

4 ways to help build strong bones



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Use only as directed. Consult your healthcare professional if symptoms persist.

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today has two pages of news, plus a MIMS update.

Teething gel safety concerns

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) is being encouraged to consider a change of indication and/or rescheduling topical lidocaine gels, due to high numbers of reports of adverse reactions to products containing lidocaine when used to treat teething in infants and young children.

The authors of a paper published in the *Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health*, noted "there is a growing plethora of case reports identifying adverse reactions of varying severity and accidental ingestions associated with the use of lidocaine gels in young children and babies for treating teething and other oral conditions".

A literary review of studies investigating lidocaine, found lidocaine ingestion by children aged 3.5 years and younger had induced seizures, respiratory attacks and death.

The authors noted the US Food and Drug Administration no longer approved lidocaine gels for treating teething pain due to their associated risks.

They also called for appropriate health workers to be informed of the risks.

There are heroes in our midst: Guild

HERCULEAN efforts by pharmacists in bushfire-affected regions highlight the selflessness of many working within the pharmacy sector, Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President, George Tambassis (pictured), believes.

In a message to Guild members, Tambassis expressed his pride in hearing stories of pharmacists who have gone "above and beyond to help people and maintain front line services" in the face of numerous challenges.

"We have seen urgent medicine supplies delivered by boat, air ambulance, naval vessels, military helicopters, private vehicles under police escort and jet skis where necessary," he said.

"Mainstream news outlets have covered the courage and strength of a pharmacist owner in Malua Bay NSW who has opened his pharmacy and served patients despite losing his home to the fires.

"And the pharmacist in Narooma NSW who spent three days working with a doctor in an evacuation centre to maintain medicine supplies to patients while her own home was under threat.

"And I know there are countless other efforts, putting patient needs first, that have not been reported.

"Pharmacists, pharmacy staff, Guild Branches and wholesalers have worked together to solve seemingly insurmountable hurdles to get medicines to patients.

"There are heroes in our midst. My sincere thanks to all."

Tambassis told members

the widespread nature of the bushfire disaster - with the NSW Government declaring a State of Emergency and the Victorian Government declaring a State of Disaster - highlighted the need to expand and streamline the provisions under which pharmacists can dispense essential medicines during and in the immediate aftermath of crisis situations.

"As the recovery efforts from these catastrophic bushfires commence in the coming days, weeks and months, we will be focusing our efforts on achieving this objective which we have advocated for many years," he said.

"Our objectives in relation to emergency supply can be summarised thus:

- An expansion of Emergency Supply provisions in all States and Territories to enable urgent supply of the smallest available manufacturer pack in the absence of a prescription; and
- An expansion of Continued Dispensing by the Commonwealth to allow urgent supply of all pharmaceutical benefits for long-term health conditions,



including extraordinary provisions to cover support during and following a natural disaster."

Tambassis urged members affected by the fires to contact their local branch if they have "any needs or concerns - be it medicine supply, financial pressure, clinical query or workplace-related".

"We want to help," he said.

The Guild has urged members looking to help those in bushfire-affected regions to make cash contributions to their local fire brigade, the Australian Red Cross, the Fallen Firefighters Fund or the St Vincent De Paul Society Bushfire Appeal.

Employers must support reservists

PHARMACY owners are being reminded of their obligations to staff members who may be called up by the Army Reserve as part of the Australian Defence Forces deployment in bushfire affected areas in NSW.

Following the decision to draft 3,000 reservists, Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President, George Tambassis, told members the Defence Reserve Service (Protection) Act 2001 made it an offence for an employer to discriminate against, disadvantage, hinder or dismiss an employee or prospective employee for rendering Defence service.

"The Act also requires employers to release employees who are Defence Reservists to

undertake Defence service," he said.

"The Act not only makes it mandatory for employers to release their reservists for service, but also for the required training to prepare them for that service."

Employers are entitled to payment for absent employees under the Employer Support Payment Scheme, to hire a replacement for the period the reservist is absent from their workplace.

The deployment includes the 4th Brigade from Victoria, the 5th Brigade from NSW, the 9th Brigade from South Australia and Tasmania, with specialist logistic elements of the 17th Brigade headquartered in NSW.

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Dispensary Corner

TRADITIONALLY the theory has been “an apple a day keeps the doctor away”, however, new research from the UK suggests a monthly dose of culture can increase life expectancy.

The study published in *The BMJ* found participants aged over 50 who attended “receptive arts engagements” such as trips to museums, concerts or theatres, at least once every few months had a 31% lower risk of dying in the 14 years after the study began, than those who did not.

Participants who had an annual dose of culture at a 14% lower risk of death at the follow-up period than those in the group who shunned the arts.

The authors noted that going to exhibitions and performances supported cognitive reserve, and promoted empathy, social perception, and emotional intelligence, which are all linked to a greater chance of survival.

“Arts engagement could help to reduce sedentary behaviours, which are well established predictors of cardiovascular health and immune function, and might also reduce risk taking behaviours,” they said.

“Arts engagement is linked to a greater sense of purpose in life, which is itself associated with better immune function and healthier behaviours.”

Attending religious ceremonies and eating out were also linked to increased longevity, so ditch the gym membership and go out more in 2020!

Cooler conditions give respite in Vic

CHANGING weather conditions in East Gippsland and north eastern Victoria, are allowing pharmacy owners to restore services in bushfire-affected areas after evacuations last week.

