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Evidence favours pharmacist Rx

SUGGESTIONS that financial interests will supersede patient safety if pharmacists are empowered to prescribe, do not match the reality in jurisdictions where prescribing is part of pharmacists' scope of practice, a Queensland-based research says.

Writing in *The Conversation*, University of Queensland Primary Care Clinical Unit Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Greg Merlo, said arguments proffered by former Federal MP and general practitioner, Dr Kerryn Phelps, that allowing pharmacists to prescribe would lead to negative patient outcomes were unfounded.

"What Phelps is suggesting is that a pharmacist may manipulate a consumer into purchasing an unnecessary drug," Merlo said.

"When there is no information asymmetry, supplier-induced demand disappears.

"Paracetamol, for instance, is unlikely to be subject to supplier-induced demand despite direct

sale from pharmacists because consumers have experience of using the product regularly and understand its effects.

"[However] there is no reported evidence of inappropriate prescribing by pharmacists in any countries that have introduced regulated, controlled models of pharmacist prescribing."

Merlo, noted that while there was little to support claims that pharmacists were likely to prescribe inappropriately, studies in countries where doctors are able to dispense, showed evidence of financial profits influencing prescribing decisions.

"A Swiss study, for instance, found physician dispensing leads to a 34% increase in drug costs per patient, as doctors overprescribe and prescribe more expensive medications," he said.

"An evaluation of pharmacist prescribing in the UK found it was safe, clinically appropriate, and was generally viewed positively by



patients.

"Extending the scope of practice for pharmacists has the potential to lower costs to the health system because of fewer GP visits, be more convenient for consumers, and free up busy general practitioners to spend time on high-value care."

However, he noted pharmacist prescribing could see patients skip GP visits, cutting out opportunities for clinical interventions.

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today has three pages of news including our weekly **Health & Beauty** feature plus a full page from **Wizard Pharmacy Services**.

PBS improves

THE Federal Department of Health hosted an information forum via webinar to open consultation on Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) improvements and more but had technical difficulties on the day (**PD** 25 Nov).

The recording of the webinar and forum is now available to move the consultation forward.

For those unable to watch the discussion live, **CLICK HERE** to register for the on demand recording and access the resource documents.

The consultation closes Tue 17 Dec - for more, pbs.gov.au.

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Pharmacy backs Gov on aged care

PHARMACISTS have voiced their support for the Federal Government's \$500 million cash injection into the aged care sector.

As part of the Government's response to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety Interim Report \$25.5 million has been set aside for medication management programs (**PD** yesterday), in an effort to reduce medication misadventure and curb the use of chemical restraint in residential aged care facilities.

The fresh funding has been welcomed by Australian Association of Consultant Pharmacy (AAPC) Chair, Dr Stephen Carter, who noted that while medication management reviews (MMRs) were only part of the structure to improve quality use of medicines in the sector, the additional funding "could only benefit the health care teams caring for older Australians".

"As one of the major credentialing bodies for accrediting pharmacists to conduct remunerated

medication reviews in this country, the AACP supports this funding increase and stands ready to work with government as it implements changes to the current medication management programs to ensure the safe and appropriate use of medicines, and improved health outcomes for all older Australians," Carter said.

SHPA CEO, Kristin Michaels, also backed the Government's commitment, but flagged concerns that pharmacists' advice was not acted upon by prescribers.

"Investment to improve access to Residential Medication Management Reviews (RMMRs) for aged care residents is welcome," she said.

"We are mindful, however, that research shows, in many cases, the majority of pharmacy recommendations made through RMMRs do not translate into action by prescribers."

Michaels said pharmacists in specialty geriatric roles were



uniquely positioned to determine if antipsychotic medicines prescribing is appropriate, and recommended that pharmacists be embedded into aged care teams.

"Looking beyond the Royal Commission, the fact remains most aged care facilities do not have a pharmacist on staff, despite research consistently finding beneficial outcomes from the provision of clinical pharmacy services," she said.

"SHPA will continue to advocate for investment in clinical pharmacy services for aged care residents so pharmacists can identify and manage medication-related issues and reduce harm."

