmacy* publication describing a 'mystery shop' of Sydney community pharmacies (**PD** 13 Jul), which doctors claim showed low rates of GP referrals.

The *Australian Doctor* summary said "up to 50%" of pharmacies failed to recognise red-flag referral symptoms at first presentation, but Australian College of Pharmacy education and research manager Dr Brett MacFarlane said "the College has extensive experience in pharmacy mystery shopper research over many years and has published evidence of the profoundly positive effects Australian pharmacists have on patient care."

MacFarlane highlighted the work was a pilot study, with the rate of referral only a secondary outcome, and it included only 13 out of the 5,600 pharmacies in Australia, not a representative sample.

The shoppers and the scoring sheet were not validated, he said, and some audio recordings of visits failed, meaning data recall was prone to bias.

Referral rates actually increased to 70% in two of the three clinical scenarios investigated, with the overall rate at 66%, and when a pharmacist was involved, 80%.

College president Georgina Twomey noted that pharmacy was one of the only professions

in Australia that had competency standard based education.

"The pharmacy profession has a long history of supporting research into the quality of our clinical practice and welcomes any opportunity to undertake quality improvement."

"The College welcomes discussion over the role of pharmacists in front line clinical care," she said, supporting an interdisciplinary team approach to healthcare and the ongoing close relationship between pharmacists and doctors.

"I call for a mature, evidence-based debate," Twomey concluded.



UK meds app update

FOLLOWING the recent launch of a new, faster, easier-to-use and access app by the publishers of the British National Formulary (BNF) and British National Formulary for Children (BNFC), the UK's National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has confirmed that its own in-house BNF app will be withdrawn later this year.

"Aimed at prescribers, pharmacists and other health and social care professionals, the BNF and BNFC provide details of the medicines licensed in the UK and how they should be prescribed, including their side-effects, contra-indications and doses," NICE said.

For the first time, adult and child BNF content is available through a single app, providing ease of use and saving space on users' devices, the NICE announcement said.



Pensioners selling prescription drugs

MISUSE of prescription opioid-based painkillers is rife in rural areas, with elderly people on-selling the drugs to help pay their bills, according to the Rural Doctors Association.

President of the association, Ewen McPhee, told the *ABC* he believes some are also being bullied into handing over the medications by drug dealers.

The report also cited Mildura pharmacist Eric Oguzkaya, who said elderly customers tended to "fly under the radar" with the problem significantly more widespread than previously suspected.

Oguzkaya said he had heard reports of patients being intercepted and intimidated by dealers outside doctors' surgeries and pharmacies, describing one customer who had been convinced to sell the prescribed opioids to help cover the cost of funeral bills.

McPhee urged the introduction of mandatory real-time monitoring for dispensing of drugs of addiction to help address the problem - meaning doctors and pharmacists would instantly be able to know what each person was taking.

"At the moment what we have is a person goes from GP to GP getting prescription after prescription, hoarding them and on-selling, without any ability to track or monitor them," he said.

Every year 800 Australians die by overdosing on prescription painkillers, with the toll highest in rural and regional areas, the *ABC* report stated.

Priceline for Beecroft

THE northern Sydney suburb of Beecroft is set to become home to Priceline's newest pharmacy in the coming months.

The soon-to-open Beecroft Market Place shopping centre will house the pharmacy, which is scheduled for a grand opening on 12 Sep this year.

Teva trade secrets

TEVA Pharmaceuticals has filed a lawsuit against its former head of regulatory affairs in the USA, alleging she passed proprietary information to her boyfriend - who was the CEO of rival Apotex.

The case against Barinder Sandhu alleges she copied company files onto USB flash drives and handed them onto Jeremy Desai for a period of two years ending in 2016.

Teva says it learned about the information thefts from a former Apotex staffer who said the generics firm used the data to compete against Teva.

MEANWHILE speculation that AstraZeneca CEO Pascal Soriot may move to Teva has been downplayed, with *Bloomberg* reporting Soriot will stay at AZ "for the foreseeable future".

Praxbind 'rapid'

BOEHRINGER Ingelheim's anticoagulation reversal agent Praxbind has demonstrated "rapid, complete, and sustained reversal of dabigatran etexilate" (Pradaxa) in a new study dubbed RE-VERSE AD.

Median time to homeostasis was 2.5 hours - **CLICK HERE** for the study.

Northern Territory

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Dispensary Corner

EVER wondered why dolphins always appear to be smiling?

They have a secret, but it's now been exposed by the BBC.

