Pharmacy Daily

Thu 5th May 2022

Today's issue of *PD*

Pharmacy Daily today features three pages of news plus a full page from **Bioceuticals** and the **MIMS May update**.

FIP rego open

EARLY bird registration for the International Pharmaceutical Federation's 80th World Congress of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences is open.

Having been postponed twice due to COVID-19 the global event will take place in Seville, Spain, between 18 and 22 Sep.

The conference will discuss a range of topics including, science and evidence supporting the response to COVID-19, and identifying learnings for future pandemic preparedness.

CLICK HERE to register and secure an early bird discount.

Biosimilar preparedness concerning

DECLINING preparedness amongst community pharmacists to dispense biosimilar medications is a "concerning" finding from the latest *University of Technology Sydney (UTS) Pharmacy Barometer*, Adjunct Professor of Pharmacy, John Montgomery, believes.

Speaking at the launch of the 2021 Barometer earlier this week, Montgomery said pharmacists' confidence in substituting biosimilars had increased slightly from 36% in 2020 to 39% when the annual survey was conducted in Oct 2021.

"I think that 39% is not that high in terms of confidence, but at least it's going in the right direction, as opposed to how prepared [pharmacists] are to dispense biosimilar medicines to new patients," he said.

"That's actually declined from 52% to 44%.

"It's a little concerning that six months after the launch of biosimilars for one of the largest products on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS), which is Humira, we're not seeing an increase in preparedness to dispense.

"Biosimilars are critical to the sustainability of the PBS.

"The PBS is rapidly moving towards biologics.

"Biologics make up most of the top 20 products by cost on the PBS - reference pricing needs to work for biologics to create the kind of savings that we saw with the non-biologic products in previous decades."

However, he added that dip in preparedness to dispense biosimilars could be an "aberration", which could "correct itself" in the next Barometer.

Montgomery noted that responses indicated volumes of prescriptions for biologics were "pretty decent", with 53% of pharmacists reporting they were seeing between one and 10 prescriptions of the medications a month.

A further one-in-three respondents reported "seeing anywhere between 11 and more than 100 biologic scripts a month", Montgomery said.

"In terms of what types of scripts they're seeing, about two-thirds of respondents were seeing the original brand... and around a third were seeing biosimilars being written, so that's encouraging that specialists and some GPs are beginning to write biosimilar [scripts] generically."

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TWC takes events to the 'Next Level'

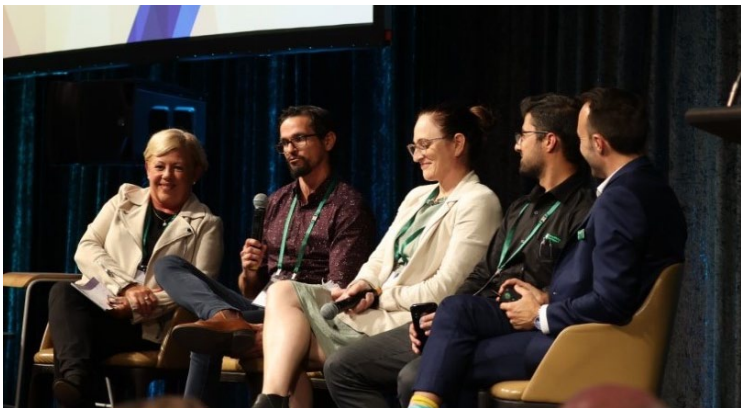
MORE than 1,000 delegates from across the TerryWhite Chemmart (TWC) network are set to attend the group's state-based Next Level events over the coming weeks.

The in-person series got underway in NSW last week, with TWC Executive General Manager, Nick Munroe, marking the group's successes in 2021 and outlining how the business will move forward in 2022 and beyond.

"It has been a record breaking few months at TWC so it's great to finally see everyone face-to-face to celebrate our recent wins, reconnect, and importantly hear directly from our peers about some of the challenges and successes they have been experiencing in their own pharmacies," he said.

"We have an incredible culture at TWC filled with high-performing and passionate pharmacists and pharmacy team members who we can all learn a great deal from.

To have these leaders on the stage sharing their insights on a range of topics from vaccinations to in-store efficiencies and business building is a true highlight of these events."



The series will also see the state winners of the TWC HEART Awards announced, with TWC Delory, claiming the group's NSW Pharmacy of the Year (PotY) Award last week (***PD*** 28 Apr), and TWC Valley Road Devonport taking the Tasmanian crown earlier this week (***PD*** 04 May).

The winners of the South Australian, Victorian and Queensland PotY titles will be named in the coming weeks, before the Next Level series draws to a conclusion in Western Australia on 30 May, when the WA and National TWC PotY winners will be revealed.

Pictured, TWC Network Partners Judy Plunkett, Kaail Bohm, Tanya Maloney and Ruda Dhahir talking vaccination leadership with TWC Chief Pharmacist Brenton Hart at the NSW 'Next Level' event.

Invest in hospital pharmacists

VICTORIAN politicians are being urged to use funding announced in the State's Budget to embed more surgery and perioperative hospital pharmacists into mutlidisciplinary teams.

Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) CEO, Kristin Michaels, said funding specialist pharmacists would "reduce length of admission, improve bed flow and reduce incidence of serious medication errors for surgical patients by carrying out pre-surgery medication reviews, ensuring potentially fatal drug interactions and overdoses are avoided".

Michaels added that the State's commitment to recruiting 7,000 additional health workers, "must include pharmacists", to support the Government's health programs.

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Dispensary Corner

COVID-19 momentarily became a secondary concern to staff at a testing clinic in Sydney's west on Mon, when testers spotted a number of red-bellied black snakes at the clinic.

The site was temporarily closed as the team waited for snake catcher, Sean Cade, to trap and relocate the snakes.

Cade told Nine News that it was not unusual to see snakes in the area at this time of year, noting "the red-bellied black snakes may have misread RAT testing".

"Staff had originally sighted a medium-sized snake on Fri last week, and due to improved weather conditions and the influx of babies being born over the last couple of months, they sighted a couple of baby snakes again on Mon," he said.

"So they temporarily closed the testing facility until we attended."

Cade noted that while the red-bellied black snakes are venomous, they have a "docile nature" and rarely bite.

Dispensary Corner will continue to maintain its policy of staying as far away from snakes as possible, rather than running the risk of encountering a snappy one.

RACFs need in-house pharmacists

PROVIDING patients living in residential aged care facilities (RACFs) with access to on-site pharmacy services will improve care, researchers believe.

Results from the ReMInDAR trial, published in *Age and Ageing*, found that having pharmacists meet residents on a regular basis ensured medication-related issues were addressed, but also allowed for monitoring of patients' cognitive and physical health.

The randomised controlled study, involving 248 patients, found that while there was no statistically significant difference for change in frailty between the intervention and control groups, "there was a significant difference in the change in cognition scores from baseline, favouring the intervention".

Lead reseacher, University of South Australia's, Professor Libby Roughead, said the study showed the need for additional

pharmaceutical support in RACFs, with pharmacists making 309 recommendations to change residents' medications, advising reductions in medicine use for close to two-thirds of residents.

"Medicines are the most prescribed health intervention for older people, yet they're also the catalyst for concern for many aged-care residents," she said.

"People living in aged-care homes rely on the support and care they receive yet previously, residents have only received a medication review every two years or earlier if required.

"Our research highlights the need for personalised and continuing support by pharmacists more frequently."

Roughead added that while Federal Government funding announced for on-site pharmacists was a step forward, she added the move should encompass holistic pharmaceutical support, with pharmacists focused on efforts to reduce harm from medicines.

Quiet achiever hits ownership milestone

PHARMACY wholesaler, Symbion, is celebrating South Australian pharmacist, John Spick's 50th year as a pharmacy owner.

The octogenarian pharmacist, who owns the TerryWhite Chemmart (TWC) Woolworths Shopping Centre Blackwood store, has been with Symbion since the 1970s, when he joined Faulding, as the wholesaler was known at the time.

Marking Spick's ownership milestone, Symbion Key Account Manager, Michael McNeil - who worked with the 86-year-old for 30 years - described him as "a humble quiet achiever".

Pictured, TWC Business

Development Manager, Mary-Anne Pitman, TWC Woolworths Shopping Centre Blackwood Retail Manager, Colleen Rodgers, TWC Woolworths Shopping Centre Blackwood owner, John Spick, Symbion Key Account Manager SA/NT, Irene Sardelis, and TWC State Operations Manager SA/NT, Gary Flynn.

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MIMS Monthly Update

May 2022

New Products

- **Elotuzumab (Empliciti)** is an immunostimulatory humanised, IgG1 monoclonal antibody that specifically targets the SLAMF7 (signaling lymphocyte activation molecule family member 7) protein. SLAMF7 is highly expressed on multiple myeloma cells independent of cytogenetic abnormalities. Elotuzumab targets SLAMF7 on myeloma cells and facilitates the interaction with natural killer cells (via Fc receptors) to mediate the killing of myeloma cells through antibody-dependent cellular cytotoxicity (ADCC). Elotuzumab also directly activates natural killer cells through the SLAMF7 pathway to enhance anti-myeloma activity *in vitro*. *Empliciti is indicated in combination with lenalidomide and dexamethasone for the treatment of patients with multiple myeloma who have received at least one prior therapy*. Empliciti is used in combination with other medicinal products; therefore, the contraindications applicable to those medicinal products also apply to Empliciti combination therapy. Empliciti powder for infusion contains elotuzumab 300 mg or 400 mg and is available in pack sizes of 1 single use vial.

- **Paliperidone (as palmitate) (Invega Hafyera)** is a psychotropic agent belonging to the chemical class of benzisoxazole derivatives (atypical neuroleptic antipsychotic). Paliperidone is a centrally active dopamine Type 2 (D) receptor antagonist and a serotonin Type 2 ($5HT_{2A}$) receptor antagonist. Paliperidone is also active as an antagonist at α1 and α2 adrenergic receptors and H_1 histaminergic receptors, which may explain some of the other effects of the drug. *Invega Hafyera, a 6-month injection, is indicated for the maintenance treatment of schizophrenia in adult patients who have been adequately treated with the 1-month paliperidone palmitate injectable product for at least four months or the 3-month paliperidone palmitate injectable product following at least one 3-month injection cycle*. Invega Hafyera is contraindicated in patients with a known hypersensitivity to risperidone. Invega Hafyera modified release injection contains paliperidone 700 mg/3.5 mL or 1000 mg/5 mL and is available in pack sizes of 1 pre-filled syringe.

