Pain scepticism hurts
NEW research released ahead of the 01 Feb codeine upscheduling has demonstrated that one of the significant impacts for chronic pain sufferers is widespread scepticism about the veracity of their pain story, from friends, family and colleagues as well as from health professionals.

The Amcal Pharmacy sponsored study described the “silent suffering” with 66% of sufferers not explaining their pain to acquaintances and 28% from their health professionals. A further 68% worry they will be seen as ‘complaining constantly’ if they talk about their pain, forcing 28% to conceal their pain from close friends and even more than 10% not telling their spouse. Amcal encourages sufferers to seek advice from their pharmacist.

Peninsula Pharmacy
Walter Mikac was also cited in this year’s Australia Day Honours (PD yesterday), receiving an AM for significant service to the community as an advocate for gun control.

Codeine - NSW ‘go-it-alone’?
A COMBINATION of real-time monitoring and New South Wales ministerial regulation could see the state “go it alone” on allowing pharmacists to supply codeine-containing products under specific conditions, according to Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) NSW Branch president Peter Carroll.

Carroll has written to NSW Health Minister Brad Hazzard, explaining that concerns about interstate inconsistency need not hinder a local decision to benefit patients, as there are already disparities between different jurisdictions. Carroll pointed out that even though vaccines are Schedule 4 (prescription only) medicines in all states, NSW regulations allow influenza vaccine to be administered to patients by approved pharmacists without a prescription under approved protocols and conditions.

By contrast, in Queensland different arrangements apply, with more vaccines such as measles, mumps and rubella vaccine also able to be administered by approved pharmacists. On, or before 01 Feb the “NSW Health Minister, or any other State Health Minister for that matter, could regulate to mandate real time monitoring of the supply of low dose codeine-containing products in all pharmacies, and allow pharmacists to supply low dose codeine-containing products (up to 3 days’ supply) without a prescription for the treatment of acute, short term pain,” Carroll argued.

The end result would then “be identical to the situation that exists for vaccines,” Carroll added, pleading with Hazzard to “do this in the interests of the hundreds of thousands of people in NSW who use these products safely and appropriately for the short term treatment of acute pain such as migraine, toothache and period pain.”

In the meantime, Carroll has written to Health Minister, or any other State Health Minister for that matter, to alert them to the situation.

Injectors ‘at flag call
IN RESPONSE to recent stock issues involving Mylan’s Epipen autoinjector, Sun Pharma has submitted to the Mar PBAC meeting that its AdrenaJect adrenaline (epinephrine) autoinjector be listed as substitutable, “a” flagged, with the Epipen product.

Sun Pharma is calling on healthcare practitioners and patients to express their concerns about the single supplier situation to the PBAC at health.gov.au.

Gong for Mikac
BYRON Bay-based pharmacist Walter Mikac was also cited in this year’s Australia Day Honours (PD yesterday), receiving an AM for significant service to the community as an advocate for gun control.

Codeine update
NPS MedicineWise has posted information and resources for health professionals and consumers on its website, to support healthcare professionals and their customers dealing with chronic pain in the run-up to 01 Feb upscheduling of products containing codeine.

The site recommends the use of paracetamol/ibuprofen combinations to help manage chronic pain without seeking GP prescription alternatives, including products containing codeine.

There is a section on codeine misuse disorder and the diagnosis of codeine dependency and an FAQ page for consumers.

See nps.org.au for more.

AMR and dispensing
COMMUNITY pharmacy dispensing of antibiotics has been placed under the microscope in a study investigating the “relationship between antimicrobial-resistance programs and antibiotic dispensing for upper respiratory tract infection: An analysis of Australian data between 2004 and 2015”.

Associations with a number of interventions, including a series of nationwide educational and advertising interventions for general practitioners and consumers implemented in Australia between 2009 and 2015 were studied, revealing on average 14% total reduction in dispensed scripts after the series of nationwide educational interventions.

There is a section on codeine misuse disorder and the diagnosis of codeine dependency and an FAQ page for consumers.

See nps.org.au for more.

DAA and MedsCheck e-learning modules available soon
PSA is supporting pharmacists to implement changes to redesigned 6CPA programs.

Find out more at www.pharmacydaily.com.au/6CPA

For more information CLICK HERE!

or call 1300 650 455 www.bioceuticals.com.au

Introducing The BioCeuticals® UltraDefense Mushroom Range

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ASTHMA Australia and TerryWhite Chemmart (TWC) have entered a three-year partnership to support people with asthma.

Beginning with this month’s Back to School asthma campaign, TerryWhite Chemmart has pledged funding and in-store support to help Asthma Australia reach a broader audience.

Asthma Australia ceo Michele Goldman said, “This partnership allows us to strengthen our presence in the community, building on work we have done in other healthcare settings.”

“Pharmacists may be the only health professional that some people with asthma see on a regular basis.”

“They are uniquely positioned to offer advice and referrals, particularly for people struggling with symptoms whose asthma is poorly controlled,” Goldman said. She added that demonstrating device technique is another key service pharmacists can offer to help people with asthma ensure they are using medication correctly and getting the maximum benefit.

The Back to School asthma campaign also reminds parents to update asthma action plans and provide them to schools along with spare medication, to minimise the risk of severe asthma flare-ups.

As well as awareness raising activities, TerryWhite Chemmart pharmacists will connect consumers with Asthma Australia’s support services including the 1800 ASTHMA Helpline (1800 278 462) and will raise funds to support people with asthma.

Paracetamol is NICE

ANTIBIOTICS are over-prescribed for sore throats, according to the UK’s National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE).

In a statement issued this week NICE suggests the majority of patients suffering from common respiratory tract infections are better served by taking paracetamol, with antibiotics & medicated lozenges only helping to “reduce pain by small amounts”.

MHR consultation

BY THE end of 2018, all Australians will have a My Health Record (MHR) unless they choose otherwise, prompting the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) to open a public consultation aimed at creating guidelines for pharmacists around its use.

The PSA invites input from all stakeholders including all health professionals, consumers and government bodies. Visit psa.org.au for details.

MedsASSIST shutdown

A REMINDER that MedsASSIST will be discontinued nationally from 10 pm Australian Eastern Daylight Time, tomorrow Wednesday 31 January.

All of the medicines recorded in the MedsASSIST system will shift to prescription only from 01 Feb, and the system will become redundant at that time.

The MedsASSIST clinical decision support tool has recorded over 11 million transactions since it was introduced in Mar 2016. The number of pharmacies voluntarily using MedsASSIST peaked at around 70%.

The Guild thanks the thousands of pharmacies that have used MedsASSIST so effectively since its introduction.

The focus now will be on assisting patients through the transition, and urging the swift introduction of real-time recording for prescription medicines.