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Kids EpiPen shortages strike again

PHARMACISTS are being urged to manage their supplies of EpiPen Jr autoinjectors, with sponsor, Mylan, reporting shortages are likely to continue until at least 31 Jan.

Mylan informed the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) about the supply issues last week, following manufacturing delays being experienced by Pfizer subsidiary, Meridian Medical Technologies.

The TGA has described the patient impact of the shortages as "critical".

The Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA) has noted that patients requiring an EpiPen Jr should contact their local pharmacy, while pharmacists have been told "only one EpiPen Jr should be dispensed to each patient".

"Whilst the use of an expired EpiPen Jr adrenaline autoinjector is not ideal, research suggests that recently expired devices retain potency," the ASCIA said.

"Therefore, if no other EpiPen Jr autoinjector is available, use of a recently expired EpiPen Jr autoinjector to treat anaphylaxis is advised.

"To ensure those at risk of

anaphylaxis have access to the treatment they may need, supply should be restricted to patients with an EpiPen Jr prescription for a new diagnosis, or because their EpiPen Jr has expired or has recently been used.

"We also request that schools and early childhood education/care (ECEC) centres take into account the current supply issues, by not requesting additional EpiPen Jr devices to be brought to the school or ECEC centre for each child at risk of anaphylaxis, and to limit the replacement of general use devices at this time."

As previously reported medicines shortages reporting increased by 400% in the 2018/19 year (*PD* 06 Nov), with 1,455 shortage notifications made in the year to 30 Jun.

Currently more than 500 products are listed on the TGA's Medicine Shortages Information Initiative website, with 65 rated as "critical".

The TGA is anticipating supply shortages of a further seven products with a critical patient impact in the coming weeks.

Pharmacy Guild of Australian Victorian Branch President, Anthony Tassone, told *Pharmacy*



Daily that medicines shortages have plagued the sector in recent years.

"Supply issues and medicine shortages have been an ongoing problem and frustration for many years, and the Guild welcomed working with the Government in 2017 and 2018, which resulted in bringing in stronger reporting requirements for manufacturers at the beginning of this year," he said.

"However, reporting alone does not resolve the problem and we believe there is still more that must be done.

"We'd like to see the Government work again with key stakeholders, including pharmacists, prescribers and consumers, to consider what further needs to be done to improve the situation."

Today's issue of *PD*

Pharmacy Daily today has three pages of news plus full pages from:

- Iberisig
- Sigma Rewards

New program

HEALTH professionals including pharmacists will be eligible to take part in a new two-year education program announced by Minister for Regional Services, Decentralisation and Local Government, Mark Coulton.

The Allied Health Rural Generalist Workforce and Education Scheme will drive improvements in allied health recruitment and retention rates in the regions and provide professional development for allied health professionals.

Launching the program Coulton said a similar scheme was already operating in the state health system, but would expand to include rural private practice and non-government organisations, with the Government investing \$3.2 million for 40 scholarships.

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* 8 weeks clinical study. Dermatology 233(2-3); August 2017

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More ranitidine recalls - MHRA

THE UK Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has issued a drug alert saying that 13 OTC ranitidine brands are being recalled.

The ongoing world-wide problem relates to contamination with an impurity, N-nitrosodimethylamine (NDMA), a known potential risk factor for certain cancers.

North Qld store robbed

EMPLOYEES at a pharmacy in northern Queensland were threatened at knife-point by a thief demanding prescription medications on Fri morning.

Queensland Police reported detectives from Townsville were investigating the incident at a pharmacy in a shopping centre on Ross River Road, Aitkenvale.

The suspect entered the store at 8.30am and produced a knife, the police reported.

"He has then threatened two



staff members, before demanding prescription medication," the Queensland Police media team reported.

"He fled via the rear door of the pharmacy with a large quantity of prescription drugs.

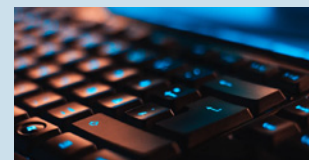
"The dog squad has been called to assist in locating the man who is described as of olive complexion and between 20 and 30 years of age."

MEANWHILE, a 47-year-old has been charged in relation to a robbery at a pharmacy in Innaloo, a northern suburb of Perth, Western Australia, earlier this month.

The suspect allegedly threatened staff in the pharmacy with a fake homemade gun, before making off with cash.

He was apprehended the following day and charged with armed robbery.

PBS webinar challenges



THE Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) improvements webinar held last Thu ran into some technical difficulties which took a long time to resolve.

The webinar itself was however completed and a recording will be available for on demand listening early next week, the PBS has said.

The presentation slides, transcripts and consultation documents will also be available at this time and a follow up news item will be published on the PBS website.

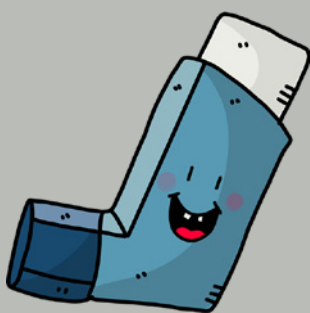
Managing asthma in the smoky haze

THE risk of an asthma flare up after exposure to fine particulate matter in smoke may be reduced by maintaining good asthma control, according to Discount Drug Stores pharmacist, Nicky Muscillo.

