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## Today's issue of PD

*Pharmacy Daily* today features two pages of news plus the **MIMS September Update**.

## No need to risk taking ivermectin

**PHARMACEUTICAL** Society of Australia (PSA) National President, Associate Professor Chris Freeman, is urging people not to take risks with ivermectin.

Speaking on *The Project* last night, Freeman warned that suggestions that the medication could treat or prevent COVID-19 were "at best dangerous, at worst lethal".

"I understand how people get anxious about getting COVID-19... but we do have a good prevention [option] here in Australia, which is the vaccine," he said.

"The Therapeutic Goods Administration has approved a new treatment for COVID recently, so we do have approved treatments, it's not like they don't exist."

## Pharmacy solution to hospital crisis

**FUNDING** more services through community pharmacy and implementing a primary healthcare plan should be key components of the upcoming Western Australian State Budget, Pharmacy Guild of Australia WA Branch President, Andrew Ngeow, believes.

In a pre-Budget statement, Ngeow called on the WA Government to activate the inherent capacity of the pharmacy network to cut patient demand on the State's stressed hospital system.

Ngeow noted despite record investment, capacity concerns remain within the WA health system.

"Potential solutions to the current challenges were identified in the WA Government's Sustainable Health Review, which was released in Apr 2019," he said.

Ngeow said the review found that over the last two decades the State's health system had experienced unsustainable growth and demand, and it had called for a shift in focus from treatment to prevention and community care supported by a modern hospital system.

"Removing the cost and patient demand pressures on the hospital system was a priority in 2019,"



Ngeow said.

"Seemingly, there is little motivation or incentive to address the ongoing cost blowouts or look outwards to primary healthcare for solutions."

While frustrated by the lack of progress in implementing recommendations from the Sustainable Health Review, Ngeow noted that Premier Mark McGowan had said there was "a need to increasing use of community pharmacies to reduce the demand on the State's hospital system" at last week's Pharmacy WA Forum (PD 27 Aug).

"It makes absolute sense to greater utilise community pharmacy, which would both improve patient health outcomes and decrease the cost

of the unnecessary use of public hospital services," Ngeow said.

He added that ahead of any plans to lower WA's COVID-19 border restrictions there was an opportunity to implement the review's early intervention recommendations and "take a practical, common-sense approach to keep people out of the hospital system by engaging the existing capacity of community pharmacy effectively and sustainably".

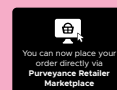
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## Extended expiry

**RESPONDING** to current shortages of tocilizumab, the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has advised that vials of the medication "continue to be stable for a further six months past their labelled expiry".

The TGA has said that clinicians should consider the risks and benefits of treatment with expired tocilizumab.

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## Guardian No1 for satisfaction: Canstar

**SIGMA** Healthcare's Guardian Pharmacy network is the nation's top group for customer satisfaction, Canstar Blue's 2021 review reveals.

The annual report card saw the Guardian brand secure five-star ratings from consumers for overall satisfaction, service and advice provided, availability of pharmacists, prescription availability and speed, and value for money, while the group scored four stars for its range of products.

Pharmacy4Less, Discount Drug Stores, Pharmacy 777 and TerryWhite Chemmart rounded out the top five, with each brand scoring four-star ratings of overall satisfaction.

The results of the review, which included a survey of more than

4,100 Australians found that 51% of shoppers reported that they "generally stick to the same pharmacy chain", up from 48% in 2020, and 42% in 2019.

When it came to identifying what keeps customers coming back to a particular group, 69% of respondents rated convenience as a key factor, with good customer service (58%) and range of products (48%) also important considerations.

"While getting bang for your buck is important to many, receiving good service and advice to get you back to feeling your best was again the biggest driver of satisfaction amongst survey respondents this year (23%)," the report said.

"This was on par with availability



of pharmacists (23%) and prescription availability & speed of dispensing (23%)."

The survey found that 14% of respondents felt that "value for money" contributed to their satisfaction with a pharmacy brand.

## Dispensary Corner

**THROUGHOUT** the course of the COVID-19 pandemic pharmacy staff and customers have been exposed to an increased level of anti-social behaviour.

From abusive behaviour to physical violence, the global crisis has given rise to multiple unsavoury incidents.

However, things reached a new level for staff and patients at a pharmacy in Florida late last month, when a man exposed himself outside the store.

News website *local10.com* reported that the Giraldo Palacio had been following a woman and her two children "for several blocks while openly masturbating behind them", before the mother entered the Walgreens store where she grabbed a mop to hopefully scare him away.

However, police swooped before the woman could take a swing at Palacio, who then sat next to the store front and continued to touch himself in front of passersby.

The 55-year-old was subsequently arrested while shouting, "I love you baby, you are my boyfriend", at one of the police officers.



## Reagila listing

**ADULT** patients living with schizophrenia will be able to access Reagila (cariprazine) through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS), following its listing on 01 Sep.

Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia (MIFA) CEO, Tony Stevenson, welcomed the reimbursement of a new treatment option for those living with schizophrenia.

