

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features three pages of news.

Transition period

IN LIGHT of the Australian Association of Consultant Pharmacists (AACP) imminent closure late last year, the Department of Health and Aged Care will implement a transition period whereby the AACP Medicine Review Numbers that are valid as of 31 Dec 2022, will remain valid until 30 June 2023 within the Pharmacy Programs Administrator (PPA) Portal.

This will ensure currently accredited pharmacists can continue to utilise their existing AACP Accreditation to provide services, the PPA said.

An update on the PPA website notes that during this transition period, the Department will "review options available in regards to pharmacist accreditation".

New Sanofi vaccine

VIDPREVTYN Beta, a new COVID-19 vaccine developed by Sanofi, has been authorised by the UK Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency. It becomes the seventh COVID-19 vaccine authorised by the British regulator, following expert advice from the independent Commission on Human Medicines.

VidPrevtyn Beta combines the spike protein from a COVID virus variant, Beta, with an 'adjuvant' - an additional ingredient to trigger a stronger immune response.

The clinical evidence for this authorisation is based on data from about 800 individuals previously immunised with an mRNA or viral-vectored vaccine.

The authorisation is for the use of this vaccine in those aged 18 and older, as a heterologous booster dose, given as a single injection.

This means that those who got a different vaccine (mRNA or viral-vectored) as a primary course, can receive this vaccine as a booster.

Board warns against online scripts

THE Medical Board of Australia has issued new draft guidelines which warn doctors not to prescribe medication to people via text, email or online in cases where they have never actually spoken to the patient.

The update is part of a wide-ranging consultation process to update procedures around telehealth, with the current guidelines not having been updated in more than a decade.

The revised guidelines note that "prescribing or providing healthcare for a patient with whom you have never consulted, whether face-to-face, via video or telephone is not good practice and is not supported by the Board".

"This includes requests for medication communicated by text, email or online that do not take place in real-time and are based on the patient completing a health questionnaire, but where the practitioner has never spoken with the patient," the document notes. "Any practitioner who prescribes



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for patients in these circumstances must be able to explain how the prescribing and management of the patient was appropriate and necessary in the circumstances," the draft guidelines warn.

The consultation document notes that in some emergency situations "it may not be possible or appropriate to practise according to these guidelines".

"If an alternative is not available,

a telehealth consultation should be as thorough as possible and be followed up with more suitable arrangements for the continuing care and follow up of the patient."

The guidelines are seen as potentially impacting the operations of several online medical and prescription providers.

Submissions to the consultation are open until mid-Feb - more details at medicalboard.gov.au.

Scarring trial

ASX-LISTED Pharmaxis Limited has announced the completion of recruitment in the final placebo control stage of its study into topical anti-scarring drug PXS-6302.

The trial, known as SOLARIA2, is being undertaken by the University of Western Australia under the leadership of Fiona Wood, Director of the WA Burns Service.

It involves 50 adult patients treated for scars of greater than one year in age and over 10cm² in size, for a period of three months.

The first eight patients treated were on the active drug, with the remaining 42 randomised 1:1 to either active or placebo treatment.

Final results are scheduled for the second quarter of 2023, with Pharmaxis CEO Gary Phillips citing "encouraging" interim data.

US FDA approves new HIV medication

AMERICA'S Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has granted approval for Sunlenca (lenacapavir), a new type of antiretroviral medication for adult patients living with HIV.

Sunlenca can be used in cases where HIV infections cannot be successfully treated with other available treatments due to resistance, intolerance or safety

considerations.

After a starting oral dose, Sunlenca is administered as subcutaneous injections once every six months.

It's the first in a new class of drugs called capsid inhibitors to be FDA-approved for treating HIV, and works by blocking the virus' protein shell (the capsid) and interfering with its life cycle.

7 KEY CYBER SECURITY MEASURES

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Discovery leads to COPD treatment

RESEARCH led by the Centenary Institute, the University of Technology Sydney and Ghent University Hospital, Belgium has identified a new therapeutic approach for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) - the targeting and inhibition of a protein called RIPK1.

The third leading cause of death worldwide and with no effective treatments, COPD is a chronic lung disease also known as emphysema.

It is characterised by a mix of airway inflammation and blockage, and lung damage which makes it difficult to breathe.

Reported in the prestigious *European Respiratory Journal*, the researchers found increased levels of the protein RIPK1 in the lungs of people suffering from COPD as well as in experimental COPD mouse models.

Inhibiting RIPK1 helped protect against COPD and may represent a new approach for treatment.

Co-senior study author Professor

Phil Hansbro (pictured), Director of the Centenary UTS Centre for Inflammation said that the primary risk factor for COPD is smoking tobacco but that the disease can also be caused by breathing in dust, fumes, chemicals and air pollution.

"Cigarette smoke or exposure to other irritants triggers inflammation and can induce cell death in the lungs and airways, which directly contributes to the development of COPD," Professor Hansbro said.

"We investigated RIPK1 as it plays a key role in cell survival and death as well as inflammation.

