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Electronic scripts from early 2020: ADHA

THE Australian Digital Health Agency expects to see electronic prescriptions start to become available as soon as the first quarter of 2020, after the recent release of the final "Technical Framework" for software vendors to implement the system.

Dated 31 Oct 2019, the Version 2.0 documents include an overview of the architecture of the "end-to-end national electronic prescribing framework".

"Electronic prescribing provides an option for prescribers and their patients to have a digital prescription as an alternative to a paper prescription," the release note states.

Electronic prescribing is not mandatory, and patients and prescribers will be able to choose electronic or paper prescriptions.

The architecture document notes that the implementation of electronic prescribing was identified as an "urgent priority" by last year's *Review of Pharmacy Remuneration and Regulation*, with the 2018 Federal Budget



including funding for upgrades to e-prescribing software to support the new prescription option.

It's envisaged that electronic scripts will be able to be used in all medicine supply settings where paper prescriptions are currently dispensed, including community pharmacies, public and private hospitals, residential aged care facilities and in-home nursing services.

Paper prescriptions may continue to be required in cases where state or territory legislation requires

additional handwritten wording - such as for S8 medicines in all states apart from WA.

The overall strategy commits to the full availability of "digitally enabled paper-free options for all medication management in Australia" by 2022.

Today's issue of PD

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

Diabetes app

FOLLOWING World Diabetes Day this week, GuildLink reminds pharmacists of its free patient-facing app myPharmacyLink, which can help pharmacists support patients living with diabetes as well as their families.

GuildLink CEO, Arun Sharma, said, "Through the Carer mode in the app, carers are able to not only manage the medications for the dependants they care for; they can also now order NDSS products for these dependants" - [CLICK HERE](#).

New Clear Cold Seals for Webster-paks

WEBSTERCARE has released Clear Cold Seal for its Webster-paks, claiming the product offers faster and more accurate checking, and makes it easier to change medications when required.

Registered pharmacist and Managing Director of Webstercare Gerard Stevens AM

said the product was created in response to customer demand for "something strong, durable and easy to check".

"Something so simple can make a huge difference when working under pressure and attending to many clients," Stevens added.

For order enquiries, phone Webstercare on 1800 244 358.

Accu-Chek product defect correction

HEALTH professionals are advised by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) that Roche Diabetes Care Australia, in consultation with the TGA, is undertaking a product defect correction for Accu-Chek Guide and Accu-Chek Performa blood glucose meters.

Unfortunately announced on World Diabetes Day yesterday, it has been identified that Accu-Chek Guide blood glucose meters with serial numbers lower than 92911000001 and Accu-Chek Performa blood glucose meters with serial numbers between

68920000000 and 68925525056 may have battery and power problems which could have clinical implications.

Consumers and health professionals are advised to visit tga.gov.au for guidance.

MEANWHILE the TGA has issued a warning about De2Xy capsules, which have been found to contain the laxative Bisacodyl.

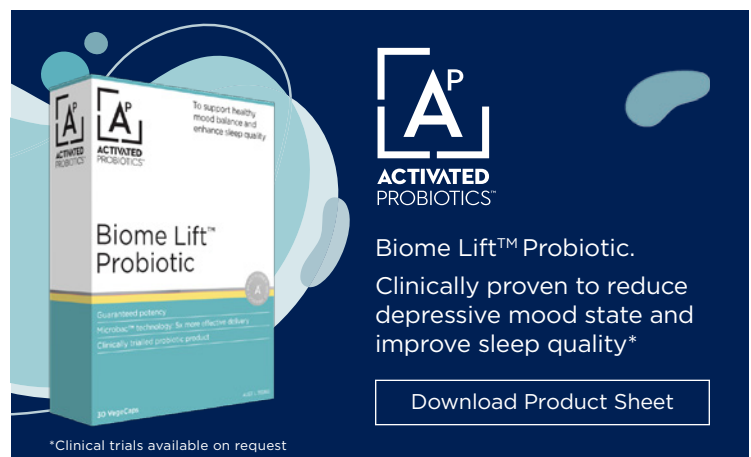
In addition the TGA warns consumers against using the illegal injectable tanning products Melanotan-I, Melanotan-II, which are associated with a wide range of serious side effects - tga.gov.au.



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UK's ethnicity pay gap

BRITAIN'S major pharmacy chains are questioning the results of a survey that found a 15% gap in pay between caucasian community pharmacists and those from different ethnic backgrounds.

The *Pharmaceutical Journal's* annual salary and satisfaction survey, published in Sep, revealed the disparity in pharmacists' earnings based on racial lines, across the pharmacy sector.

When contacted by the publication, four of the largest groups - Boots, Rowlands, LloydsPharmacy and Well Pharmacy - said they were not aware of an ethnic pay gap, however, they noted they did not publish any data on the issue.

A spokesperson for LloydsPharmacy told the *Journal* that it did not hold complete "ethnicity data" on its employees "so we are not able to perform analysis of any statistical significance".

