

MedicineWise app

NPS MedicineWise has released a new version of its popular MedicineList+ smartphone app,

which has undergone a makeover to become the "New and improved MedicineWise app".

Updated features include a secure login feature to keep information safe, synchronisation of data when the app is used on multiple devices, and access to featured resources such as videos to learn more about medicines.

The app is now available for download on the Google Play or Apple App Store.



PSA call for codeine rethink

ANTICIPATING the 01 Feb 2018 planned OTC codeine products upscheduling to S4 (**PD** 20 Dec 16), the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) NSW Branch has called for a rethink of the move.

A circular to members this week said if the proposed rescheduling of over-the-counter (OTC) codeine-containing analgesics to prescription only goes ahead, hundreds of thousands, if not millions of Australians who use these products appropriately and safely will be forced to visit a GP to get a prescription in order to still use the products.

President of the PSA NSW Branch Professor Peter Carroll said clearly many would not be able to get an immediate appointment and, due to the rescheduling, would be forced to suffer unnecessary pain.

"This will be particularly so in regional parts of Australia where there is a shortage of GP access," Carroll pointed out.

The NSW PSA Branch said it also believed that the rescheduling would add significant costs to the healthcare system, and costs to patients if the GP did not bulk bill.

"We must remember that alternative OTC analgesics such as those containing ibuprofen will not be a safe alternative for many patients, and these patients will have no option but to visit the GP."

Carroll said the NSW Branch believed that low dose codeine-containing analgesics must remain an OTC therapeutic option for the management of acute, short term pain.

"Community pharmacists have the knowledge base and competence to counsel patients regarding the effective and safe use of these products, and the vast majority of patients who use the products do so safely and appropriately for short-term use, and are at no risk of becoming dependent on codeine," he said.

PDL reiterates methotrexate alert

PHARMACEUTICAL Defence Limited has confirmed that despite the well-recognised and publicised dangers when dispensing methotrexate incorrectly, it continues to receive reports of error with this drug.

PDL was responding to the recent TGA Advisory Committee on Medicines statement (**PD** Wed) which highlighted the increased risk of inadvertent dosing errors.

A spokesperson said PDL agreed with the strategies suggested by the Committee, adding that "when dispensing any methotrexate formulation, the pharmacist should remember SEE METHOTREXATE, SEE POTENTIAL DANGER".

PDL reminded **Pharmacy Daily** readers that it is available at any time to help pharmacists in relation to risk and harm minimisation, and will provide confidential advice regarding an incident or general query around methotrexate - 1300 854 838 or pdl.org.au.



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Caffeine study hailed

AUSTRALIAN pharmaceutical manufacturer Phebra has welcomed the findings of a new study demonstrating the sustained benefits of giving neonatal caffeine to pre-term babies suffering breathing difficulties.

The Royal Women's Hospital in Melbourne led the research, following the development of 142 premature babies up to the age of 11, showing the rate of breathing difficulties was approximately halved for the neonates who had been given caffeine once per day.

Phebra was not involved in the study, but has developed the TGA-approved Cafnea range of products for the short-term treatment of apnoea of prematurity in infants of gestational age 28 to 33 weeks.

Phebra ceo Mal Eutick said it was the first time research had clearly demonstrated the long-lasting effectiveness of treating premature babies with caffeine.

French codeine ban

FRENCH Health Minister Agnes Buzin last week announced that medications containing codeine would be placed on the country's list of prescription-only drugs.

The decree, which is effective immediately, aims to "put an end to practices relating to these dangerous and potentially life-threatening additives," she said.

There have been major concerns in France about diversion of some codeine-containing cough mixtures to compose a "euphoric cocktail" known colloquially as 'Purple Drank'.

Maxigesic expansion

AFT Pharmaceuticals' Maxigesic painkiller product is now licensed in 124 countries worldwide, after the formalisation of an agreement with European pharmaceutical group Amicus SA Switzerland in three regions: the Baltics (Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania); Central Eastern Europe (Czech Republic, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania and Slovakia); and most of the Balkans (Croatia, Slovenia, Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Macedonia).

CEO Dr Hartley Atkinson said the pact exceeded a previously disclosed target to sell Maxigesic in 100 countries.

"This agreement, together with other recent out-licensing agreements, means that Maxigesic is now licensed in 124 countries around the world.

"Getting these agreements in place shows that we are expanding on our planned pathway to deliver on our sales targets," he said.

Currently Maxigesic is sold in eight countries, with some additional launches from this current deal expected to take place in the next 12 months.

"We believe that these markets present good additional potential for Maxigesic as the market, defined by IMS Health for paracetamol and ibuprofen tablet sales for 10 of the 14 countries, is in excess of \$220 million," he said.

MEANWHILE AFT said it was now able to confirm that its agreement to out-license Maxigesic to France, Monaco, Andorra and French dependencies (**PD** 23 May 2017) is with French pharma company Laboratoires Expanscience.



