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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features two pages of news.

Variant spreads

SOUTH Africa has detected its first XBB.1.5 coronavirus variant case.

The most transmissible sub-variant was detected at the Stellenbosch University.

Director of the Centre for Epidemic Response and Innovation, Tulio de Oliveira, said the variant was detected on a 27 Dec sample.

"At present, there is no increase in cases, hospitalisations or deaths.

"We are increasing genomics surveillance in South Africa."

Ozempic supply crunch to continue

THE worldwide "very serious shortage" of Ozempic (Semaglutide) (*PD* 03 Nov 2022), that first started in Apr 2022, will continue till Apr this year, Adjunct Professor John Skerritt (Pictured), head of the Therapeutic Goods Administration, has said in an interview with the ABC Radio National earlier this week.

The weekly injectable drug originally designed for diabetes is being promoted online for its off-label use, which is weight loss.

"The shortage of this product worldwide is really stimulated by two things.

"It's an effective anti-diabetic drug for people with particular characteristics of their diabetes.

"It's proved to be a lot more popular and lot more valuable.

"So that drove the original shortage, and it was pushed along further by all this social media promotion for weight loss.

"And I really need to emphasise it isn't a magic pill.

"You can't have a hamburger one day and take this pill the next.

"It's designed for a narrow group of patients at a different dose, in a different form.



"But it's not yet available for weight loss."

Prof Skerritt said the TGA has been able to bring in the drug from other countries, but "they are in

very, very short supply".

Prof Skerritt said the TGA is working with social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, eBay, Amazon and Gumtree to "block posts with this content because it's been all over a lot of them," he said.

He added that these platforms are well aware of the issue but "their challenge is having algorithms that effectively block illegal ads.

"And so it's a little bit like mushrooms.

"The advertisements spring up."

The TGA is strongly advising people against buying the drug online from China, Eastern Europe or North America.

How do you safeguard your business and patient data from cybercrime?



VIEW GUIDE

FRED

Misconduct!

THE Health Care Complaints Commission prosecuted a complaint against medical practitioner Dr Nouredine Houfani before the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

In its decision of 23 Dec 2022, the Tribunal found the complaint proven and that Dr Houfani was guilty of unsatisfactory professional conduct and professional misconduct over the years 2017 to 2020.

Dr Houfani was reprimanded and ordered to comply with several conditions, including restricting his prescribing of Schedule 8 and 4D drugs and that he must practice only under appropriate supervision.

For the full decision found at NSW Caselaw [CLICK HERE](#).

First AL amyloidosis listing on PBS

JANSSEN'S Darzalex SC (daratumumab solution for injection) is now available through the PBS for use in combination with other medicines (cyclophosphamide, bortezomib, and dexamethasone) for Australians who are newly diagnosed with amyloid light chain amyloidosis (AL amyloidosis).

AL amyloidosis is a rare disease where, for no apparent reason, plasma cells in the bone marrow produce abnormal antibody proteins (called amyloid light chains).

The abnormal proteins clump together and can build up in vital organs, causing damage and

impairing their function.

It most frequently affects the heart, kidneys, liver, and nerves and can lead to organ failure.

Darzalex SC is the first medicine specifically approved and government funded for the treatment of AL amyloidosis, Janssen reports.

It is a targeted immunotherapy that works by attaching to a specific signalling molecule on the surface of amyloid-producing plasma cells, triggering the patient's immune system to attack and destroy these cells.

Eligible patients will pay just \$7.30 (on concession) or \$30 (general patients) each month for Darzalex SC.

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Dispensary Corner

A NEW hair trend sweeping the world - or at least the floors of barber shops - is seeing discarded human hair recycled to help the environment.

The initiative has rolled out across Belgium in the last few months, with the Hair Recycle project taking the cuttings and using them to create matted squares which can absorb oil and other hydrocarbons.

Apparently human hair is particularly powerful in taking on fat and hydrocarbons, with the specially created mats (pictured) deployed to soak up pollutants in water before it reaches rivers or the ocean.

The project is run by a group curiously named Dung Dung, with founder Patrick Janssen saying "our products are all the more ethical as they are manufactured locally...they are not imported from the other side of the planet."

"They are made here to deal with local problems," he said.

Hairdressers pay a small fee to have their cuttings collected, with *Reuters* quoting a Brussels-based salon owner saying "What motivates me, personally, is that I find it a shame hair is nowadays just thrown in the bin, when I know that so much could be done with it".



Jugs 'n' Jocks a winner



CLERMONT pharmacist, Grant Oswald, has taken home the Guardian Community Engagement Award in acknowledgement of his efforts to raise awareness for men's mental health.

Oswald, Clermont's sole pharmacist, first started the 'Jugs 'n' Jocks' program after seeing how his wife and her friends candidly approached mental health topics.

Held annually, the 'Jugs 'n' Jocks' program encourages local men to come together to discuss mental health issues and to learn firsthand from guest speakers covering topics such as mental health strategies, finances, and relationships.

The program has since grown to encompass over 100 attendees, and even expanded to include a mental health project at two local primary schools within the Clermont region.

Oswald said: "It's a get together for blokes to come have a chat and check up on each other."

"I think blokes are starting to realise that we can ask for help and there shouldn't be a stigma around men and their emotions."

"We've recently sponsored a mental health resilience project for

two of Clermont's primary schools, and we hope this is something that can help break down barriers in the future, and over time, help us all to open up," he added.

To achieve such a success, Oswald shares that the Clermont team's family mentality and incredible attitude is key.

"We couldn't be where we are without our incredible team, so their help is paramount."

"It's really humbling to be recognised as Guardian Pharmacy of the Year for Community Engagement, especially due to the last couple years being a tough time for many."

"Being recognised on a national scale truly means a lot."

The award comes as Guardian Pharmacy recently announced its pharmacies around Australia are being invited to integrate into the Amcal brand, which is designed to ensure a more sustainable pharmacy structure under a single, competitive brand offering.

Pictured: Guardian state manager Jess Cranston, Grant Oswald, and business development manager Rachael Chandler with Oswald's community award.

Guild Update

Rural Pharmacy Forum

THE Assistant Minister for Rural and Regional Health, the Hon Emma McBride MP, will officially open the Rural Pharmacy Forum as part of the Australian Pharmacy Professional (APP) Conference on the Gold Coast on 23 March 2023.

"As a pharmacist of over 20 years and the only pharmacist in federal Parliament, I'm proud to be opening the Rural Pharmacy Forum at next year's APP Conference," she said.

"Pharmacists are some of the most trusted healthcare professionals in Australia and this forum is an opportunity for us to discuss the important role pharmacists play in delivering healthcare to people living in rural and remote communities."

National President of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, Trent Twomey, said the forum was a highlight of APP.

"The forum provides a great opportunity for all pharmacists to learn more about developments in this sector of our profession and I am especially excited by this year's theme of innovation and access which is so timely," Professor Twomey said.