"We do not believe that an ethnicity pay disparity is an issue among our pharmacist population," the spokesperson said.

A spokesperson for the Phoenix Group, the owner of the Rowlands group, said the *Journal's* findings



showed that "community pharmacy as a whole appears to have a notable ethnicity pay gap".

"We are continuing to review and further enhance our colleague demographic data and regularly discuss workforce metrics internally to identify potential areas of focus for action," the spokesperson said.

The *Journal* noted that all four groups said they were committed to ensuring their employees were paid fairly in accordance with their role, skill-set, experience and location.

Under British law there is no requirement for businesses to report on ethnicity and pay, however, a Government consultation is reviewing the matter.

Antibiotics overused in aged care

NEARLY 65% of aged care facility residents recently prescribed antibiotics had no documented signs or symptoms of a suspected infection in the week before they started treatment, according to the latest Aged Care National Antimicrobial Prescribing Survey, published in *Australian Prescriber*.

The report said that on any given day, almost 10% of residents in aged-care homes in Australia are using an antibiotic, but only around 3% have any signs or symptoms of infection.

Further, over a quarter had been using antibiotics for longer than six months.

The release of the report comes just ahead of World Antibiotic Awareness Week 18-24 Nov.

National Centre for Antimicrobial Stewardship Associate Professor Noleen Bennett said antibiotics are valuable in aged-care homes to treat infections and reduce the elevated risk of complications.

"However, many people are using antibiotics for much longer than is needed to treat an infection, or even using them to



prevent infections.

"This puts them at risk of developing infections that become resistant to antibiotics.

"As resistant bacteria can spread from person to person, this puts other residents at risk."

The survey, funded by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care, showed that in aged-care facilities, it is often not recorded why an antibiotic is being used, when it was started, when it should be reviewed and when it should be stopped, Bennett said. "This information should be kept up-to-date and available to all relevant medical staff and carers," Bennett said.

She added that aged care facility staff, residents and their families need education about antibiotic use to effect change.

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Dispensary Corner

EATING more carrots is the solution to Delhi's worst-ever pollution crisis, according to India's Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Science and Technology, Earth Sciences Dr Harsh Vardhan.

The Minister took to Twitter to provide an interesting piece of advice: "Eating carrots helps the body get Vitamin A, potassium, & antioxidants which protect against night blindness common in India. Carrots also help against other pollution-related harm to health."

Taking a slightly different approach to the problem, the Minister of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Information & Broadcasting Prakash Javadekar tweeted this gem: "Start your day with music".

The reaction, unsurprisingly, was one of derision, with Twitter users joking that the Government's plan was to enforce the use of carrot masks and carrot nostril plugs to stave off the effects of pollution, while more serious responses urged the Government to take real action and included the use of #EnoughIsEnough and #BullshitNoMore hashtags.

New Delhi's air quality reached 900 last week on the Air Quality Index, an international metric used by public health officials that accounts for a range of major air pollutants, with anything over 100 considered unhealthy.

Watering eyes, a persistent cough and a dull headache are among the symptoms reported by Delhi citizens.

Montgomery's stellar career

AFTER 27-years with Corum Health, IT specialist Ken Montgomery (pictured) has announced his retirement, effective 13 Dec.

An experienced pharmacist, Montgomery joined Lockie Computers in 1992 - just as the World Wide Web was in its infancy.

Lockie became Pharmsol, and then in turn, Corum Health.

Throughout his career Montgomery has been focused on serving customers in technical support, deployment, training, product design and quality.

His specialisation in enterprise systems has been essential to the success of Corum's RPM Head Office product and will reflect within Corum's future enterprise systems, the company said.

Corum CEO David Clarke said



Montgomery was well respected in the industry for his knowledge and commitment to pharmacy.

"Ken is highly regarded by his peers, colleagues and customers.

"His knowledge has been described as encyclopaedic.

"Ken has been a quiet achiever, and his contribution to pharmacy groups in Australia is a wonderful legacy," Clarke added, wishing him all the best in his retirement.

FDA Brukinsa OK

THE US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has granted accelerated approval to Brukinsa (zanubriunib) capsules for the treatment of adult patients with a type of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma called mantle cell lymphoma.

Clinical trials of the product showed 84% of patients saw tumour shrinkage with the therapy, which is only approved for people who have received at least one prior therapy.

The FDA's "Breakthrough Therapy" designation sped up Brukinsa's regulatory review.



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.

25 - 29 Nov: ASCEPT-PAGANZ 2019 Joint Scientific Meeting; Rydges Lakeland Resort, Queenstown, New Zealand; details and registration here: www.asceptasm.com

23 - 29 Jan: NAPSA Congress; University of Newcastle; for more info visit: www.napsa.org.au

19 - 22 Mar: APP 2020; Gold Coast Convention & Exhibition Centre; Early bird registrations now open: www.appconference.com

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