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APC inspires the Philippines



AUSTRALIAN Pharmacy Council ceo Bronwyn Clark inspired 5,000 attendees at the recent Philippines Pharmacists Association (PPhA) conference in Palawan, the Philippines, in late May.

Clark gave the keynote speech at the event, speaking on the topic of *Filipino Pharmacists, embracing the challenge of change* during which she acknowledged the opportunities posed by the current situation in the Philippines where a new Pharmacy Law was recently passed allowing the expansion of pharmacist services.

Vaccinations by pharmacists are set to roll out in the Philippines under the new arrangements, with Clark's presentation focusing on needs-based education to enable practice changes.

She also showcased practice from Australia and New Zealand as well as the quality assurance of the education and professional developments which underpin our high quality systems locally.

Other potential areas for expansion of service in the Philippines highlighted by Clark

include blood pressure screening, diabetes Meds Checks and counselling, smoking cessation, sleep apnoea treatment, lung function tests, anticoagulation management and more.

Outside of the pharmacy possibilities highlighted included expanding scopes through GP practice pharmacists, home medication reviews, and even pharmacist prescribers.

However a key factor is assuring quality of the workforce during this transformation of the sector, Clark added, unveiling competency standards and frameworks and the importance of accreditation processes and systems.

She also unveiled details of next year's Life Long Learning in Pharmacy Conference taking place in Brisbane from 06-09 Jul 2018 - more details at llpharm2018.com.

Pictured above from left are: Ms Marilyn Tiu Ms Zenaída Lumacang; PPhA president Dr Yolanda Robles; Bronwyn Clark, Australian Pharmacy Council ceo; Ms Leonila Campo; Dr Imelda Pena; and Mr Aldrin Santiago.

Northern Territory

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Hall of Fame for Blackmores



LAST night Blackmores chairman Marcus Blackmore accepted an award in Brisbane from His Excellency the Honourable Paul de Jersey AC, Governor of Queensland.

Blackmores was inducted into the Queensland Business Leaders Hall of Fame, established by QUT Business School, the State Library of Queensland and the Queensland Library Foundation in 2009, to recognise the public contribution made by leaders of business to the reputation of Queensland and its economic and social development.

Marcus paid tribute to his late father during the event, saying "our journey started in Queensland in 1932 with Maurice Blackmore's very strong sense of purpose and a vision for better health for Australians - opening one of Australia's first health food stores in Albert Street, Brisbane in 1932 along with a small naturopathic practice which grew into a regional network of outlets.

"Eighty-five years later our business looks very different but what we stand for remains the same," Blackmore said.

He said from humble beginnings in Queensland the business was now enjoying success on a global stage, adding "we've faced challenges and criticism and we've overcome it with strong values and with a fighting spirit, and I've no doubt that comes from our heritage".

QUT Emeritus Professor Peter Little said the businesses and individuals inducted into the Hall of Fame this year had "demonstrated the entrepreneurship and innovation that exemplify what Queensland has to offer Australia and the world.

"Their diverse stories have helped shape our state and recognising them in this way provides a permanent, public record of their leadership and excellence for future generations," Little added.

Bubs HealthOne deal

LISTED

organic baby food and infant milk formula producer Bubs Australia Limited has entered into a distribution and field marketing services agreement with HealthOne which will provide sales and key account services to pharmacies across Australia.

Bubs Australia ceo Nicholas Simms said the company continued to focus on its domestic footprint in the pharmacy channel.

"Pharmacies are a highly trusted source and key destination for mother and baby products...by partnering with HealthOne we can deliver enhanced customer service and support at both individual pharmacies and key retail banners nationally," he said.

HealthOne's other key clients include Procter & Gamble and Abbott Nutrition, with the company's chairman Tom Crimmins saying he was excited about the future potential for Bubs within the pharmacy channel.

"We look forward to delivering tailored solutions to enhance Bubs' brand presence across the healthcare channel, and significantly increasing the number of individual locations where Australian parents can access Bubs products," he said.



Nicotine & OC consult

NEW Zealand's Pharmaceutical Management Agency, PHARMAC, is calling on pharmacists and other stakeholders to provide input relating to proposals around nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) and emergency contraceptive pill (levonorgestrel tablets) (ECP).

The proposal would give pharmacists the ability to provide some funded pharmaceuticals without a prescription.

This would involve making amendments to the Pharmaceutical Schedule rules to allow pharmacists to independently authorise subsidy for certain pharmaceuticals.

It doesn't involve any changes to other prescribing rights or pharmacist scope of practice, but would create a national framework for consistency across the nation, PHARMAC said.

These would supersede local District Health Board arrangements for the provision of NRT and the ECP through pharmacies in their area, outside of the Pharmaceutical Schedule.

