

New Osteoporosis screening program

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UK cannabis tick

CANNABIS-DERIVED medicinal products will be rescheduled in the UK from 01 Nov, after which specialist doctors will be legally able to issue cannabis prescriptions for dispensing by pharmacists.

An amendment to the UK's Misuse of Drugs Regulations was detailed to the British Parliament last week, but Home Secretary Sajid Javid emphasised that GPs would not be able to prescribe such items.

Cannabis-derived products must only be prescribed "when the patient has an unmet special clinical need that cannot be met by licensed products," according to the updated regulations.

New anxiety CM

MENARINI has launched Seremind, a new lavender oil-based over-the-counter treatment which it says has been "clinically tested to relieve symptoms of mild anxiety, nervous tension and improve sleep quality in adults".

Seremind contains Silexan, a patented lavender oil claimed to "help restore balance to hyperactive nerve cells".

Menarini released details of a new Australian Anxiety Report which found two-thirds of people don't seek help for mild anxiety due to the side-effects of medication.

The study also found more than 90% of those suffering mild anxiety had experienced symptoms in the previous four weeks.

National pharmacy vax plan

STATE and Territory Health Ministers from across the country have taken a key step towards the establishment of a nationally consistent approach to pharmacist administered vaccination.

At the COAG Health Council meeting in Adelaide last week, pharmacist vaccination was one of the top agenda items, with attendees agreeing to harmonise current arrangements.

The Australian Health Protection Principal Committee has been formally tasked with "establishing a working group to consider and recommend options to COAG Health Council," according to a communiqué released after Fri's meeting.

The Pharmacy Guild of Australia welcomed the move, with National President George Tambassis saying "it makes great sense for Australians, regardless of where they live, to have the same option of accessing vaccinations conveniently and safely from their local pharmacist."

"We welcome the Ministers' support for the common sense position that there should be a uniform availability of such vaccination services across Australia," Tambassis said.

The Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) also applauded the Health Council's initiative "to build on the success of pharmacist vaccinations."

"Research has shown internationally and locally that pharmacists are considered highly accessible and they can boost vaccination rates, contributing to a reduced burden on our already over-burdened healthcare system," said PSA President Shane Jackson.

Jackson said it clearly didn't make sense that pharmacists can only vaccinate for meningococcal disease in Tasmania, and pertussis in some states such as South Australia, Victoria & Queensland.

He cited independent research commissioned by the Society which revealed that almost two thirds of Australians believed pharmacists should be able to administer a broader range of vaccinations.

The COAG initiative comes in the lead-up to an expansion of the vaccination scope of pharmacists in Vic, who from later this month will be able to administer the Measles Mumps Rubella (MMR) vaccine - more details on **page two**.

Mandatory reporting

THE COAG Health Council has approved the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Amendment (Tranche 1A) Bill, which includes new mandatory reporting provisions and other changes including the introduction of custodial sentences for people who falsely hold themselves out to be a registered health practitioner.

The ministers said the mandatory reporting amendments should also give practitioners who are unwell the confidence to seek treatment.

Who is Arrotex?



THE ACCC-approved merger of generic medicines giants Arrow Pharmaceuticals and Apotex Australia & NZ last month (**PD** 21 Sep) has created a challenge in the creation of a single joint name that reflects the original company nomenclature.

While obvious choices for the new company might look like Arrotex or Arrowtex, companies with those names already exist, in the form of a US wholesale building supply firm and a New York Stock Exchange-listed textile company respectively.

A recent Blooms The Chemist conference saw the new company present and toss some ideas around according to an un-named Blooms member pharmacist.

Arrotex Pharma or Arrotex Pharmaceuticals are unconfirmed front runners but the final decision still remains to be announced.

Humira biosimilar

NOVARTIS has announced that its generic division Sandoz is now free to market its tumour necrosis factor (TNF) inhibitor medicine adalimumab branded Hyrimoz, biosimilar-referenced to AbbVie's Humira.

