

Today's issue of PD

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

Wizard recruiting

WIZARD Pharmacy is seeking "exceptional pharmacists with astute business acumen and influence" to become Wizard Pharmacy Area Development Managers - for details see page four of today's Pharmacy Daily.

TGA hopping mad

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has issued warnings against the use of Australia Kangaroo Essence 2500mg Tablets and Ultimate & Herbal Slim Weight Loss capsules, saying they pose a serious risk to health and should not be taken.

The Kangaroo Essence tablets contain the undeclared substance sildenafil while the slimming capsules contain sibutramine, supply of which is illegal.

Sibutramine was withdrawn from sale in Australia in Oct 2010 after a study showed an increased risk of major cardiac events.

Visit tga.gov.au for more detail.

Evidence-based screening

THE Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) has come out of its corner in response to media reports criticising the Amcal "Strokecheck" screening service, saying that screening and "risk assessment activities in community pharmacy must be evidence-based, meet unmet needs in the community, be appropriate for a pharmacy setting and provided by an appropriately-trained pharmacist".

The Australian Medical Association and the Stroke Foundation are reportedly both warning the public to avoid the "Strokecheck" screening because it has "terrified" some patients incorrectly assessed to have a high risk and may involve unnecessary medical testing and excess Medicare costs.

The process of screening and risk assessment falls within the scope of all pharmacists' practice in Australia and is a "key component of Australia's strategy to reduce the burden of preventable disease", the PSA says.

In addition, there is strong evidence that screening and risk assessment targeted at preventable conditions such as diabetes, cardiovascular, chronic kidney

disease and osteoporosis, is cost-effective and improves population health.

PSA national president Joe Demarte said, "The opportunity is obvious in that it represents another avenue for highly accessible community pharmacies to embed themselves as important contributors to our healthcare system.

"However the responsibility, on the other hand, is to remember that this is a preventive health service and deserves to be treated as such.

"With this in mind, PSA has a new position statement on screening and risk assessment to help pharmacists with this important issue."

The five PSA position statement principles encompass the need for services to be targeted to conditions with a significant disease burden, to be evidence-based and appropriate for the pharmacy setting, to document informed consent, to include follow up and referral, as well as being conducted by appropriately trained pharmacists using validated screening and risk assessment tools.

Melatonin, cannabis, nicotine and more

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has published its final decisions around scheduling of nicotine products including e-cigarettes or electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS), melatonin, cannabis, vardenafil and many more.

The Department of Health Advisory Committee on Chemicals Scheduling (ACCS) and the Advisory Committee on Medicines Scheduling (ACMS) as well as the Joint Advisory Committee completed their findings in their November 2106 meetings and published them last week.

ENDS gained no relaxation of scheduling, nor did melatonin or vardenafil, each having their current scheduling considered appropriate.

Additional concerns were raised around the scheduling of paracetamol/caffeine combinations, highlighting the sourcing of caffeine from many different foods, drinks and medicines without full awareness on the part of the consumer.

Pentobarbital also had its scheduling tightened - tga.gov.au for details on these and more.

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Pharmacy-led review for diabetes

PHARMACIST-LED review of diabetes patient care increased the number of key care processes administered and improved diabetic control during the year of program delivery, but abated during the year after, in a study supporting the management of type 2 diabetes (T2D).



The UK study out of Windsor and Leeds demonstrated the positive impact of pharmacist engagement in the processes and the need to make such programs ongoing rather than fixed term, authors asserted.

“The program combined the strategic drive and project facilitation skills of Slough CCG, the general practice teams’ knowledge of their patients and the clinical and information technology skills of an experienced pharmacist team,” said lead researcher Dr Tim Langran.

More than 5,900 patients with T2D were reviewed by pharmacists working with GP teams to schedule

any of the nine key care processes recommended by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) that the patients were lacking, to optimise medication and to make other interventions.

The study was one of the joint working initiatives created by Britain’s Royal College of General Physicians and the Royal Pharmaceutical Society in order to identify areas where general practitioners and pharmacists can work together to improve the quality of patient care.

CLICK HERE for the *BMJ* abstract.

PBS rejects Keytruda

KEYTRUDA has failed to receive a pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) listing due to concerns from the PBAC around the incremental cost-effectiveness ratio (ICER) per quality-adjusted life-year (QALY).