"The availability and accessibility of affordable treatment options for adults living with schizophrenia is crucial for this patient community, given the stigma they experience with the disorder, and resulting social isolation," he said.

Stevenson added that delays in accessing treatment places patients at higher risk of a more severe course of illness.

## Lockdowns and mental health webinar

**WITH** the ACT, NSW and Victoria in COVID-19-induced lockdowns, Westmead Hospital's Director of Pharmacy, David Ng, will host a webinar looking at the impacts they are having on mental health, next week.

The event will feature UNSW Scientia Professor of Psychology,

Richard Bryant, and Associate Professors Elvira Solji and Wing Wah Tam from the UNSW School of Banking and Finance.

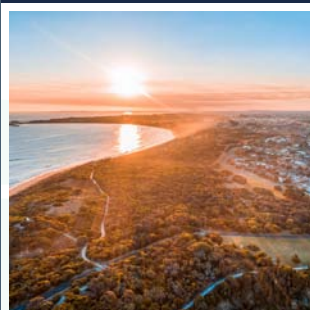
The 90 minute webinar will start at 7.30pm (AEST) on Tue 07 Sep.

**CLICK HERE** to register to attend the event.



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## New Products

- **Brexucabtagene autoleucl (Tecartus)** is a CD19-directed genetically modified autologous T-cell immunotherapy. To prepare Tecartus, a patient's own T-cells are harvested and genetically modified *ex vivo* by retroviral transduction to express a chimeric antigen receptor (CAR) comprising a murine anti-CD19 single chain variable fragment (scFv) linked to CD28 and CD3-zeta co-stimulatory domains. The anti-CD19 CAR-positive viable T-cells are expanded and infused back into the patient. Tecartus binds to CD19-expressing cancer cells and normal B-cells, which activate downstream signalling cascades that lead to T-cell activation, proliferation, acquisition of effector functions and secretion of inflammatory cytokines and chemokines. This sequence of events leads to killing of CD19-expressing cells. Tecartus is indicated for the treatment of patients with relapsed or refractory mantle cell lymphoma (MCL), who have received two or more lines of therapy, including a Bruton's tyrosine kinase (BTK) inhibitor (unless ineligible or intolerant to treatment with a BTK inhibitor). Contraindications for lymphodepleting chemotherapy must be considered. Each patient specific bag of Tecartus suspension for infusion contains a dispersion of anti-CD19 CAR T-cells in approximately 68 mL for a target dose of  $2 \times 10^6$  CAR T-cells/kg bodyweight (range: 1 to  $2 \times 10^6$  cells/kg; maximum:  $2 \times 10^8$  cells).
- **Budesonide/glycopyrronium/formoterol (eformoterol) fumarate dihydrate (Breztri Aerosphere)** contains budesonide, a glucocorticosteroid, and two bronchodilators: glycopyrronium, a long-acting muscarinic antagonist (LAMA) (anticholinergic) and formoterol, a long-acting  $\beta_2$ -agonist (LABA). Breztri Aerosphere is indicated for maintenance treatment to prevent exacerbations and relieve symptoms in adults with moderate, severe, or very severe chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) who require treatment with a combination of an inhaled corticosteroid, a LABA, and a LAMA. It is not indicated for the initiation of therapy in COPD. Breztri Aerosphere pressurised inhalation contains budesonide 160 mcg, glycopyrronium 7.2 mcg (as glycopyrronium bromide (glycopyrrolate) 9 mcg), and 5 mcg formoterol fumarate dihydrate per delivered dose and is available in pack size of 1 metered dose inhaler with 120 actuations.
- **Cariprazine (HCl) (Reagila)** is an orally active and potent dopamine  $D_3/D_2$  receptor partial agonist, with preferential binding to  $D_3$  receptors, and partial agonist at serotonin 5-HT<sub>1A</sub> receptors. The therapeutic effect of cariprazine may be mediated through a combination of partial agonist activity at dopamine  $D_3$ ,  $D_{2L}$  and  $D_{2S}$  receptors and serotonin 5-HT<sub>1A</sub> receptors, and antagonist activity at serotonin 5-HT<sub>2B</sub>, 5-HT<sub>2A</sub> and histamine H<sub>1</sub> receptors. Reagila is indicated for the treatment of schizophrenia in adults. It is contraindicated with concomitant administration of strong or moderate CYP3A4 inhibitors or inducers. Reagila capsules contain cariprazine 1.5 mg, 3 mg, 4 mg or 6 mg and is available in a pack size of 30.
- **Ciclosporin (Ikervis)** is a calcineurin inhibitor immunosuppressant agent when administered systemically. Ciclosporin has been shown to have an anti-inflammatory effect whereby it inhibits the production and/or release of pro-inflammatory cytokines and has been shown to upregulate the release of anti-inflammatory cytokines. In patients with dry eye disease, topical administration of ciclosporin is believed to exert an immunomodulatory effect, although its exact mechanism of action in dry eye disease is not known. Ikervis is indicated for the treatment of severe keratitis in adults with dry eye disease which has not improved despite treatment with tear substitutes. It is contraindicated with ocular or peri-ocular malignancies or premalignant conditions and active or suspected ocular or peri-ocular infection. Treatment with Ikervis should not be initiated or continued until all signs of infection have cleared. Ikervis eye drops contain ciclosporin 1 mg/mL and is available in pack size of 30 x 0.3 mL single use ampoules.
- **Elasomeran (Spikevax COVID-19 Vaccine)** contains messenger RNA (mRNA) encapsulated in lipid nanoparticles. The mRNA encodes for the full-length SARS-CoV-2 spike protein modified with 2 proline substitutions within the heptad repeat 1 domain (S-2P) to stabilise the spike protein into a prefusion conformation. After intramuscular injection, cells at the injection site and the draining lymph nodes take up the lipid nanoparticle, effectively delivering the mRNA sequence into cells for translation into viral spike protein. The delivered mRNA does not enter the cellular nucleus or interact with the genome, is nonreplicating, and is expressed transiently mainly by dendritic cells and subcapsular sinus macrophages. The expressed, membrane-bound spike protein of SARS-CoV-2 is then recognised by immune cells as a foreign antigen. This elicits both T-cell and B-cell responses to generate neutralising antibodies, which may contribute to protection against coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). Spikevax COVID-19 Vaccine has provisional approval for the active immunisation of individuals  $\geq 18$  years to prevent COVID-19 caused by SARS-CoV-2. Spikevax suspension for injection contains elasomeran 100 mcg/0.5 mL dose and is available in multidose vials containing 10 doses/vial.
- **Obeticholic acid (Ocaliva)**, a 6-ethyl derivative of the human bile acid, chenodeoxycholic acid, is a selective and potent agonist for the farnesoid X receptor (FXR), a nuclear receptor expressed at high levels in the liver and intestine. FXR is thought to be a key regulator of bile acid, inflammatory, fibrotic, and metabolic pathways. FXR activation decreases the intracellular hepatocyte concentrations of bile acids by suppressing *de novo* synthesis from cholesterol, as well as by increasing transport of bile acids out of the hepatocytes. These mechanisms limit the overall size of the circulating bile acid pool while promoting cholestasis, thus reducing hepatic exposure to bile acids. Ocaliva is indicated for the treatment of primary biliary cholangitis (or primary biliary cirrhosis) in combination with ursodeoxycholic acid (UDCA) in adults with an inadequate response to UDCA or as monotherapy in adults unable to tolerate UDCA. Ocaliva is contraindicated with complete biliary obstruction. Ocaliva tablets contain obeticholic acid 5 mg or 10 mg and is available in a pack size of 30.