The company said that it now has global resolution of all intellectual property related litigation with AbbVie with an agreement that sees Sandoz paying AbbVie royalties.

Pharmacies For Sale

The Voluntary Administrators invite offers for the purchase of pharmacies operated by the Country Wellness Group in Melbourne, Brisbane and Darwin.

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PSS overseas exploration



PHARMACISTS' Support Service (PSS) Executive Officer Kay Dunkley recently visited the UK to meet some of her foreign counterparts at the International Practitioner Health Summit 2018.

Themed "The Wounded Healer," the London conference included a presentation by Dunkley on the findings of the Australian National Stress and Wellbeing Survey of Pharmacists (PD 28 Aug 2017).

The Wounded Healer Summit also featured initiatives across a wide range of health professions, including medical, dental, nursing, pharmacy, veterinary and allied health professionals.

Themes included resilience and healthy workplaces, mindfulness, the emotional impact of caring, burnout, mistakes, complaints and blame, mental health management, addiction, impairment and management by regulators and suicide in health professionals.

While in the UK, Dunkley also attended the Pharmacy Show in Birmingham, where she interacted with delegates and exhibitors including the British Pharmacy Students Association and the Pharmacists Defence Association, as well as attending sessions on

contemporary pharmacy practice within the United Kingdom.

The trip also included a meeting with the UK Pharmacist Support staff at their Manchester offices.

She is pictured with the team, following a briefing on their programs and services which include the development of well-being seminars for pharmacists, marketing and fundraising, involvement of volunteers and charity management.

Cannabis for MS

MEDICINAL cannabis appears to be safe to use among people who have multiple sclerosis, but its actual benefit may be limited, according to a systematic review and meta-analysis of 17 randomised clinical trials involving 3,161 patients.

Autonomous University of Barcelona researchers found an overall mild effect on muscle spasms, pain, and bladder dysfunction in patients with MS, although the side effect profile was significantly greater than that for placebo in studies.

Access the Barcelona research at jamanetwork.com.

Vic MMR jabs next week

PHARMACISTS in Victoria will be able to immunise patients with the MMR vaccine from next Mon 22 Oct, with the age of access for pharmacist vaccinations in the state also lowered to 16 years.

The move was announced two months ago (PD 13 Aug 2018) and a joint communiqué from the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia, the Pharmacy Guild and the Victorian Department of Health & Human Services has provided further detail around the plan.

Victorian pharmacist immunisers will be authorised to administer the vaccine to individuals aged 16 and over, but the update notes they are not authorised to provide the vaccination for travel purposes, hospital inpatients or people with contraindications defined in the current edition of the *Australian Immunisation Handbook*.

Pharmacist immunisers in Vic will also be authorised to administer influenza and pertussis vaccines to people aged 16 and over, with consent from a parent or guardian required for those under 18.

Pharmacists are expected to maintain competency through continuing professional development, and must report

all vaccines administered to the Australian Immunisation Register.

The Victorian Government noted that "pharmacists play an important role in the delivery of opportunistic immunisation, and improving access to vaccinations for people who are most at risk of complications from some preventable diseases".

Guild hails Labor support for tax cuts

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia has welcomed the Federal Opposition's commitment to accelerating tax cuts, with the ALP confirming on Fri it would support government tax cut legislation.

The Labor Party announcement ensures the passage of laws which will see businesses turning over up to \$50 million annually have their tax rate reduced to 25% by 2021/22.

Guild Executive Director David Quilty said the bipartisan move would benefit community pharmacy small businesses across the country, providing certainty as they make decisions on staff hiring and investing in their businesses to support patients and communities.



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Dispensary Corner

HOW good is red wine for you? Many health experts suggest a glass of red plonk every now and again can be beneficial to your body on account of its quantity of the antioxidant Resveratrol.

But how red are you prepared to go? A budding Rwandan entrepreneur by the name of Assumpta Uwamariya has started cultivating beetroot wine, a concoction that has proven popular with several countries so far - including Germany.