Pharmacy Guild of Australia Victorian Branch President, Anthony Tassone, told *Pharmacy Daily* yesterday that the Guild had been working with owners to coordinate deliveries from Community Service Obligation (CSO) wholesalers and logistics firm, DHL, via the Australian Defence Forces (ADF) and emergency command centre units.

“Today we have assisted a medicine delivery for Omeo Pharmacy via Bairnsdale and emergency unit escort – as well as arranging permits for re-entry of the proprietor back to the pharmacy after they were

evacuated late last week,” he said.

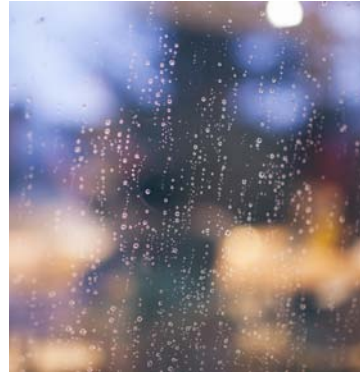
Tassone confirmed the pharmacy was reopened yesterday afternoon following the evacuation.

“Pharmacies in other areas that had to close momentarily over the weekend have been able to re-open including in Orbost and Bright,” he said.

“The pharmacy in Mallacoota is still relying on medicines being delivered via air and then boat due to lack of access of road routes in to and out of town.

“The camaraderie amongst pharmacy owners and pharmacist colleagues in and around the impacted communities has been brilliant – with pharmacy teams going above and beyond doing what they can for each other in the name of patient care.”

MEANWHILE, Capital Chemist Group Business Manager, Andrew



Topp, revealed the group had distributed 21,000 P2/N95 face masks over the weekend through its 21 stores in the ACT, with a further 10,000 distributed across the pharmacies in the Territory.

Topp also said the 100,000 masks from the National Medical Stockpile for at risk ACT residents has arrived at pharmacies yesterday.

Petrol bombs used in pharmacy attack

BRITISH police are investigating a petrol-bomb attack on a west Yorkshire pharmacy, the *Yorkshire Post* reports.

Police were called to the Heath Pharmacy in Halifax at 2:25am on Fri morning by local firefighters after two suspects smashed a panel in the store’s door before throwing two petrol bombs into the pharmacy.

Store manager, Amanda Smith, said a large floor mat soaked up most of the petrol, preventing the fire from spreading through the pharmacy.

“We will need to replace the shop floor and some of the fixtures and fittings,” she said.

“The main problem is the amount of soot covering everything.”



Following the incident staff members came in early to ensure the store could open a 9am.

Smith said the British community pharmacy sector has been struggling with reduced funding adding “this is a problem we could do without”.

“Pharmacies provide a vital health service to their local communities and we were determined to make sure we continued to provide that service and ensure no one went without medication,” she said.

Guild Update

Bushfire emergency update

WITH widespread bushfires having an unprecedented impact on pharmacies and patients in multiple States, pharmacists and pharmacy staff are urged to be aware of advice issued by the Department of Health before Xmas regarding the supply of medicines to patients in areas affected by natural disasters including bushfires. The full statement is available on the Guild website homepage at www.guild.org.au

New Products

- **Crisaborole (Staquis)** is a competitive inhibitor of cyclic adenosine monophosphate (cAMP) at the phosphodiesterase-4 (PDE-4) catalytic site resulting in increased intracellular cAMP levels. As a PDE-4 inhibitor, crisaborole suppresses inflammation and secretion of certain cytokines, such as tumour necrosis factor- α , from the peripheral blood mononuclear cells. Staquis is indicated for the topical treatment of mild to moderate atopic dermatitis in patients 2 years of age and older. Staquis ointment contains 20 mg/g crisaborole and is available in a pack size of 60 g.
- **Patiromer (sorbitex calcium) (Veltassa)** is a non-absorbed, cation exchange polymer that contains a calcium-sorbitol complex as a counterion. It increases faecal potassium excretion through binding of potassium in the lumen of the gastrointestinal tract. Binding of potassium reduces the concentration of free potassium in the gastrointestinal lumen, resulting in a reduction of serum potassium levels. Veltassa is indicated for the treatment of hyperkalaemia in adults. Veltassa powder for oral suspension contains 8.4 g patiromer and is available in a pack size of 30 sachets.

New Indications

- **Certolizumab pegol (rbe) (Cimzia)** is now indicated for the treatment of adults with active non-radiographic axial spondyloarthritis with objective signs of inflammation as indicated by elevated C reactive protein (CRP) and/or magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) change, who have had an inadequate response to, or are intolerant to, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs).
- **Dolutegravir (Na) (Tivicay)** is now indicated for the treatment of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection in combination with other antiretroviral agents in children over 6 years of age.
- **Progesterone (Oriprio, Utrogestan 200)** is now indicated for the prevention of preterm birth in singleton pregnancies at risk due to shortened cervix (midtrimester sonographic cervix \leq 25 mm) and/or where there is a history of spontaneous preterm birth.

New Contraindications

- **Fluorouracil (DBL Fluorouracil, Fluorouracil Ebewe)** must not be taken within 4 weeks of treatment with brivudine, sorivudine or their chemically related analogues.
- **Hydromorphone hydrochloride (Jurnista)** is now contraindicated with significant respiratory depression.
- **Progesterone (Oriprio)** is now contraindicated with ectopic pregnancy.

This list is a summary of only some of the changes that have occurred over the last month. Before prescribing, always refer to the full product information.