Identified as one of the animal kingdom's most intelligent beings, they have put their ingenuity to work in the pursuit of having a "high" time.

Scenes filmed for a new documentary showed young dolphins carefully manipulating a certain kind of puffer fish which, if provoked, releases a nerve toxin, which in the right doses, generates a "trance-like" state.

What's even more amazing the clever trippers even passed the puffer-fish between each other to share the stupor, or the "puff".

The BBC video was obtained by using spy cameras in fake turtles.

CLICK HERE for the video.



SMOKING is harmful - and it proved to be particularly dangerous for a Mexican soccer fan who told his wife he was going to get a pack of cigarettes, but ended up flying to Russia to watch a tournament instead.

Die-hard fan Arturo Garcia really wanted to see Mexican team El Tri play in the Confederations Cup, telling his wife he was heading to buy some smokes from the store, "but I did not tell her which one".

He spent his life savings on the trip and also injured his Achilles tendon on the journey - which will probably be the least of his concerns when he heads home to face the music.

New FIP IPJ out now

THE International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) has released a special edition of its *International Pharmaceutical Journal (IPJ)*,

summarising the proceedings of the recently concluded 6th Pharmaceutical Sciences World Congress in Sweden.

The conference discussed the ongoing major revolution in pharmacy as a result of progress in genetics and systems biology, leading to an era of "precision medicines," with the journal including articles on non-profit pharma, potential antidotes to GHB, what regulatory bodies are doing to accelerate access to new medicines, mass customisation of medicines, self-care, education for pharmaceutical scientists, pharmacists' role in harm reduction and much more.

For more see www.fip.org.



Pharmacists charged in USA

A MASSIVE crackdown on healthcare fraud by the US Justice Department has seen charges laid against 412 people including pharmacists, doctors and nurses.

One case involves a pharmacist who was charged with submitting US\$192 million in false and fraudulent claims to health care benefit programs "for dispensing compounded medications that were not medically necessary, and often based on prescriptions induced by illegal kickback payments," the department said.

Oct disclosure cycle

THE Department of Health has published indicative 01 Oct 2017 prices resulting from the 2017 October Cycle of Price Disclosure.

The price reductions range from 37% at the top end for lamivudine tablets, through to 34% for quetiapine, 33% for pramipexole, 31% for temolozolomide, 28% for capecitabine, 24% for aolanzapine, 23% for letrozole, 22% for telmisartan and zolmitriptan, 21% for rabeprazole, filgrastim and granisetron, down to 10% for esomeprazole, irbesartan, perindopril and lercanidipine.

There are also price cuts of up to 94% for some medications under the Efficient Funding of Chemotherapy initiative - pbs.gov.au.



Weekly Comment

Welcome to **PD's** weekly comment feature.

This week's contributor is Toni Riley, Community Pharmacist and Project Manager of National Return of Unwanted Medicines.



Where do medicines returned via RUM Project end up - how are they disposed?

UNWANTED medicines once returned to a community pharmacy are placed into a RUM bin, in a secure area of the pharmacy that's always supervised by the pharmacist. When the RUM bin is full, the tamper-proof lid is firmly attached and the bin will make its way to an EPA accredited facility where everything is destroyed using high temperature incineration.

The contents of all RUM bins are not examined - in fact, the sealed bin is incinerated with the tamper-proof seal still intact.

The RUM bin is processed at temperatures of up to 1,200°C, ensuring complete combustion and destruction of all the unwanted medicines. This high temperature incineration does not produce methane gas (a contributor to greenhouse gas, which contributes to global warming) as all hydrocarbons are converted to heat energy, carbon dioxide and water. There is virtually only a tiny pile of "sand" remaining at the end of the incineration process.

This process ensures that all unwanted medicines are securely disposed of in the most environmentally sustainable manner.

WIN WITH NUTRI-SYNERGY

Each day this week, Pharmacy Daily and NS are giving away a NS pack for Sensitive Skin including NS Sensitive Skin Cleanser 500ml (RRP \$16.50), NS Extra Dry Skin Moisturiser 250ml (RRP \$17.50), NS Protective Hand Cream 60g (RRP \$9.30) and NS Lip Balm 10g (RRP \$6.70).

Nutri-Synergy Extra Dry Skin Moisturiser is formulated with natural active ingredients to give your skin superior moisturisation. NS is rich in Natural Moisturising Factors like urea, glycerine and triglycerides and common irritants are avoided such as petrochemicals, parabens, soap, harsh detergents and perfumes. For more info visit www.nutrisynergy.com.au.

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