"I don't know how my wine got there, but a German tourist told me that they tasted my wine and started ordering from me afterwards," Uwamariya said.

We're not entirely sure if the health benefits of beetroot wine stack up to the red grape variety, however we're willing to hear this guy out so long as we never see anyone create a kale goon bag!



AUSTRALIAN comedian Adam Hills has thrown down the charity gauntlet by suggesting he will have a live prostate exam if he raises enough money during "Stand Up To Cancer" this year.

"I'll be honest, I've suggested a live prostate exam on air, and it seems to have been shot down, but if there's enough of a groundswell behind it, if people donate enough money, I will have a live prostate exam," Hills said.

Alcohol labels pregnancy warning

ALCOHOL manufacturers will now be required to label their products with warning labels highlighting the risks of drinking while pregnant.

The proposal, supported by Australian and New Zealand ministers, was spearheaded by the Western Australian government and supported by health professionals and public health lobbyists.

The requirements aim to target the disappointing relatively high drinking rates among pregnant women in Australia and reduce dire complications such as Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

The mandatory labelling for alcohol products sold in Australasia, which will be developed by Food Standards Australia New Zealand in consultation with industry, will include a pictogram and warning statement.



The future is precise

AUSTRALIA'S Chief Scientist, Alan Finkel, has highlighted the rapid development of Precision Medicine in an "Occasional Paper" on the topic issued last week.

Finkel noted that advances in science and technology are "clearing the way to what medicine has always aspired to provide: person-specific, custom-fit care".

Precision Medicine is a term which captures the collective impact of advances in genomics, data science and computing, drawing on a report produced by Australia's Learned Academies.

The paper notes that the cost of sequencing a genome has fallen from over \$100 million less than 20 years ago to just \$1,000 today, making the technology far more accessible to labs and clinics.

Technologies accelerating biomedical research are also transforming bedside care, with more targeted treatments and more timely and accurate diagnostic tests.

Hundreds of cancer patients are already receiving customised therapy based on genome analysis, while metabolic defects are being identified in newborn babies more rapidly and accurately than ever before, the report states.

Finkel emphasised the importance of public policy in guiding the healthcare transition, with Precision Medicine able to ensure that Australian life expectancies remain among the highest in the world.

See chiefscientist.gov.au.



Weekly Comment

Welcome to Pharmacy Daily's weekly comment feature. This week's contributor is **Dr Ross Walker**, Cardiologist.



Cardiovascular disease - still the number one killer (Part 2)

IN MY practice, based mainly on the 20 year study from Harvard university demonstrating a 44% reduction in hard cardiovascular end points, I suggest all my patients take a daily multivitamin. A meta-analysis from the January 2017 Mayo clinic proceedings showed an 18% reduction in cardiovascular events for those people who took omega three supplements for five years or longer.

I have been involved in multiple studies of bergamot polyphenols demonstrating significant benefits on the lipid profile, improvements in diabetes and fatty liver and a reduction in statin dosage when used synergistically with the Bergamot extract.

There are published papers demonstrating a reduction in muscle pain and weakness when ubiquinol is added to statin therapy. Vitamin K2 is also showing promise in a number of published studies as an arterial decalcifier, along with improving bone strength.

Finally, kyolic aged garlic extract has been shown to improve blood pressure control as well as standard antihypertensive therapy, along with a one study demonstrating reversal of coronary artery disease with high doses of this garlic extract.

Surely with this strong evidence that has emerged over the past decade, the medical profession should be embracing integrative medicine.

Win with SkinB5

This week **Pharmacy Daily** & **SkinB5** are giving away each day the NEW SkinB5's Clear Skin Superfood Booster valued at \$63.90.

Skin wellness starts from the inside with skinb5's clear skin superfood booster. Your body responds to the goodness you put into it, and so does your skin. With the power of 63 premium nutritional ingredients, our uniquely formulated superfood booster is the all-natural supplement your skin will thank you for.

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