The PBAC said the submission from the sponsor’s seven-year time horizon underestimated the ICER adding that if the criterion for treatment eligibility was changed from tumour proportion score (TPS) $\geq 50\%$ to include all of the PD-L1 positive population (TPS $\geq 1\%$), the ICER would increase substantially, and would be unacceptably high.

Potential costs to the taxpayer would range from \$100m to \$200m over five years, the PBAC said.

Visit pbs.gov.au for more detail.

Rivaroxaban for VT

THE anticoagulant rivaroxaban reduces the risk of recurrence of life-threatening blood clots more effectively than daily aspirin in patients diagnosed with venous thromboembolism, according to the double-blind, multicentre EINSTEIN CHOICE study, presented at the 66th American College of Cardiology scientific sessions.

Bayer sponsored the study.

Millions missing out on vax

UP TO 3.8 million Australian adults are missing out on free vaccinations each year, putting themselves at risk of contracting life-threatening, yet preventable infections, according to a report in the *Medical Journal of Australia* (MJA) today.

The report’s release coincides with the launch of the University of New South Wales Vaccine and Infection Research Lab (UNSW VIRL), a national research centre of excellence designed to tackle the serious social health issue of low adult vaccination rates, and reduce the gap between infant and adult vaccination.

The group identified at high risk and most missing out on their free vaccine under the National Immunisation Program (NIP) are those aged 65 years and older.

Although targeted for influenza, pneumococcal pneumonia and shingles vaccines within the NIP, only around 49% of this demographic are being immunised.

“Vaccination rates are significantly higher among infants versus their grandparents, despite the availability of free vaccines for both groups. This demonstrates the lower value that society places on keeping older Australians healthy,” said UNSW VIRL Head, Professor Raina MacIntyre, Sydney.

Influenza alone is responsible for more than 3,000 deaths per year in the senior age group who have a low perception of the risk associated with the infection, the report reads.

Authors call upon governments, the media, providers and individuals to direct more attention towards the large numbers of adults who are unnecessarily susceptible to vaccine-preventable disease each year.

Visit mja.com.au for the report.

New malaria vax tick

RESEARCHERS from Griffith University’s Institute for Glycomics have developed a new malaria vaccine and demonstrated that it works in early trials in humans.



Lead researcher Professor Michael Good had so much faith in the vaccine, called PlasProtect, that he chose to become the first person to receive it.

My Chemist tops satisfaction

THE latest figures from the monthly Roy Morgan Research Customer Satisfaction Awards have found My Chemist was the top ranked pharmacy brand in Feb 2017 - although its 90% rating was lower than last month.

Terry White Chemists came in second place, followed by Priceline and then Chemist Warehouse, which dropped from second to fourth position.

Chemmart Pharmacy was in fifth place for the Feb statistics, displacing Soul Pattinson which dropped out of the top five.

Win with SkinB5

This week *Pharmacy Daily* & SkinB5 are giving away each day the Acne Control Extra Strength Tablets.

SkinB5 is an all-natural acne supplement that works from within to treat acne on the face and all over the body. The SkinB5 Extra Strength Tablets is based on a potent dosage of vitamin B5, proven to increase skin health and reduce acne by regulating the skin’s production of sebum, or skin oil. See www.skinb5.com for more.



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

What is the recommended retail price for the Acne Control Extra Strength product?

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Dispensary Corner

UNITED States customs officials last week seized more than 40,000 counterfeit condoms which were being imported into Puerto Rico from China.

The Durex-branded items (pictured) were seized in a major operation over a five day period in the capital, San Juan.

The US Department of Customs and Border Patrol warned that the fake prophylactics were not subject to strict quality controls and "may contain substances that could lead to long term health problems.

"Fake condoms will not guard the user against sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy," it warned.



THERE'S no such thing as a free lunch, so the saying goes - but that's not currently the case in the Pacific nation of Tonga.

In a bid to battle the country's obesity problem, the government is delivering thousands of free baby chickens and ducks to communities, in the hope it will encourage citizens to reduce consumption of imported meat.

At least 10,000 chicks and ducklings have been sent to villages across the archipelago, where 33% of the population have type 2 diabetes.

