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Deprescribing role in memory clinics

PHARMACISTS could play a critical role in identifying unnecessary and inappropriately prescribed medicines among patients of memory clinics, researchers believe.

The paper published in *Research in Social and Administrative Pharmacy* found evidence to support a pharmacist-led deprescribing intervention for community-dwelling memory clinic patients, to combat the risk of medication-related problems.

The authors noted that deprescribing could reduce inappropriate medication use and potentially improve health outcomes for patients with impaired cognitive function.

The intervention involved accredited pharmacists obtaining a comprehensive medication history of all prescription and over-the-counter medicines used

by individual patients, before conducting a medication review to assess the clinical appropriateness of individuals' medication and with ability to manage their medications, assessing whether medications could be ceased or dosage changed, developing plans to initiate medication withdrawal and finally contacting the patient's GP to ensure receipt of the report and to discuss recommendations and offer ongoing assistance as appropriate.

Of the 46 patients who received the intervention, pharmacists made deprescribing recommendations for 43, and 124 medicines.

Vitamins and complementary medicines were the most frequently deprescribed (39.6%), potentially inappropriate medications of patients with a cognitive impairment (18.9%), cardiovascular medications (15.1%),



analgesics (15.1%) and proton pump inhibitors (5.6%).

Of the 261 recommendations made by pharmacists, 136 had been partially or completely implemented after six months, with participants who had medications ceased or doses reduced reporting a reduction in regimen complexity and self-reported dizziness, compared with those whose medication had remained the same post-intervention.

Today's issue of *PD*

Pharmacy Daily today has two pages of news.

Harvey refutes CMA claims

PUBLIC health and preventative medicines advocate, Dr Ken Harvey, has hit out at suggestions that a Channel 9 report on three complementary medicines failing Therapeutic Goods Administration lab tests, was "fake news" (*PD* yesterday).

Harvey noted TGA tests had shown prohibited substances had been detected in each of the products, with the sponsors cancelling their entries on the ARTG.

Complementary Medicines Australia CEO, Carl Gibson, has defended the claims.

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US supermarket pharmacies struggling

SUPERMARKET groups are pulling the pin on pharmacies across the US as the perceived convenience of picking up statins alongside a rotisserie chicken fades, the *Wall Street Journal* reports.

The supermarket model has been impacted by falling footfall as patients turn to online pharmacies dispensing 90-day supplies of prescription medicines, combined with the dominance of the big full-service



pharmacy groups, including CVS, Walgreens and RiteAid.

The paper reported the number of supermarket pharmacies fell for the first time in 2017, down from 9,344 in 2016 to 9,026.

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Dispensary Corner



SOCIALLY unacceptable, nail-biting is not a particularly pleasant habit, but few would think it could lead to a life-threatening illness.

However, life-long nail nibbler and ex-postie, Steven MacDonald, 48, is warning others against chomping down on their fingers, after one nail chewing moment left him fighting for his life.

The Scotsman developed a severe case of paronychia, which spread from his index finger up his forearm, before his fiancée took him to University Hospital Monklands, in North Lanarkshire.

Despite a large queue in the Emergency Department, MacDonald was rushed to the top of the queue when a doctor spotted his infected finger, and he was given a strong dose of antibiotics before being sent to Glasgow Royal Infirmary for emergency surgery to remove the infected flesh.

"They told us that if we'd left it even for a few hours longer he might have been dead," his fiancée told *The Scotsman*.

MacDonald said the experience had taught him a valuable lesson, and he urged fellow nail-biters to get a finger out and cut the habit.

"I'd never had a problem like it before, but it left me seriously considering life and death," he said.

"It's weird now that I'm not nibbling away at them, they're actually growing really fast.

"I keep joking that I might need to get myself down the salon for a manicure."

Wizard bushfire appeal

WESTERN Australian pharmacy group, Wizard Pharmacy, has raised \$20,000 for bushfire relief and recovery.

The funds will be donated to the Australian Red Cross and WWF Australia.

Wizard Pharmacy Chief Operating Officer, Sally Parker, said members of the group had felt compelled to give their support to people affected by the fires.

"Like all Australians, we're deeply saddened by the bushfires burning across our country and the devastating effect it has had on many communities, wildlife, our firefighters and the Australian landscape," she said.

"We will continue to monitor the situation and look out for further ways we can offer our help, whether that be now or further into the recovery period."

Pharmacy Guild of Australia, Pharmacy of the Year finalist, Wizard Pharmacy Kalgoorlie Central has also acted as a drop-off point for medical supplies donated to support those impacted by the fires.

Kalgoorlie Central pharmacist, Teeba Al-Mawab, said the store would continue to collect



donations, which will be transported across the country to affected areas, including Kangaroo Island.

"We will keep in touch and keep it going for as long as it needs to be done," she said.

MEANWHILE, Alliance Pharmacy has raised \$175,291 to support pharmacies affected by the fires, through its GoFundMe campaign (*PD* 14 Jan).

Member pharmacies collected \$68,215 through non-prescription sales across 50 stores on 16 Jan.

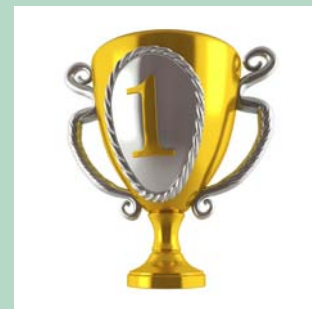
A separate GoFundMe appeal, launched by Queensland-based pharmacists, Joyce McSwann, Karalyn Huxhagen and Owen Mellon, has raised \$16,095, with funds to be distributed to support pharmacists in bushfire-affected areas as they reestablish their businesses (*PD* 10 Jan).

Wildcard winner

QUEENSLAND University of Technology's (QUT) Melinda James took out the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia's (PSA) Pharmacy Student of the Year (PSotY) Wildcard Title at the National Australian Pharmacy Students' Association (NAPSA) in Newcastle.

The QUT student saw off competition from Griffith University's Joshua Clements, University of Western Australia students, Kurtis Gray and Madeline Hills, LaTrobe University's Maegan Johnson and Curtin University's Antoni Ukalovic, to land the title.

James will compete for the national PSotY 2020 title at the PSA20 National Conference in Sydney later this year.



APP earlybird

PHARMACISTS have until Fri to secure earlybird registration for the Australian Pharmacy Professional Conference and Trade Exhibition 2020 (APP 2020) on the Gold Coast.

APP 2020 will host new special interest group sessions focused on aged care, travel medicines and pharmacist prescribing.

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