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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today has three pages of news plus a full page from APP 2020.

APP speaker

FORMER Australian of the Year, Rosie Batty AO, will give the Ann Dalton Address at the Australian Pharmacy Professional Conference (APP) on the Gold Coast on Sat 21 Mar.

[CLICK HERE](#) for more on APP.

Travel vax package not enough

QUEENSLAND'S move to expand the range of vaccinations that pharmacists can administer is a "first step", but "does not go far enough", the State branch of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia believes.

Responding to Queensland Health's announcement that pharmacists in the state will be able to administer a range of travel vaccinations to patients age 16 years and older, and the decision to lower the minimum age for patients receiving influenza vaccines from



pharmacists to 10 years (*PD* yesterday), Queensland Guild Branch President, Trent Twomey, said the change would help build herd immunity.

However, he added that access to a more comprehensive package of measures was needed to deliver a drastic improvement.

"A comprehensive travel medicines program needs to include all travel vaccinations to 10 years of age, relevant antibiotics and antimalarials and other agents for conditions such as altitude illness, venous thromboembolism and jet lag," he said.

"Our strategic advocacy has got us to this point, but there is more

work to be done."

With an increase in the number of vaccine-preventable diseases being reported in the State, Twomey said the Guild would work with Queensland Health Minister, Dr Steven Miles, to ensure a comprehensive travel medicines and vaccination program is rolled out across the State.

He also noted Queensland's 2019 flu season was the worst in close to 20 years, adding that with the global coronavirus outbreak the 2020 season was likely to be significant, and pharmacists would play to help build "community immunity" through in-store immunisation services.

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What is your pharmacy's risk of cyber attack? **FRED**

Aged care meds safety

AUSTRALIA is playing a game of Russian roulette with the use of medicines in aged care, research published today by the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) states.

Launching the *Our Medicine Safety: Aged Care* report in Canberra this morning, PSA National President, Dr Chris Freeman, said the issues around inappropriate use of medicines in the aged care sector needed to be "tackled without delay".

"The Royal Commission has shone a light on significant shortcomings in residential aged care," he said.

"Unfortunately, our report has found we are also neglecting vulnerable older Australians when it comes to protecting them from medicine-related harms.

"One of the most shocking findings of our report is that 20% of unplanned hospital admissions for aged care residents are a result of inappropriate medicines use."

Freeman noted half of all aged care residents are taking medications that cause sedation or confusion, and are increasing the risk of falls and injuries for many patients.

"Pharmacists are medicine experts and in collaboration with other health professionals and carers can help identify and diminish the risk of medicine side-effects and harmful interactions," he said.

"One way pharmacists already do



this is through medication reviews.

"Currently, these can generally only be conducted once every two years.

"When they are, nearly all aged care residents have at least one problem with their medicines and most have three problems.

"When it comes to protecting older Australians, we must support pharmacists to spend more time in aged care and enable them to conduct more frequent medication reviews and follow-ups.

"Pilot programs which have embedded pharmacists in the aged care team have achieved demonstrable improvements in medicine safety and quality use of medicines."

Providing a resident's perspective, Goodwin Aged Care resident, Jean Fry, said "every nursing home should have its own pharmacist to help maintain independence and safety regarding their medications".

WIN WITH AROMABABY

This week **Pharmacy Daily** & AROMABABY are giving away each day, a prize pack valued at \$39.95.

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To win, be the first person from WA to send the correct answer to comp@pharmacydaily.com.au

Congratulations to yesterday's winner Kaye Hazel.



Name 2 natural skin soothing ingredients used in AROMABABY

Blackmores profits slip

AUSTRALIAN Securities Exchange (ASX) listed health supplement brand, Blackmores, has reported a 55% dip in earnings before interest and tax, from its Australian and New Zealand (ANZ) business in the six months to 31 Dec, compared to the prior corresponding period.

Announcing its first-half financial results, Blackmores Chairman, Brent Wallace, noted revenue was down 5% to \$303 million, with revenue from ANZ business falling by 20% to \$115 million.

"Contributing to this decline was regulatory change in China, which impacted revenue in Australia and additional material and packaging costs," Wallace said.

The results were in line with a profit downgrade issued last week (*PD* 12 Feb), which flagged concerns over the potential impact the coronavirus could have on the business over the coming months.

Despite concerns over the impact increased manufacturing costs combined with other factors

including coronavirus will have on the second-half results, Wallace said the company's Board and new management team were "very confident and optimistic about the long-term future of Blackmores".