"The whole thing is trying to reduce the imports of fatty chicken," said agriculture ministry spokesman Viliami Taufa.

Other recent initiatives include a discount on fresh fish and higher taxes on tobacco and turkey.

Menveo shortage

GLAXOSMITHKLINE has advised of a short-term supply constraint of its Menveo meningococcal ACWY vaccine, after a recent increase in notifications which is driving additional demand.

Menveo is not on the National Immunisation Program, but a number of states and territories have recently introduced Meningococcal W vaccination programs to protect those most at risk of contracting the disease.

GSK said the Meningococcal ACWY vaccine is considered important for those travelling overseas to where the disease burden is greatest, including the so-called 'Meningitis Belt' of sub-Saharan Africa covering 26 countries from Senegal to Ethiopia.

The company said it was prioritising supply of Menveo to the government programs, with forecasts adjusted to meet the anticipated increase in demand.

"We regret the inconvenience this may cause people and their families who want the vaccine, as well as pharmacists and doctors.

"We are working to re-establish supply as a matter of urgency," the company said.

New cancer drug nod

THE US Food and Drug Administration FDA today granted accelerated approval to Bavencio (avelumab) for the treatment of adults and pediatric patients 12 years and older with metastatic Merkel cell carcinoma (MCC).

This is the first FDA-approved treatment for metastatic MCC, a rare, aggressive form of skin cancer, and extends to patients who have not received prior chemotherapy.

Bavencio appears to work by helping the body's immune system attack cancer cells by blocking their interaction with specific proteins.

Paramedics to be regulated by AHPRA

THE Council of Australian Governments Health Council has considered a major revision to the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, with a draft Bill proposing a range of reforms including the addition of paramedics to the national registration scheme.

Other changes proposed include governance improvements, enabling Chairpersons to be appointed on merit from any of the members of a National Board, not just the practitioner members.

Under a draft Bill, nursing and midwifery would be recognised as two separate professions rather than a single profession, with both continuing to be regulated by the Nursing and Midwifery Board.

There are also a number of proposed improvements to the management, disciplinary and enforcement powers of National Boards in relation to notifications and complaints, "to strengthen public protection and ensure fairness for complainants (notifiers) and practitioners".

The Bill is stage one of the reform process, with a second stage including broad public consultation to commence during 2017.

MEANWHILE the state, territory and federal health ministers also agreed to a national "opt-out" model for long term participation arrangements in the My Health Record system.

J&J pulls YouTube ads

JOHNSON & JOHNSON has announced it will suspend all of its digital advertising on YouTube, due to concerns that its products may be appearing alongside offensive content on the Google-owned video sharing platform.

Google has promised to overhaul its systems, with the issue arising after claims that advertising from a range of companies is appearing on channels carrying homophobic or anti-Semitic content.

The controversy has also seen GlaxoSmithKline, Marks & Spencer, Verizon, AT&T, HSBC and the UK government announce they will no longer promote their products via YouTube advertising.



Welcome to PD's weekly comment feature. This week's contributor is Teresa Di Franco, Pharmacist and Credentialled Diabetes Educator, Perth Diabetes Care.



How to become a 'FITTER Pharmacist'

OVER the past few weeks, I've spoken about the pharmacy's role in supporting diabetes management. I've also spoken about the recent updates in relation to insulin injection techniques and needle lengths (or FITTER* recommendations), and how healthcare professionals, including pharmacists, need to provide support to their customers who inject their diabetes medication by adopting the Golden Rules.

Taking the time to initiate a conversation about injection technique with our customers can make a significant difference to their health and wellbeing. Simple questions can help uncover bad habits and put customers with diabetes on a path to better health.

Questions that 'FITTER Pharmacists' should ask include:

- How often are you changing your needle?
- Do you know there are shorter needles now available that may be more comfortable to use?
- When was the last time you saw a credentialled diabetes educator?
- How often do you experience pain, bruising or bleeding when injecting your insulin or injectable medication?

The FITTER recommendations, including the Golden Rules of Injection Technique, can be accessed **HERE**.

*FITTER stands for the Forum for Injection Technique & Therapy Expert Recommendations and is an international program sponsored by BD.

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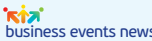
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