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Toby Keall at TerryWhite Chemmart Floreat Forum, WA
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Pharmacy Daily today features four pages of news, plus a front cover wrap from TerryWhite Chemmart, and full pages from:

- PharmXchange
- Wakey Wakey

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Click here to learn more.



Expanding scope a sensible solution

PHARMACIST prescribing is one of the only realistic ways of boosting access to healthcare available to State governments, former Federal Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Dr Nick Coatsworth, believes.

In an editorial published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* this morning, Coatsworth backed pharmacists to take on the tasks of diagnosing and prescribing safely.

"I've lost count of how many times a pharmacist has saved my bacon (and my patient's health) during my career," he said.

"Those experiences have led me to deeply respect the professional skills of pharmacy colleagues.

"Expanding scope of practice always has significant safety implications and is never something to be taken lightly.

"But it would be wrong to characterise this trial as an attempt by the pharmacy profession to gain ground in a professional turf war.

"On the contrary, it represents one of the only realistic short-term

reform pathways to improve access to care in our constrained health system."

Coatsworth added that criticism from the medical profession of pharmacist prescribing pilots in Queensland and NSW, and the Victorian Labor Party's pre-election commitment to conduct a trial, had been a mix of "credible counter-argument and predictable hyperbole".

The former Deputy CMO noted Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP), Dr Karen Price's comments that "the art of diagnosis" was a differentiator between GPs and pharmacists.

"But no pharmacist is claiming to be a master of the diagnostic art - and by the way, that mastery is not universally attained by doctors," he said.

"What their prescribing trials are working to is a pharmacist's strengths - highly protocol-driven assessment and treatment of routine conditions in a safe and



controlled manner."

Coatsworth also rejected claims that pharmacist prescribing would fuel a rise in antimicrobial resistance, "given the prescribing practice of many doctors".

He said recent data showed that one-in-five antibiotics issued for residential aged care patients were for prophylaxis, "which is outside the recommended guidelines and a known driver for resistance".

"By contrast, pharmacists have been the backbone of successful hospital-based antibiotic prescribing improvements over the past decade," he said.

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'Common goal' unites PDL and PSA

PROFESSIONAL indemnity insurer, Pharmaceutical Defence Limited (PDL), is partnering with the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) to explore new medicines safety initiatives.

The partnership will see both organisations support the introduction of a nationally coordinated pharmacovigilance system, and medicine incident and near-miss reporting systems, to provide feedback on the safe and effective use of medicines.

Under the agreement the PSA and PDL will set up a Practice Support Liaison Group to provide support for pharmacists and scope of practice across all areas of pharmacy practice.

PSA National President, Dr Fei Sim, said the united approach would place them in a stronger position to make medicines safer for patients through excellence in pharmacy practice.

"We are stronger when we work together, and this will allow our

organisations to collaborate on future medicine safety reports, and to progress medicine safety initiatives such as a nationally coordinated pharmacovigilance system," she said.

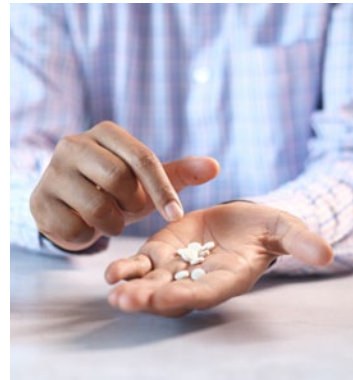
"PDL is incredibly well trusted by the profession, and has supported pharmacists for generations, through investment in pharmacist education and scholarships as well as practice support.

"PSA is excited to see that practice support expand for pharmacists across all practice settings.

"I'd like to thank PDL for their support and collaboration, and for their ongoing commitment to the pharmacy profession and to improving medicine safety for all Australians."

PDL Chair, Paul Naismith, said the partnership would unite members of both organisations in the common goal of improving medicines safety.

"As the peak body representing all pharmacists, PSA has demonstrated



it is a leader in medicine safety by driving excellence in pharmacist practice," he said.

"At PDL, we're excited to be working together with PSA to help tailor practice support across the profession in areas it will have the biggest impact on improving medicine safety.

"We look forward to supporting and working with PSA to further strengthen our great profession as it strives to deliver on Australia's growing health needs."

One stop shop

PRODUCTS from Australia's largest generic pharmaceuticals and private label over-the-counter medicines company, Arrotex, are now available through the PharmXchange platform. See **page five** for more.

Kill or Cure expo

VISITORS to the State Library of NSW will be able to view a rare first edition of the 16th century medical book, *De humani corporis fabrica libri septem*, as part of its *Kill or Cure* exhibition starting tomorrow.

Librarian, John Vallance, said the book transformed the understanding of the human body, and was a "significant addition to the State Library's holdings of major printed works in the history of science and medicine".

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Moderna's SPIKEVAX BIVALENT Original/Omicron COVID-19 vaccine has provisional approval as a booster for active immunisation to prevent COVID-19 caused by SARS-CoV-2 in individuals 18 years of age and older.¹ The use of these vaccines should be in accordance with official recommendation.¹

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▼ This vaccine is subject to additional monitoring in Australia. This will allow quick identification of new safety information. Healthcare professionals are asked to report any suspected adverse events at www.tga.gov.au/reporting-problems.

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Reference: 1. Spikevax Bivalent Product Information, August 2022.