Wallace also confirmed the company's Directors had resolved not to pay an interim dividend in respect to the first-half.

Blackmores CEO, Alastair Symington, outlined four strategic priorities for the business, including leveraging manufacturing and partnerships to drive new growth in Indonesia and India, shifting away from its "Australia leads, Asia follows" approach, to focus on the "Modern Career Women in China" as a key consumer group, while building a "world-class organisation", and rejuvenating the brand in Australia.

"With our renewed strategy we are making clearer choices that set the business on a stronger footing for the long-term that will free the group to focus on what matters," he said.

Pharmacy Daily

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Dispensary Corner

WHEN patients present with symptoms of liver failure, excessive drinking can usually be assumed.

However, for one 61-year-old woman who had been placed on a transplant list, doctors' assumptions that she had an alcohol dependency issue were misguided, a study published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* revealed.

Despite the patient insisting she was not a drinker, she was ushered into an alcohol abuse treatment program, on the presumption she was being economical with the truth.

Adding weight to the theory the woman was a secret drinker with the result of a urine test, which showed the presence of a high concentration of alcohol, although she did not show any signs of being intoxicated.

The urine sample also contained sugar and yeast - two ingredients needed for fermentation, and lab tests found the yeast-rich urine became increasingly alcoholic when the sugars were allowed to ferment leading researchers to theorise that the woman was in fact a human brewery, with the yeast and sugars fermenting in her bladder, a condition known as "urinary auto-brewery syndrome".

The conclusion of the study did not specify if the woman had been subcontracted by Anheuser-Busch InBev to produce Budweiser, but we can only assume it would be an improvement on what is a piss poor beer.

Pharmacists' warnings ignored in US

CONCERNS that unreasonable expectations and high levels of stress experienced by pharmacists working for large US pharmacy groups are being glossed over by consultants under orders from senior management, *The New York Times* reports.

The paper has published several articles in over the last three weeks highlighting pharmacists' fears that they could be putting patients at risk by ignoring safety procedures, because they have been working in high stress environments (*PD* 03 Feb).

In its latest piece, *The New York Times* said pharmacists had told consultants working for Walgreens late last year that stress and unreasonable expectations had led to mistakes while filling prescriptions.

"When the consultants presented their findings at Walgreens's corporate offices this month, there was no reference to the errors and

little mention of other concerns the employees had raised," the article said.

"That's because senior leaders at Walgreens had directed the consultants to remove some damaging findings after seeing a draft of their presentation, a review of internal emails, chat logs and two versions of the report shows.

"In one instance, Amy Bixler, the Director of pharmacy and retail operations at Walgreens, told them to delete a bullet point last month that mentioned how employees "sometimes skirted or completely ignored" proper procedures to meet corporate metrics, according to the chat logs and the draft report.

"A slide detailing 'errors resulting from stress' was also removed."

Last week American Pharmacists' Association CEO, Thomas Menighan, said pharmacists were being set up for failure by the corporate pharmacy groups (*PD* 19 Feb).

"The weight of the potentially



dire consequences of filling the wrong prescription or missing dangerous drug interactions is crushing pharmacists, personally and professionally," he said.

"The solution comes from taking a hard look at how pharmacies are reimbursed and who profits from inadequate patient care."

MEANWHILE Australian pharmacists who may be experiencing stress or anxiety as a result of concerns over their workload can contact the Pharmacists' Support Service on 1300 244 910.

Pharmacy picks up script fraud

A PHARMACY'S decision to report a suspicious oxycontin prescription to police has landed the would-be patient with a \$2,500 fine.

Ballarat Magistrates' Court heard Lachlan Ronis, 28, had been prescribed the opioid to treat jaw pain.

Ronis pleaded guilty to presenting edited scripts for the medication and successfully presenting them at a pharmacy five times.

However, when he went to a different pharmacy in Jun 2019, a pharmacist reported him to the police, *The Courier* reported.

Ronis made full admissions



when interviewed by police, saying he had become addicted to using the drug to cope with his pain.

Magistrate, John Lesser, warned Ronis, who had a number of prior convictions, that he faced a custodial sentence "at some point" if he continued to break the law.

Oral health update webinar

PHARMACISTS are being invited to take part in a free oral health update webinar for non-dental health professionals, hosted by the Dental Hygienists Association of Australia on 19 Mar.

The hour and a half-long session will provide participants a list of key risk factors affecting oral diseases and enable them to identify appropriate oral health referral pathways for at risk patients.

The webinar will commence at 7pm AEST on 19 Mar.

CLICK HERE to register.

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