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## COVID experience key to education

**PHARMACY** training programs around the globe need to embrace the lessons learned during the COVID-19 crisis to ensure they are prepared for future pandemics, an International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) webinar heard last week.

University of Otago Associate Dean of Undergraduate Programs, Associate Professor Kyle Wilby, said there was a need to develop an "international consensus document" to determine "what it is that students can do in terms of clinical placements" during a pandemic and "at what level they may occur".

"As we move out of the acute COVID phase really what we really need to think about is sustainability, and its that aspect around workforce development and normalisation," he said.

"We hope that there's not a pandemic next year, that there's not a pandemic in five years, [but] we

don't know if that's going to happen or not.

"Now that we have this experience with COVID-19, I think it's really important that we build on that experience and come together as a profession [on student placements]."

He added the profession needed to consider how they assess students in the future.

"I've been working with [organisations in] a couple of different countries - we've talk a lot about virtual experiential rotations and assessment tools," he said.

"We need to adapt how we're assessing our students and that will really help with [getting] their buy-in and their confidence with out programs moving forward, so being assessed in our standard communication rubrics in a Zoom space... is not quite the same, and it could actually be disadvantaging them.



"So I hope that COVID-19 sparks a whole line of scholarships in Teaching and Learning, in terms of the types of assessments we're doing and looking at the different tools that we're using in order to assess students, whether it's difference in the clinical placements or in the online space in order to ensure they are really being validly assessed based on what they're actually trying to achieve."

## FDA test tick

**THE** US Food and Drug Administration has issued an "emergency use authorisation" for new tests and an at-home sample collection kit from Everlywell, which can be sent to specified laboratories for COVID-19 diagnostic testing.

## Today's issue of PD

**Pharmacy Daily** today has three pages of pharmacy news.

## TGA details 2020 flu vax makeup

**RECOMMENDATIONS** of the Australian Influenza Vaccine Committee in relation to the composition of egg-based influenza vaccines in Australia for the 2020 flu season have been accepted by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA).

This year the vaccines include a new A (H1N1) like virus strain, a new A (H3N2) like virus strain and a new strain for the B Victoria lineage.

All 2020 southern hemisphere seasonal influenza vaccines

available for use in Australia are quadrivalent, with approved product including FluQuadri (6 months and over) and Vaxigrip Tetra (6 months and over) from Sanofi-Aventis; GlaxoSmithKline's Fluarix Tetra (6 months and over); Influvac Tetra from Mylan Health (3 years and over); and Afluria Quad (6 years and over) & Flud Quad (65 years and over) from Seqirus.

The TGA said it would be closely monitoring adverse event reports during the 2020 flu vax program.

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\*Fussell A, et al., Eur J Med Res. 2000;5:385-390. Koetter U, et al., Phytother Res. 2007;21:847-851. Lataster MJ, et al., Notabene Medici. 1996;4:182-185. Nottter D, et al. Eur J Med Res.2003;3:9-13



## Getting messaging right on COVID-19

**PHARMACISTS** need to embrace behavioural medicine to get key health messages across to patients during the COVID-19 pandemic, experts believe.

Speaking during an International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) webinar last week, University of Auckland pharmacist and behavioural scientist, Dr Amy Chen, said the profession had a key role to play in combating misinformation about COVID-19.

"What happens during a healthcare crisis is there's a high risk of misinformation, and we know that misinformation has the potential to be as dangerous as a direct health consequence of COVID-19," she said.

Chen noted the World Health Organization (WHO) Director General, Tedros Adhanom, has described the social spread of scientifically inaccurate information around COVID-19 as an "infodemic".

To tackle the spread of misinformation, she urged pharmacists to consider how they express the risk posed by the pandemic, while stressing the need



to build trust and consider how the public perceives that threat posed by COVID-19.

Chen's University of Auckland colleague, clinical psychologist, Dr Liesje Donkin, told the webinar that advice from pharmacists "comes with a different layer of credibility", but she stressed that health professionals need to listen to the concerns of patients, and support them to understand the risks and causes of the virus, rather than arguing with them.

"Understanding where your patient comes from in terms of their attitudes is really important for improving outcomes," she said.

"There's quite a body of people

here [in New Zealand] reporting that COVID-19 is caused by the roll out of the 5G network - now if they believe it's cause by 5G they're unlikely to engage in handwashing and use personal protective equipment.

"People come to us with a very fixed set of beliefs that have come from their interactions with loved ones, what they've read in the media and through their interactions with health professionals.

"Unless we understand what their concerns are and what their perceptions of the illness are, we may miss what they think is important and they will switch off and not hear what we're saying."

### Online pharmacy demand surges

**ECOMMERCE** firm Storbie Limited says it has seen a 250% increase in demand for online pharmacy websites in Australia between Feb and Mar this year, as the COVID-19 pandemic started to make an impact.

The NZ tech company, which also hosts websites for one in every five Kiwi pharmacies, says surging demand means new sites are now having to be built within two to three days.

Since the start of COVID-19 lockdowns NZ traffic to Storbie

community pharmacy websites has increased by over 300%.

"Our experience during COVID-19 tells us all retailers will want an online presence to meet shopper demand and we expect this momentum to continue post lockdown," said Storbie CEO Shane Bartel.

"More consumers are becoming familiar with the benefits of shopping online and retailers will want an online presence to complement their physical stores well into the future," Bartel said.

### Delivery "threat"

**HOME-DELIVERED** pharmacy products will be a "tremendous threat to bricks-and-mortar pharmacies," according to Mark Fitzgibbon, CEO of ASX-listed health insurance company NIB.

