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## WA pharmacists to advise on VAD

**PHARMACISTS** will be included as part of an expert clinical panel to determine medication protocols for voluntary assisted dying (VAD) in Western Australia, Minister for Environment and Disability Services, Stephen Dawson, revealed.

Responding to questions about what medications and doses would be used for VAD in WA under legislation currently under review in the State Parliament, and how it would compare with the protocols in place in Victoria, Dawson said he had been advised not to comment on the Victorian model.

"In WA, the choice of lethal medication for a particular patient will be a clinical decision made by the coordinating practitioner from an approved list of schedule 4 (S4) and 8 poisons only."

It is a matter for the patient's coordinating practitioner.

A fully qualified medical practitioner with additional training on voluntary assisted



dying will determine what dosage and formulation they consider appropriate to make up the voluntary assisted dying substance.

"It is intended that as part of the implementation of the bill a clinical panel be convened to determine the S4 and S8 medication protocols suitable for voluntary assisted dying in WA.

"The clinical panel will also inform the operational requirements for supply, dispensing and ensuring

safe management of these medications.

"Further, it is expected that this clinical panel will include appropriate representation from pharmacy, medical and nursing experts from a health and clinical perspective."

Dawson flagged the establishment of a statewide pharmacy, operational procedures around care navigators and medical protocols, alongside a VAD Board.

## Today's issue of PD

*Pharmacy Daily* today has three pages of news plus a front cover wrap from Iberisig.

## Ice-fuelled fail

A **PHARMACY** in Canberra became a hiding place for a drugged person being pursued by police last Sun.

Tahlyia Helen Florence Hunter, 22, was granted bail when she appeared in the ACT Magistrates Court on Tue, after being charged with seven offences.

Trying to flee from police, Hunter had crashed the vehicle she was driving into a steel fence outside Westfield Belconnen shopping centre.

She and her accomplice ran from the vehicle and police found her hiding in the Guardian Pharmacy.

She admitted to having used ice and heroin that day.

## Looking to take your career in a new direction?

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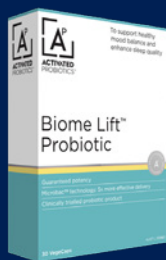
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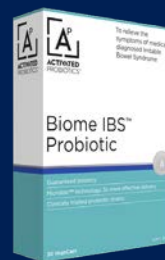
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## Fake drugs alert

**THE** Therapeutic Goods Administration has warned that Grakcu capsules contain sildenafil and tadalafil, pose a serious risk to health and should not be taken.

See details at [tga.gov.au](http://tga.gov.au).

## Rx opioids now causing more harm

**PHARMACEUTICAL** opioids are now responsible for far more deaths and poisoning hospitalisations in Australia than illegal opioids such as heroin, the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) reports.

As a consequence of the frightening data such as, nearly 150 hospitalisations and 14 emergency department admissions involving opioid harm, and three people dying from drug-induced deaths involving opioid use, the TGA was tasked by the Federal Government with helping tackle the problem.

A public consultation was set up and a total of 98 submissions were received from interested parties, indicating a strong level of interest in a regulatory response, the TGA said.

Several reviews and activities arose from the consultation:

- Smaller pack sizes will be

available for immediate-release prescription products

- Sponsors will need to include boxed warnings and class statements in their PIs for prescription opioids
  - Similarly CMI's will contain safety information and warnings as well
  - Approved indications for these products will also reinforce that opioids should only be used when other analgesics have proven not to be effective
  - Fentanyl in particular, as the strongest opioid in Australia, will have an updated indication list reserving its use for patients with cancer, patients in palliative care and those with exceptional circumstances.
- The TGA said it is in the process of communicating these changes to health professionals and consumers, encouraging the return



of unwanted opioids to pharmacies.

Products of concern are named as fentanyl, codeine, hydromorphone, oxycodone, morphine, tramadol, tapentadol, buprenorphine and methadone.

NPS MedicineWise offers pharmacists a Pharmacy Practice Review CPD activity - *Opioids: reducing harms from long term use*.

Participants working through this module receive a counselling checklist and practice tips for starting conversations with patients about opioid tapering - **CLICK HERE**.



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## Counselling parents on HPV vaccine

**THE** Federal Department of Health has posted information for parents around the human papilloma virus (HPV) vaccine, providing a useful counselling guide for health professionals.