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Product Information

CSIRO study sees benefits of krill oil

KRILL oil supplements may help alleviate stiffness and physical function in patients with mild to moderate knee osteoarthritis, research from the CSIRO reveals.

The research published in *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* found that krill oil supplements “resulted in modest improvements in knee pain, stiffness and physical function” over a six month period, compared with placebo treatment.

CSIRO Principal Clinical Researcher, Dr Welma Stonehouse, said the results, combined with future research, would provide information and enhance the understanding of complementary medicines for both consumers and the health professionals who prescribe them.

Guild backs Andrews' election pledge

VICTORIAN Premier, Daniel Andrews' \$19 million pre-election commitment to deliver a 12-month pilot expanding pharmacists' scope of practice is being welcomed by the Pharmacy Guild of Australia.

Under the proposal, pharmacists in Victoria will be authorised to treat uncomplicated urinary tract infections (UTIs) and minor skin conditions, reissue contraceptive prescriptions and administer a broader range of vaccination services from 01 Jul 2023, if Labor is re-elected this weekend.

The pilot would also see the State Government pay pharmacies \$20 for each patient consultation, limiting patients' out-of-pocket expenses to the cost of any prescribed medications.

Guild Victorian Branch President, Anthony Tassone, said the scheme would provide improved healthcare outcomes for patients.

“Allowing pharmacists to provide women antibiotic treatment for urinary tract infections and repeat

prescriptions for oral-contraceptive therapy will provide choice and increase access to care that women need and reduce hospital presentations,” he said.

“Pharmacists are highly skilled and qualified medicines experts, who already assess, diagnose and treat common conditions every day.

“Authorising pharmacists to treat uncomplicated UTIs and issue repeat oral contraceptive prescriptions is a practical step that will help relieve the burden on our overstretched health system and ensure women have access to the routine healthcare services they need.”

However, Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) Victorian Chair, Dr Anita Munoz, criticised the planned pilot, describing it as a “band-aid plan” to tackle the shortage of GPs in the State.

“It is disappointing to hear decision-makers oversimplify and minimise the important function of the GP in consultations involving



repeat prescriptions of the contraceptive pill, travel medicine discussions or diagnosing a UTI,” she said.

“Pharmacists don't have the training and expertise to make these calls and pregnancy, cancer, genital infections, and undiagnosed diabetes can also cause similar symptoms to a UTI.

“Unlike pharmacists, a GP will take a full history, perform dipstick urine testing and physical examinations as well as pathology urine testing as needed.”

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Dispensary Corner

AN AMERICAN couple has made headlines after welcoming healthy twins born from embryos which were frozen over three decades ago. Rachel and Philip Ridgeway from Portland, Oregon are believed to be the parents of babies born from the longest-frozen embryos to ever result in a live birth, with the new babies joining their four other children - all naturally conceived - who are aged 8, 6, 3 and almost 2. The twins came from a total of five embryos which were created for an anonymous married couple using IVF, and were frozen on 22 Apr 1992. They didn't end up using the embryos, and in 2007 donated them to the US National Embryo Donation Center in Knoxville, Tennessee, in the hope another family might be able to use them. The Ridgeways were keen to grow their brood further, and specifically asked the Donation Center if they could be considered for "the ones that had been waiting the longest". After being selected, attempts were made to thaw and then implant the five embryos, with two of them surviving and resulting in the new baby twins. The parents of the now six-strong clutch of kids said "we've never had in our minds a set number of children we'd like to have...we've always thought we'll have as many as God wants to give us, and when we heard about embryo adoption, we thought that's something we would like to do".

Tasmania looks to extend scope

PHARMACISTS in Tasmania could soon see their scope of practice expanded, with the State's Department of Health being tasked with identifying ways that pharmacists can deliver a broader range of health services.

In a statement released this morning, Tasmania Premier and Minister for Health, Jeremy Rockliff, said his Government was "committed to doing what it can to improve access to GPs and ease pressure on our hospitals".

"We are undertaking a Pharmacy Scope of Practice Review to consider what other services and supports this highly skilled group of professionals may be able to safely provide to Tasmanians," he said.

"However, we believe there are steps we can take in the interim.

"I've tasked the Department of Health to immediately look at ways we can extend the role of pharmacists before the Review outcomes.

"This includes expanding the list

of medications that are already subject to continued dispensing provisions, such as medications used to treat high blood pressure and high cholesterol, to include a broader group of medicines like oral contraceptives, medications for the treatment of migraine, eczema, asthma and emphysema, as well as patients who are stabilised on anti-depressant medications.

"This would mean that pharmacists could dispense or supply typically a month of medication after a patient's prescription runs out and the patient had been unable to access a GP.



"It does not mean pharmacists can initiate or prescribe these medications."

Rockliff added that he has also asked the Department to investigate enabling pharmacists to administer more vaccinations, including travel vaccines already prescribed by a GP.

COVID-19 apathy

NEW research conducted by Pfizer Australia, has revealed that 60% of Australians believe the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic is over, despite a recent rise in case numbers.

The survey found that 46% of respondents said they were less concerned about their personal risk of serious illness, than they were in 2021.

University of Sydney Infectious Diseases Specialist, Professor Robert Booy, has urged Australians not to be complacent about the virus and to practice COVID safe measures.

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