Speaking to *The Australian* after addressing the Amazon Web Service Summit last week, Fitzgibbon foreshadowed a future where the elderly will "never run short of their pills and they will be reminded when to take them".

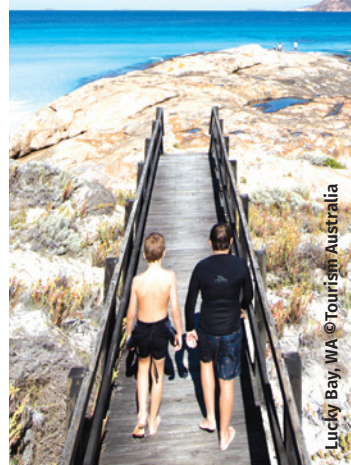
### Opioid cost

A **NEW** report from the National Drug Research Institute at Curtin University in Perth has estimated that illicit use of drugs such as heroin and unprescribed pharmaceutical opioids costs Australia about \$15.7 billion and causes over 2,200 deaths every year.

The report is the first national update on the cost of opioids in 13 years - [ndri.curtin.edu.au](http://ndri.curtin.edu.au).

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## Dispensary Corner

**THE** relaxation of social distancing rules in the USA has enabled some restaurants to reopen - but they're not allowed to be full.

An eatery in South Carolina partly reopened this week, and to ensure it complies with reduced capacity requirements, the owner is filling empty seats with blow-up dolls.

"Instead of using scary yellow tape or roping off the empty tables I thought 'we're going to make this restaurant look full,'" said owner Paula Starr Melehes.

She said she ordered the "G-rated kind" of inflatable dolls online, dressed them up like customers (pictured) and seated them at off-limit tables.

A local news report depicts some merry locals enjoying the lockdown relief, with one man saying "they tried to kick me out after I kissed one of them" - [pharmacydaily.com.au/videos](http://pharmacydaily.com.au/videos).



**COULD** a higher male death rate from coronavirus be related to trying to look cool?

A new scientific paper from Middlesex University London and the Mathematical Science Research Institute in Berkeley, California, has found US men are much less likely to wear face masks because they are "not cool" and "a sign of weakness".

## US pharmacy COVID testing

**PHARMACIES** in the USA have been advised that they may temporarily enrol as "independent clinical diagnostic laboratories" during the COVID-19 public health emergency.

The move means the pharmacies are then able to bill America's Federal Medicare program for COVID-19 testing, as long as they have the required equipment, training and testing protocols.

In order to receive temporary billing privileges each pharmacy only needs to call a hotline number and provide limited information such as their business name, provider identifier, state license, address and contact information.

The initiative is part of new guidance issued by the US Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, which said it aimed to provide additional laboratory resources to meet the urgent need to increase COVID-19 testing

capability.

Temporary billing privileges will be granted within two days.

However to maintain ongoing status after the COVID-19 crisis subsides, as a clinical diagnostic laboratory the pharmacy must submit a formal enrolment within 30 days after the formal public health emergency ceases.

While the measure removes a Federal barrier to pharmacy COVID-19 testing, some US states still restrict pharmacist authority to administer laboratory testing.

The special arrangements apply to simple point-of-care COVID-19 testing, rather than full laboratory tests for coronavirus.

If a pharmacy wishes to perform other types of COVID-19 testing as well as serology testing for the detection of SARS-CoV-2 antibodies, it must also obtain a certificate of compliance or accreditation to perform high complexity testing.

## COVID-19 advert webinar

**THE** Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has announced an online webinar to assist new and potential sponsors of therapeutic goods to meet their regulatory and legislative obligations in relation to COVID-19.

The session, which will also include interactive Q&A with TGA staff, covers the basics of therapeutics good regulation, with a focus on hand sanitisers, disinfectants, personal protective equipment and advertising.

It will take place from 12.30-3.30pm on Thu 28 May - to register [CLICK HERE](#).

## RMMR and HMR claiming now

**THE** Pharmacy Programs Administrator has confirmed that claiming for follow-up services under the Home Medicine Review (HMR) and Residential Medication Management Review (RMMR) programs can now be lodged.

Up to two remunerated follow-up services can now be conducted within nine months of the initial patient interview, under changes implemented in response to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Safety and Quality.

Instructions on how to lodge claims and more details are at [ppaonline.com.au](http://ppaonline.com.au).



## Weekly Comment

Welcome to Pharmacy Daily's weekly comment feature. This week's contributor is **Anna Paonne, Product Manager, GuildLink**.



### GuildCare pharmacy vaccination support

**OVER** the past three months, we have made numerous changes in GuildCare NG to help drive influenza vaccination in pharmacy and support community health.

Across Australia, most states have amended immunisation legislation, lowering the vaccination age of patients and increasing in the range of vaccinations able to be administered by pharmacy.

One of our commitments is that we will implement state vaccination legislation changes within 24 hours of passing, to ensure pharmacies are able to provide continuous vaccination healthcare to patients.

To help you deliver increased vaccination support to patients this flu season, we have updated the range of influenza vaccinations available within GuildCare NG and enhanced your ability to communicate to patients the availability of vaccination services through our improved Bulk Messaging feature and new myPharmacyLink Promote myPharmacy Services features via the app.

Through GuildCare NG, we are also supporting pharmacies taking part in the Guild Corporate Vaccination Program.

The ability to administer vaccinations is crucial to the community healthcare provided by Australian pharmacies. We recommend pharmacists familiarise themselves with these features to help manage the expected increased demand for vaccination services during this flu season.