

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features two pages of news.

Fake doc busted

AN UNREGISTERED medical intern who worked in a Sydney hospital has been sentenced to two years imprisonment to be served by an intensive corrections order in the community and fined \$10,000.

Zhi Sin Lee accepted a position as an intern at Bankstown-Lidcombe in 2021, despite failing to complete her Doctor of Medicine training.

APP rego deal

PHARMACISTS planning to attend the Australian Pharmacy Professional Conference (APP) from 24 to 27 Mar have until 11.59pm AEDT tonight to secure earlybird registration.

The event is backed by a 100% COVID-19 refund guarantee for those unable to make it due to lockdowns or restrictions.

RAT rollout to be bumpy

ROLLOUT of the Federal Governments free COVID-19 rapid antigen test (RAT) scheme is set to be "bumpy" Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President, Trent Twomey, warns.

Speaking with *Nine's Today* program this morning, Twomey said 804 of the country's 6,000 community pharmacies will be providing the Government-funded RATs to eligible patients from today.

However, with supply chain constraints impacting pharmacies' ability to access sufficient stock, Twomey urged consumers to "have some patience" with their local store.

"The Guild has been in daily and weekly conversations with the supply chain - the manufacturers, the importers, the distributors, and what we know is that there are 13 million tests in the supply chain arriving just for pharmacies... between now and next Mon," he said.

"There's also another 22 million arriving just for pharmacies in the first three weeks of Feb, but like with everything with this pandemic we're competing with global supply chain shortages on RATs, not just with the UK and US, but here



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in Australia, so our plea is quite simple - please have patience with your local pharmacy.

"The bigger boys are getting stock before the smaller guys, and that's the same with the States and Territories."

Twomey added that in addition to problems in accessing supplies to participate in the concessional RAT scheme, current wholesale prices are above the remuneration rate (\$10 plus GST, and a \$4.30 administration handling and infrastructure fee) being offered by the Federal Government for pharmacies.

"Prices need to drop in order for pharmacies to be able to provide RATs at the price that this scheme is paying," he said.



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Dispensary Corner

PERSONAL grooming has frequently been identified as one of the casualties of the COVID-19 pandemic, with sales of showergels and deodorants reportedly slumping as people started living like hermits.

However, as the world slowly edges closer to normality, patients with diabetes are being warned to pay particular attention to their blood sugar levels before attempting any manscaping.

US-based urologist, Ashley Winter, highlighted the dangers of whipping out a razor to tidy up "downstairs" while having an elevated A1c, on Twitter this morning.

"Wait until your glycemic control is in the range recommended by your doctor," she said.

"To clarify, when a guy with an A1c of 14 shaves his nuts it's like the Fournier's gangrene origin story.

"If you have a healthy immune system, please feel free to shave your balls."

Responding to the post one nurse from Texas said "we received an admit with Fournier's and we were wondering how someone could get gangrene down there - hospital paperwork didn't say and he wasn't too keen to talk about it."

For those unfamiliar with Fournier's, it is an acute necrotic infection of the scrotum, and we would advise against investigating the condition - we did and frankly, the images cannot be unseen.

Novavax start date set

THE rollout of the long awaited Novavax protein subset COVID-19 vaccine is set to commence on 21 Feb, after the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) issued guidelines for its use this morning.

ATAGI has recommended that the vaccine be used as a two-dose primary course of COVID-19 vaccination in people aged 18 years and older, at least three weeks apart.

The group has advised that the Novavax shot is not currently recommended for use as a booster vaccine, however, it has said that severely immunocompromised patients who opt to be vaccinated with it should receive a third primary dose two months after their second jab.

Welcoming ATAGI's recommendations, Federal Health Minister, Greg Hunt, said the addition of the Novavax vaccine would add a new option for patients who have yet to be

immunised.

"What happens from here is now that we've got the double green-light in Australia, stocks will be released, [and] provided to Australia, the Therapeutic Goods Administration will go through a detailed batch testing process, as this will be the first such shipment we have received," he said.

"It's a protein-based vaccine, and for some who may have had contra-indications or reactions with other vaccines, this will provide an additional opportunity for them, as well as those who for whatever reason have not taken up the program so far."

ATAGI has also recommended the use of the vaccine for pregnant and breastfeeding women, noting that while there was no safety data for these groups, "there are not theoretical safety concerns".

No announcement has been made regarding the role pharmacies will play in the rollout of the Novavax vaccine.



Weekly Comment

Welcome to Pharmacy Daily's weekly comment feature. This week's contributor is **Amit Saha, M-Pharm, MBA, MPS Group Technical Manager, LaCorium Health.**



Best foot forward

SUDDENLY found it's painful to stand or walk? Heel pain is common and most often due to plantar fasciopathy, often referred to as plantar fasciitis.

The plantar fascia is a piece of strong, thick tissue running along the bottom of the foot connecting the heel bone to the toes, creating the arch of the foot. It supports the arch of the foot and takes the strain when we stand, walk or run. We tend to only become aware of this vital piece of foot architecture when it starts to complain.

Planter fasciitis is most common in the 40 to 60 year age group, and accounts for up to 15% of all foot complaints. The good news is that for most people, symptoms improve with simple treatments such as rest, ice therapy and painkillers including topical pain relief products. Your healthcare professional can diagnose, give exercises and an individualised programme.

Being an expert in foot care, Dermal Therapy has added a topical foot and knee pain relief gel in its foot care armour.

It is cleverly formulated with wintergreen, arnica and peppermint oil for effective pain relief associated with Planter Fasciitis and other painful foot and knee conditions.

Wizard donations give Christmas boost

FUNDRAISING efforts made by the Wizard Pharmacy group will ensure 770 sick children will have access to the Starlight Foundation's Starlight Express Rooms at the Perth Children's Hospital and the Royal Darwin Hospital, during their stays.

The group marked the 11th year of its partnership with the charity by donating \$45,000 to the Starlight Giving Tree Christmas Appeal.

Wizard Pharmacy Chief Operating Officer Sally Parker said that the entire group felt it was very important to give back and do their part in bringing joy

to those in need.

"Our partnership with the Starlight Children's Foundation is one we all hold very close to our hearts, so it meant a lot to the entire Wizard family across our network that we could rally together and do something very special for them," she said.

"I am overwhelmed by the generosity of the Western Australian and Northern Territory communities, and I hope they feel proud of the difference they have made to the lives of sick children, young people and their families this Christmas."