ADHD omega-3

CHILDREN with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) treated with omega-3 fish oil supplements improved focused attention and vigilance in new research - [nature.com](https://www.nature.com).

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 WA to send the correct answer to the question to comp@pharmacydaily.com.au

How many peptides are in WRINKLE BLOCK and what are their actions?

Congratulations to yesterday's winner, Lauren Moran.

Permissible Ingredients up

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration has approved six new ingredient entries and changed 34 existing entries on the Permissible Ingredients list.

The most common entry changes relate to alignment of gluten requirement with labelling orders - [tga.gov.au](https://www.tga.gov.au).

APP2020 speaker announcement

NEXT year's Australian Pharmacy Professional (APP) Conference in Mar 2020 will see two key business performers take to the stage and engage with community pharmacists.

Former Kmart turnaround CEO and Senior Advisor to Wesfarmers, Guy Russo (pictured right), will share insights on growth strategies and more.



Advantage Group CEO, Steven Kastrinakis, will join him on stage to discuss how these strategies relate to community pharmacy.





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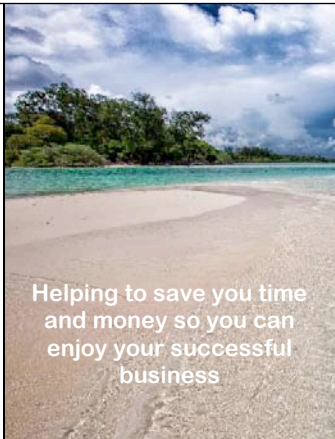
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Dispensary Corner

A QUICK-THINKING

pharmacist has heroically spared a reality TV presenter's blushes after she experienced an in-store wardrobe malfunction.

Ireland's Fittest Family coach, Anna Geary, and staff at her local pharmacy got the shock of their lives when her blue and black wrap dress tie came undone leaving little to the imagination.

Thankfully, the pharmacy staff were able to prescribe an ideal solution to her problems and save her from prying-eyes - a humble safety-pin.

"So, fun fact of the day," she said in an Instagram post.

"I was walking into a chemist this morning, looked down and suddenly realised that my dress had snapped. You know the wrap over?"

"I walked into the chemist and, thankfully, I'm wearing a vest top and tights, completely just blowing in the wind.

"Thank God I had a coat. Safety pins — hero product."

Geary laughed off her wardrobe woes, saying, "if you didn't laugh you'd cry".

"These kinda things just seem to happen to me," she said.



Codeine poisonings drop

THE rescheduling of all codeine-containing products as prescription-only medications from 01 Feb 2018 has been associated with a 53% drop in codeine-related presentations at a major Brisbane hospital's toxicology unit, according to research published in the *MJA*.

A total of 2,235 patients presented to the Princess Alexandra Hospital with poisoning during the 12 months preceding the rescheduling of codeine, and 2,516 during the subsequent 12 months, a 13% increase, wrote the authors, led by toxicologist, Dr Keith Harris.

"However, the number of codeine-related presentations was 53% lower during the second period," they wrote.

"The numbers of presentations involving 30mg codeine products, the status of which was unaffected

by rescheduling, were similar for the two periods.

"In contrast, the number of presentations involving codeine products affected by the change (< 30mg) was 85% lower after rescheduling (111 presentations before, 17 presentations after rescheduling).

The decline was not associated with a rise in alternative opioid-related presentations, Harris said.

The authors also found about 90% of the products ingested were paracetamol co-formulations.

"In summary, rescheduling of codeine-containing products was associated with a significant reduction in codeine-related presentations to our clinical toxicology unit without the number of alternative opioid-related presentations increasing."

Veterans MATES diabetes self care

VETERAN'S MATES has highlighted the benefits of the Annual Diabetes Cycle of Care, which provides a systematic approach for early assessment of diabetes related complications.

Analysis of the Australian Government Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) health claims data reveals many DVA patients with diabetes have not had claims for management plans or routine diabetes checks.

Despite the benefits, only one-fifth of DVA patients with diabetes had a claim for an Annual Diabetes Cycle of Care and one third had a claim for a GPMP - veteransmates.net.au.

NEW PRODUCTS

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