"We found that there were far higher levels of RIPK1 in patients suffering from COPD as well as in our COPD mouse models."

Subsequent study by the researchers, with COPD mouse models, found that inhibiting RIPK1 provided a significant protective effect against COPD.

"We saw reduced structural changes to the airways and



decreased damage to the air sacs of the lungs.

"Our data indicates that inhibiting RIPK1 lessened both inflammation and the death of healthy lung and airway cells meaning less tissue damage overall," said Professor Hansbro.

For more info [CLICK HERE](#).

PBS treatments

ROCHE Australia's Vabysmo (faricimab) is now on the PBS for the treatment of neovascular or 'wet' age-related macular degeneration (nAMD) and diabetic macular oedema (DMO).

Vabysmo is the first bispecific antibody approved and is now reimbursed for nAMD and DMO in Australia.

The treatment works by specifically recognising and blocking the activity of proteins known as angiotensin-2 (Ang-2) and vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF).

Stuart Knight, General Manager, Roche Products Australia, said: "We thank the Australian Government for recognising the value Vabysmo will bring to Australians living with as nAMD and DMO and for their investment in this treatment via the PBS."

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Dispensary Corner

EVEN ruthless cyber hackers have a conscience, it appears, with a ransomware gang issuing a formal apology to a medical facility it attacked in Toronto.

The SickKids teaching and research hospital was heavily impacted on 18 Dec when its IT systems were invaded, causing its phone lines, website and corporate systems to go down.

Two weeks of chaos ensued, and last week the hospital announced it had restored about half of its priority systems, including platforms which were causing diagnostic or treatment delays.

However two days later, the LockBit ransomware criminal organisation released a decryptor for the attack, saying one of its members had violated rules by attacking the healthcare facility.

"We formally apologise for the attack on sikkids.ca and give back the decryptor for free," LockBit posted on an internet security forum.

"The partner who attacked this hospital violated our rules, is blocked and is no longer in our affiliate program," LockBit said.

LockBit apparently operates as "Ransomware-as-a-Service" platform, with members using the system to breach networks, steal data and encrypt devices - subject to a range of rules including being "forbidden to encrypt institutions where damage to the files could lead to death, such as cardiology centers, neurosurgical departments, maternity hospitals and the like".

Immune system tracked

IN A world-first comprehensive study, the human immune system has been tracked from birth up until the age of 75 years, which has paved the way for future therapies to tune the immune systems of people at higher risk of certain diseases.

The research defined the composition of the human immune system throughout life by investigating over 50 populations of immune cells and establishing an immune cell cytometry atlas in people as they age.

Cell populations from both the innate and adaptive immune systems were analysed, as both are crucial to help the body respond appropriately to infections.

Led by Sedi Jalali, a PhD candidate from Murdoch Children's Research Institute, the researchers focused especially on younger age groups as very little was known about early-life immune development.

The biggest changes to the immune system were seen after birth and particularly in school-aged children.

These are periods when children are most exposed to new germs and get different vaccinations.

Infant fevers, childcare and school



colds are outcomes of our immune systems changing and responding to those novel exposures.

The research identified major changes to conventional and unconventional T-cells, which develop in the body to specifically recognise molecules expressed by invading pathogens.

There were also changes to B-cells that produce antibodies to neutralise pathogens; and monocytes and natural killer cells, which are key players of the innate immune response and rapidly initiate the human immune response to various infectious diseases.

'Exercise snacking' for older Aussies

DEAKIN University academics have developed a new approach to health and fitness that could revolutionise the way older Australians exercise and improve their sense of wellbeing.

Researchers found 'exercise snacking' - where wannabe fitness fanatics perform short bursts of regular bodyweight at-home strength training - could be enough to maintain movement

and enhance the quality of life of Australians aged 65 and older.

An exercise snack is a routine of five exercises, e.g., single-leg knee bends, sit to stand, or single-leg quarter squats performed continuously for one minute with a one-minute passive recovery break in-between.

The key was to do the exercise routines at least once per day.

Federal funding

BETTER treatments and diagnostics for childhood pneumonia, heart disease, rare diseases and stroke are the aims of the latest Murdoch Children's Research Institute-led projects awarded federal funding.

Five Murdoch Children's researchers have received a National Health and Medical Research Council Ideas Grant, which supports innovative research, totalling more than \$6 million collectively.

Associate Professor David Godler has secured \$1.8 million for his research in collaboration with Victorian Clinical Genetic Services that will assess the benefits of genomic newborn screening in infants signed up to GenV.

"There are over 7,000 rare diseases that can take up to four years to diagnose. Families consult on average five doctors and receive three misdiagnoses," he said.

This has huge health and economic burden for the children, their families and the health system.

Shrink disqualified

A WESTERN Australian psychiatrist who developed a personal relationship with a former patient has been disqualified from applying for medical registration for two years.

The WA State Administrative Tribunal found Dr Margaret Florence Lumley's behaviour with a patient between 1996 and 1998 (258 visits) demonstrated professional misconduct.

Dr Lumley was reprimanded, disqualified and fined \$6,000.