This consultation closes at 5.00pm on Fri, 18 Aug 2017 and submissions can be emailed to consult@pharmac.govt.nz.

FDA hep C drug nod

THE US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved Vosevi to treat adults with chronic hepatitis C virus (HCV) genotypes 1-6 without cirrhosis (liver disease) or with mild cirrhosis.

Vosevi is a fixed-dose, combination tablet containing two previously approved drugs - sofosbuvir and velpatasvir - and a new drug, voxilaprevir.

Vosevi is the first treatment approved for patients who have been previously treated with the direct-acting antiviral drug sofosbuvir or other drugs for HCV that inhibit a protein called NS5A.

The Vosevi combination product is not yet available in Australia.

Free pain conference

WESTERN Sydney community pharmacists, people living with chronic pain and other health professionals are invited to participate in a free conference at Westmead Hospital next week as part of National Pain Week.

The event takes place on 28 Jul, continuing a conversation started last year about what people in pain and clinicians consider a great pain service would be in the region.

Presentations in the morning will be followed by an afternoon workshop - for details **CLICK HERE**.

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Dispensary Corner

A JACKAROO from Western Australia is expecting to be up and about shortly after doctors replaced one of his thumbs with his big toe, reports the *BBC*.

20-year-old Zac Mitchell (**below**) was injured in Apr on a remote property when a bull kicked his hand into a fence, unfortunately detaching the digit.

Even though his co-workers quickly put the thumb into an esky, two operations to reattach it were unsuccessful so doctors instead tried the toe graft at the Sydney Eye Hospital this month.

The transplant looks to have worked, and although Mitchell will require a year of rehabilitation he plans to eventually return to farm work.



YOU can't beat stupidity.

Police in Florida, USA managed to crack a case fairly easily last week after a self-described drug dealer called 911 to report a bag of cocaine which had been stolen from his vehicle.

Officers responding to the incident found 32-year-old David Blackmon complaining about the theft of the drugs - and then they spotted some more drugs and a crack pipe on the floor of the car.

Blackmon was charged with possession of cocaine and resisting arrest.

SHPA Specialty Groups call

THE new Specialty Practice Framework launched by the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) (*PD* 11 May 2017) has moved to the next level, with applications now open for members to apply to join Practice Groups and nominate for election to the Leadership Committees.

There have already been more than 4,500 enrolments across the 26 Interest Groups under the structure, and Practice Groups are a step up from Interest Groups in SHPA Specialty Practice Streams.

They are communities for SHPA members with existing or evolving expertise in a specialty who want to grow and share their expertise and lead pharmacy practice in the specialty.

The SHPA is keen to get as many applications as possible, saying that successful applicants will find the growth of their expertise in the

chosen specialty will be supported, including collaboration with colleagues, networking and also help with guidance for early career pharmacists.

In addition, members will be expected to share their expertise through contributions to SHPA advocacy, education and publications.

Members of Practice Groups will be eligible to nominate for election to the Leadership Committee of that Specialty Practice Stream.

To be eligible to join a Practice Group, members need to have been a financial member of SHPA for at least 12 months and be in the eligible membership category, which means that student and intern members are not eligible to join Practice Groups.

Nominations for elections to Leadership Committees close at 5pm on Fri 11 Aug 2017.

Visit shpa.org.au for details.



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.

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To win, be the first from TAS or VIC to send the correct answer to the question to comp@pharmacydaily.com.au

Can NS Sensitive Skin Cleanser be used on the face?

Congratulations to yesterday's winner, Tahlia McGinty from Gambier Village Pharmacy.



Events Calendar

WELCOME to *Pharmacy Daily's* events calendar, opportunities to earn CPE and CPD points.

If you have an upcoming event you'd like us to feature, email info@pharmacydaily.com.au.

28-30 Jul: PSA17; Hyatt Regency, Darling Harbour, Sydney; for details see: www.psa17.com

5-9 Aug: Medici Capital Pharmacy Snow Business Conference 2017; Mt. Buller, Victoria; register your interest here: www.medicic.com.au

6-12 Aug: Pharmeducation Pharmacotherapy Update; Cable Beach Club Resort, Broome; details here: www.pharmeducationbroome.com

1-3 Sep: Pharmacy Connect; Hilton Hotel Sydney; register here: www.pharmacy-connect.com.au

10-14 Sep: 77th FIP World Congress of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences 2017; Seoul, Republic of Korea; register here: www.fip.org

24-28 Sep: 2017 Pharmacy Alliance Members' Forum; Palazzo Versace, Gold Coast; register here: www.pharmacyalliance.com.au

17-19 Oct: World Self Medication Industry General Assembly 2017; ICC Sydney; registrations opening soon: www.wsmiga2017.com

26 Oct: CMA Annual Conference and Industry Awards; Sydney; details here: www.cmaustralia.org.au