HPV affects both men and women and is spread mainly by sexual contact.

"Without vaccination, 90% of adults will have a HPV infection at some point in their life.

"There is no treatment to get rid of HPV infection," the site states.

HPV may not always cause symptoms but can persist and cause some cancers or other serious illness.

The vaccination is a safe and reliable way to protect young people from getting a range of HPV-related cancers and diseases.

It involves getting two injections, six months apart.

Young people aged 12-13 can receive the HPV vaccine free of charge at school through the National Immunisation Program.

See more at [health.gov.au](http://health.gov.au).

## Investigate harassment

**WORKPLACE** relations specialist, Employsure, is urging business owners to investigate all sexual harassment claims in the wake of a recent Australian Human Rights Commission report (*PD 30 Oct*).

"Even if the incident took place out of hours, outside your workplace ... all claims must be properly investigated," the company said, noting one-in-three workers experienced sexual harassment.

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## Dispensary Corner

**WHEN** the bar is really low, any slight improvement is a cause for celebration, especially for asthma sufferers in Delhi, India, at the moment.

The air quality in Delhi and the national capital region has been so poor, the Supreme Court termed the situation as "worse than emergency", closed schools and issued a number of directives to curb pollution.

The day after the announcement, the situation improved slightly prompting the Central Pollution Control Board to record the pollution level of 397 as merely "very poor", better than the previous level of 474.

Light showers are anticipated along with some winds to reduce the danger level further.

**SEVEN** weeks separate us from Christmas Day, but even less to set up those jumbled decorations on the tree and through and on the house.

Did you know though that there is a protocol around your tree decorations?

A post shared on the *Mrs Hinch Made Me Do It* Facebook group reveals the perfect ratio for baubles and lights depending on the height of your tree.

For example a 5ft tree "should" have 120 bulbs and 40 baubles while a 7ft tree needs 400 bulbs and 75 baubles.

There's no discount for pharmacy trees and as far as we could ascertain, no penalties or disincentives for failing to comply - happy decorating.

## AI tackling opioid abuse

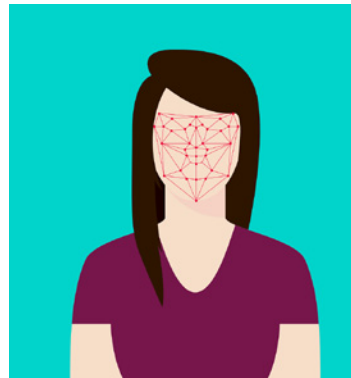
**MELBOURNE-BASED** startup, Strong Room, is providing facial recognition software to assist pharmacies offering opioid replacement therapy.

The company has integrated artificial intelligence (AI) into 35 Victorian pharmacies, to identify patients and minimise potential dispensing errors, business website *smartcompany* reports.

Strong Room co-founder, Max Mito, told the publication that the business had originally set up with the goal of integrating AI into healthcare more generally, but had shifted focus to facial recognition to meet the needs of pharmacists they had been working with.

"They just weren't happy with the industry standard [opioid replacement software]," he said. "We thought we could do a better job."

Strong Room's website said the use of facial recognition could cut hours for a pharmacist's day,



freeing them up to focus on patient care and improving outcomes.

The company said the system made it easier for locum and casual pharmacists to identify opioid replacement patients.

The system also provides patient alerts so pharmacists can keep track of patients who are expected to call in the following day, and those who have missed doses, while also allowing pharmacists create dynamic reports.

## Final year grads' provisional registration

**PHARMACY** students in their final year need to consider the requirements for their provisional registration before they can begin practising under supervision, or using the protected title, 'pharmacist', the Pharmacy Board of Australia says.

In a useful posting, the Board has clarified its requirements of provisional registration.

The Board needs documents relating to your criminal history, English language skills and professional indemnity insurance, along with graduate results from your education provider.



Plans for supervised practice arrangements need to be approved by the Board in accordance with its Registration standard: *Supervised practice arrangements before commencing your internship*.

A short video outlining the Board's requirements is available - **CLICK HERE**.

More details are summarised at [pharmacyboard.gov.au](http://pharmacyboard.gov.au).



## Travel Specials

**WELCOME** to *Pharmacy Daily's* travel feature. Each week we highlight a couple of great travel deals for the pharmacy industry, brought to you by *Travel & Cruise Weekly*.

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