Discount Drug Stores is urging all Australians to take control of their breathing by checking their inhaler technique and medication through its free asthma clinics.

Running until 29 Nov, Discount Drug Stores' 'Make Every Breath Count' clinics will offer customers a free asthma control test and inhaler technique check by qualified pharmacists to ensure they are taking their medications correctly and receiving the full dosage.

"One in every nine Australians have asthma, but only 10 per cent of these patients have the correct technique when using



their inhaler," Muscillo said.

"With the fires having such a great impact on air quality, a quick refresh on how to best use your inhaler can be effective in improving the intake of medications, ensuring the optimal dosage is received."

"The main reason most asthma patients struggle to gain control over their condition is because of incorrect handling of their inhaler or puffer."

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Dispensary Corner

VANITY and laziness are a terrible combination, just ask any personal trainer - there are no shortcuts to the perfect body.

If only former Russian soldier turned bodybuilder, Kirill Tereshin, had heeded the advice in his bid to bulk up.

The 23-year-old has been forced to have surgery on his arms, which may need to be amputated, after his plot to boost his biceps backfired.

Tereshin's shortcut to bulging biceps involved injecting petroleum jelly into his upper arms.

The idea appeared to have paid off, as his arms looked like Popeye's after a tin of spinach.

However, the plan was plagued as the petroleum jelly spread in the muscles killing them, surgeon Dmitry Melnikov, who has completed one of four operations on Tereshin's arms, told media outlets.

"Petroleum jelly is not designed for injection, only external application," he said.

"Kirill injected about three litres into each arm.

"It saturated the muscle tissues, blocked blood flow and as a result the tissue dies and gets replaced with a scar which is as tough as a tree.

"I think Kirill did not fully realise the consequences of what he had been doing."

Melnikov said petroleum jelly was frequently injected as part of "cosmetic treatments" in Russia.

Hopefully Tereshin's story will make others think twice.

Not so jolly Roger

MAYNE Pharma Chairman and former Woolworth's CEO, Roger Corbett, has expressed disappointment at the company's financial performance in 2019.

Addressing shareholders in Melbourne on Fri, Corbett noted the generic drug brand's share price slumped 45% over the last 12 month.

While Corbett said he was disappointed with the company's stockmarket performance he said it was following a trend across the generics sector.

"Mayne Pharma's recent performance is in line with many of US generic peers, which have also seen their share prices fall materially and report declining sales and earnings, and material impairments of their generic intangible assets," he said.

"Teva, the largest generic company globally has seen its share price fall 82% over the last five years.

"Mylan, the second largest generic company (which has recently announced a merger with Pfizer's UpJohn business) has seen

Opioid trials

US PHARMACY chains, CVS, Walgreens and Rite-Aid are set to face legal action as part of the nationwide opioid litigation.

The pharmacy groups will go on trial in Oct 2020.



its share price fall 69% over this same period.

"The declining share price performance has been largely due to the disruption we have seen in the US generic industry, which has been driven by customer consolidation and the increased speed of approvals through the US Food and Drug Administration."

Corbett told shareholders that Mayne had taken steps to "better align" the business, "streamlining generic drug development" and "abandoning non-viable products".

Win with freezeframe

This week Pharmacy Daily and freezeframe are giving readers the chance to win NEW WRINKLE BLOCK valued at \$69.

WRINKLE BLOCK blocks visible expression wrinkles up to 78% in 30 minutes without paralysing muscles. This fast-acting anti-ager delivers a near 40% wrinkle and 76% eye bag reduction in just 7 days. 2 powerful peptides simultaneously slow down expressions whilst charging skin with the energy to bounce back. Visit freeze-frame.com.au for more.

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

Name the 3 benefits of WRINKLE BLOCK after using it for 7 days.

Check here tomorrow for today's winner.



Weekly Comment

Welcome to Pharmacy Daily's weekly comment feature. This week's contributor is **Rachelle Frain, GM, myPak Solutions.**



Grow professional services without extra staff

THE Royal Commission's Interim Aged Care findings described the 'nature of residential care (as) dispiriting'. Many elderly are now looking for other options. As Australia's most trusted healthcare professionals, pharmacists are ideally placed to help them stay in their communities for longer.

Is your pharmacy ready to care for more elderly polypharmacy patients? myPak Solutions complete DAA solution helps you help them.

Our cutting-edge software, quality consumable blister packs and surprisingly compact Alpaca robot not only streamline and build DAA services, our complete solution also helps grow overall professional services.

One customer I mentioned last week grew DAA's without increasing staff, 'by 50% in the first year and more than 300% over 3 years'. I should have invested in technology 5 years earlier!'

Powered by myPak Solutions automation and software, our most recent case study reveals DAA packs grew 37% after 6 months. This customer commented 'It's a no brainer!'

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