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Philip Morris slams hypocrisy

TOBACCO giant Philip Morris has accused the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia, the AMA and the RACGP of double standards with their opposition to the controversial PharmaPrograms support scheme for the company's VEEV nicotine vape product range (**PD** 03 Aug).

Philip Morris noted that 880 GPs are registered with the TGA as authorised prescribers of nicotine vaping products, and also pointed out that over 2,000 pharmacies are now stocking vaping products.

"It is disappointing organisations such as the AMA, the RACGP and the PSA, who welcomed and participated in the establishment of the prescription model, are now criticising manufacturers for participating in it," Philip Morris said in a statement.

Robotic pharmacy alert

AUTOMATION could make the jobs of retail pharmacists obsolete within a decade, according to an analysis from Australian workforce data and analytics platform Faethm by Pearson.

The company has looked at "billions of data points to make predictions about the future of jobs and skills," according to a

report in today's *Financial Review*, highlighting a range of professions whose jobs could be replaced by robotic processes in the future.

Finance brokers topped the list with a stated 59% "risk of task automation" while retail pharmacists came in 13th position with a 33% rating - behind pilots (37%), retail managers (36%) and medical scientists (35%).

Hospital pharmacists were further down the list with a 27% rating, while other roles at risk included librarians (51%) and financial advisors (44%).

Faethm by Pearson's chief data scientist, Richard George, was quoted as saying the company's technology helped "determine what jobs are really at risk of automation...and the big thing is anything to do with routine tasks".

MM2022 regos

THE Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia today opened registrations for its 46th annual conference, Medicines Management 2022, taking place at the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre from 01-03 Dec.

The extended program will allow Australian pharmacists and technicians to finally gather after a three year hiatus due to the pandemic - register at mm2022.shpa.org.au.

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features two pages of news.

Sigma Chairman confirmed

SIGMA Healthcare has confirmed that its interim chair Michael Sammells is taking on the role permanently.

Sammells, who is also currently a director of AMP Limited and was formerly CFO of Healthscope and Medibank Private, joined the Sigma Board as a non-executive Director on 01 Feb 2020.

He's Chair of Sigma's Risk, Management and Audit Committee, and said it was an honour to be appointed as Chairman of the Board, "albeit under unexpected and difficult circumstances".

"Sigma has made significant improvements over the past few months and the Board remains focused on enhancing our service to customers, delivering growth and driving sustainable returns for our shareholders," he said.



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Dispensary Corner

HEAT-RELATED ailments are likely to soar due to climate change - but a Japanese clothing maker has the solution, at least when it comes to keeping pets cool.

Rei Uzawa, who also makes maternity clothes for women under the Sweet Mommy brand, has released a new range of electronic fans which attach to dogs and cats (**pictured**), blowing air around their bodies.

"There was almost no rainy season this year so the hot days came early, and in that sense I think we developed a product that is right for the market," she said, with Tokyo suffering its longest heatwave on record in a nine-day stretch of temperatures over 35°C.

As for this feline fan, we're sure she thinks it's purr-fect.



Pharmacist "tall poppy"

AN ADELAIDE-BASED pharmacist has been named one of Australia's "tall poppies of science" for her work with residents and carers in aged care to improve medicines safety among older people.

Dr Renly Lim (**pictured**), who is an NHMRC Early Career Fellow at UniSA's Quality Use of Medicines and Pharmacy Research Centre, is the clinical research leader of a trial evaluating a novel pharmacy service to prevent frailty and adverse events called ReMinDAR (Reducing medicine-induced deterioration and adverse reactions).

The Young Tall Poppy Science Awards, which were announced last week in a ceremony at the Adelaide Showgrounds, are an initiative of the Australian Institute of Policy and Science, aiming to recognise key achievements by Australia's finest scientists.

Dr Lim noted that about 250,000 hospital admissions each year are medicine-related, costing the nation \$1.4 billion annually.

"My research looks at identifying the harms due to medicines and developing solutions to prevent these harms," she said.

Lim grew up in Malaysia and



completed her pharmacy degree in Scotland and her PhD in Malaysia.

She's worked in the UK, Malaysia, Thailand and Cambodia, including organising workshops and drama performances in rural Cambodia to help increase the locals' understanding of malaria.

Dr Lim's current research interests include integrating digital health to improve medicine safety among older people, identifying associations between medicine use and health outcomes, health program evaluation and community engagement on malaria elimination.

Ozempic priority

PHARMACISTS and doctors are being told to limit prescribing and dispensing of semaglutide (Ozempic) solution for injection pre-filled pens, due to an unexpected increase in consumer demand because of "extensive prescribing for obesity management, for which Ozempic is not indicated".

The Therapeutic Goods Administration yesterday issued a joint statement alongside a host of medical bodies including the Pharmacy Guild, Pharmaceutical Society of Australia, Society of Hospital Pharmacists Australia, the National Pharmaceutical Services Association, the AMA, the RACGP and more, noting that shortages are "significantly affecting people using Ozempic for its approved use for type 2 diabetes".

Novo Nordisk Pharmaceuticals has advised that supplies of semaglutide in Australia are sufficient for this approved use, and is working with the TGA, professional associations and consumer groups to limit the effects of off-label use.

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