## New Presentation

- **Daratumumab (rch) (Darzalex SC)** is now available as a solution for subcutaneous injection containing daratumumab (rch) 1800 mg/15 mL in a pack size of 1 vial.



## New Indications

- **BNT162b2 [mRNA] (Comirnaty COVID-19 Vaccine)** now has provisional approval for the active immunisation of individuals  $\geq 12$  years to prevent COVID-19 caused by SARS-CoV-2.
- **Normal immunoglobulin (human) (Kiovig)** is now indicated for immunomodulation in chronic inflammatory demyelinating polyradiculoneuropathy (CIDP) in adults.
- **Pembrolizumab (rch) (Keytruda)** now has provisional approval for the treatment of patients with Bacillus Calmette-Guerin (BCG)-unresponsive, high-risk, non-muscle invasive bladder cancer (NMIBC) with carcinoma *in situ* with or without papillary tumours who are ineligible for or have elected not to undergo cystectomy.

## New Contraindications

- **Bethanechol chloride (Urocarb)** is now contraindicated in bronchial asthma (latent or active); pronounced bradycardia; coronary artery disease (especially occlusion); vasomotor instability; conditions in which increased muscular activity of the gastrointestinal tract or urinary bladder might be harmful, e.g. anastomosis, recent bladder surgery, gastrointestinal resection, gastrointestinal or urinary tract obstruction; and with conditions in which strength or integrity of the gastrointestinal (e.g. acute inflammation) or bladder wall is questionable.
- **ChAdOx1-S (Vaxzevria (previously COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca))** is now contraindicated in individuals who have previously experienced episodes of capillary leak syndrome.
- **Dopamine HCl (DBL Sterile Dopamine Concentrate)** is now contraindicated in ventricular fibrillation.
- **Fexofenadine HCl/pseudoephedrine HCl (Telfast Decongestant)** is now contraindicated in patients with urinary retention related to urethroprostatic disorders; a history of seizures; and in patients using other vasoconstrictor agents used as nasal decongestants, whether administered orally or nasally.
- **loversol (Optiray)** is now contraindicated in manifest hyperthyroidism.
- **Tobramycin (DBL Tobramycin Injection BP)** is now contraindicated with intrathecal administration.
- **Vancomycin HCl (DBL Vancomycin)** is now contraindicated in patients with known hypersensitivity to other glycopeptides.

*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.*