- **Sacituzumab govitecan (Trodelvy)** is a Trop-2-directed antibody-drug conjugate. Sacituzumab is a humanised antibody that recognises Trop-2. The small molecule, SN-38, is a topoisomerase I inhibitor, which is covalently attached to the antibody by a linker. Sacituzumab govitecan binds to Trop-2-expressing cancer cells and is internalised with the subsequent release of SN-38 via hydrolysis of the linker. SN-38 interacts with topoisomerase I and prevents re-ligation of topoisomerase I-induced single strand breaks. The resulting DNA damage leads to apoptosis and cell death. Sacituzumab govitecan decreased tumour growth in mouse xenograft models of triple-negative breast cancer. *Trodelvy is indicated for the treatment of adult patients with unresectable locally advanced or metastatic triple-negative breast cancer (mTNBC) who have received at least two prior systemic therapies, including at least one prior therapy for locally advanced or metastatic disease*. Trodelvy powder for injection contains sacituzumab govitecan 180 mg and is available in a pack size of 1 single use vial.

- **Trastuzumab deruxtecan (Enhertu)** is a HER2-targeted antibody-drug conjugate (ADC). The antibody is a humanized anti-HER2 IgG1 attached to deruxtecan, a topoisomerase I inhibitor bound by a tetrapeptide-based cleavable linker. Following binding to HER2 on tumour cells, trastuzumab deruxtecan undergoes internalization and intracellular linker cleavage by lysosomal enzymes. Upon release, the membrane-permeable topoisomerase I inhibitor causes DNA damage and apoptotic cell death. *Enhertu has provisional approval for the treatment of adult patients with unresectable or metastatic HER2-positive breast cancer who have received two or more prior anti-HER2-based regimens*. Enhertu powder for injection contains trastuzumab deruxtecan 100 mg and is available in a pack size of 1 vial.

- **Voretigene neparvovec (Luxturna)** is a gene transfer vector designed to deliver a normal copy of the gene encoding the human retinal pigment epithelial 65 kDa protein (RPE65) to cells of the retina in persons with reduced or absent levels of biologically active RPE65. Injection of Luxturna into the subretinal space results in transduction of some retinal pigment epithelial cells with a cDNA encoding normal human RPE65 protein, thus providing the potential to restore the visual cycle. *Luxturna is indicated for the treatment of patients with inherited retinal dystrophy caused by pathological biallelic RPE65 mutations and who have sufficient viable retinal cells*. Luxturna is contraindicated in patients with ocular or periocular infection; and active intraocular inflammation. Luxturna concentrate for subretinal injection contains voretigene neparvovec 5 trillion vector genomes/mL and is available in a pack size of 1 foil pouch containing 1 vial (0.5 mL) of concentrate and 2 vials (each 1.7 mL) of solvent.

- **Zolpidem tartrate (ZolpiMist)** selectively binds the omega-1 receptor subtype (also known as the benzodiazepine-1 subtype) which is the alpha unit of the GABA-A receptor complex. The modulation of the chloride anion channel via this receptor leads to the specific sedative effects demonstrated by zolpidem i.e. the preservation of deep sleep (stage 3 and 4 slow wave sleep). *ZolpiMist is indicated for the short-term treatment of insomnia in adults*. ZolpiMist is contraindicated in patients with sleep apnoea; myasthenia gravis; severe hepatic insufficiency; acute and/or severe pulmonary insufficiency; prior or concomitant intake with alcohol; and who have previously experienced complex sleep behaviours after taking zolpidem. ZolpiMist should not be prescribed for children. ZolpiMist oromucosal spray contains zolpidem tartrate 5 mg/actuation and is available in a pack size of 1 oromucosal spray with 28 metered actuations.

New Indications

- **Tafenoquine (as succinate) (Kozenis)** is now indicated, in combination with chloroquine, for the radical cure (prevention of relapse) of *Plasmodium vivax (P. vivax)* malaria in adults, adolescents and children weighing greater than 35 kg.

- **Ozanimod (Zeposia)** is now indicated for the treatment of adult patients with moderately to severely active ulcerative colitis who have had an inadequate response, lost response, or were intolerant to either conventional therapy or a biological therapy.

New Contraindications

- **Glecaprevir and pibrentasvir (Maviret)** is now contraindicated in patients with moderate hepatic impairment (Child-Pugh B).

- **Saxagliptin (as hydrochloride)/dapagliflozin propanediol monohydrate (Qtern 5/10)** is now contraindicated in patients with history of any serious hypersensitivity reaction to any sodium glucose cotransporter 2 (SGLT2) inhibitor; and patients with eGFR persistently < 45 mL/min/1.73 m^2 or patients on dialysis.

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.