

4 ways to help build strong bones



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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features two pages of news, plus full pages from:

- Dermal Therapy
- Fend

High SPF lip care

DERMAL Therapy has a range of SPF50+ lip care products to protect, moisturise and treat dry chapped lips with no bitter aftertaste - see more on **page three**.

Antiviral update

ELIGIBLE people who test positive to COVID using a rapid antigen test (RAT) can now access the antiviral medication on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) without requiring a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test to confirm the diagnosis.

The Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) recommended at its May 2024 meeting that the clinical criteria for PBS-subsidised Lagevrio (molnupiravir) and Paxlovid (nirmatrelvir and ritonavir) be "method-agnostic" with regards to nucleic acid testing for the respiratory pathogens.

The recommendation took effect on 1 Dec.

All other eligibility criteria relating to age, ethnicity, health complications and other risk factors remain unchanged.

Safe AI use in healthcare



A NEW initiative to create an online tool that will help classify different types of artificial intelligence (AI) solutions used in Australian healthcare has been announced by the Digital Health Cooperative Research Centre.

Teaming up with the Department of Health and Aged Care and two specialist AI teams from the University of Technology Sydney, the initiative complements efforts by governments, peak organisations and clinical professional and safety bodies to ensure AI is deployed safely into health care settings.

The tool will adapt the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) AI Classification Framework, which aims to assess the opportunities and risks in different types of AI systems, to the Australian context.

The project will see the tool being modified for healthcare organisations in Australia to support the safe adoption of AI and it is expected to be ready for testing by mid-2025.

"As government looks to build community trust and promote

AI adoption, we need to provide guidance on how to use AI safely and responsibly," said Sam Peascod, Assistant Secretary, Digital and Service Design, Department of Health and Aged Care.

"Having a tool that can assist in classifying and performing a risk assessment of AI technologies will support the adoption of AI solutions by health care organisations and health care providers, ultimately leading to better health outcomes for consumers," he added.

The dynamic, interactive tool will be a first-of-its-kind initiative, highlighting specific risks associated with bias, explainability and robustness of AI within healthcare.

"The availability and adoption of AI is without doubt moving at a rapid pace across all sectors, including healthcare", DHCRC CEO Annette Schmiede said.

"The challenge is building clear and consistent guidance and tools, ensuring these are effective for the diverse range of audiences and AI solutions across healthcare including developers, health care providers and consumers." KB

Diabetes devices safety alerts

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has issued two product safety alerts that may affect customers with diabetes.

The Accu-Chek Spirit 3.15ml cartridge system has been recalled due to potential for insulin leakage arising from a manufacturing problem.

Affected devices were manufactured between 01 Mar 2024 and 31 Oct 2024.

Customers with these products should discontinue use and discuss alternatives with their healthcare team.

Meanwhile, the deactivation of the 3G network has left customers with an Omnipod DASH Personal Diabetes Manager U100 (mmol) in the lurch, with complaints of rapid battery drain as the device fruitlessly attempts to find a network connection.

Customers have been advised they should put the device on airplane mode.

More information about both these products is available on the TGA's safety recall website.

Fends off insects

FEND Insect Repellent range offers DEET-free protection from mosquitoes and sandflies for customers.

It is hypoallergenic and can be used on infants from two months up - more information on **page four**.



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Adrian Staltari
TerryWhite Chemmart Playford



Dispensary Corner

HOW far would you go to get out of exercise?

A man in South Korea was given a one-year suspended prison sentence for deliberately gaining 20kg to avoid bootcamp and "other strenuous activities" in doing military service.

South Korean men under 30 have to do about two years of military service, but people with health issues may instead be permitted to do lighter alternatives, such as office work with a municipal government.

Upon learning that a body mass index of over 35 could get him off hook, the man in question intentionally gained weight by following a regimen designed by an acquaintance.

This entailed doubling his food intake and drinking large amounts of water before weigh-ins - hardly rocket science, but it was enough to earn the acquaintance a six-month suspended sentence for his role in the enterprise.

From a starting BMI of 29, the culprit managed to achieve the 35+ goal some years later and be classified unfit for duty.

The court reportedly noted that the "defendant has admitted his wrongdoing and expressed willingness to fulfil his military duty sincerely".

He is far from the first man to attempt evading military service, with a public name-and-shame file of culprits that includes a celebrity who pulled out his teeth to avoid it.

As for the corpulent culprit, now the real punishment begins - trying to lose the 20kg.

Mental health inequity



NEW research has found that Australians living in the most disadvantaged areas experience the highest levels of mental health distress and have the least access to services.

Researchers used mental distress data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics in conjunction with census demographic data to investigate levels of mental health distress across the population.

They reported that about 6% of working-age adults experience 'very high' mental health distress, indicating a likely mental disorder.

However, the distribution was very uneven, with around 14% in the lowest-income households reaching this threshold compared with only 2% in the highest-income households.

To establish how equitably mental health services are distributed, the researchers calculated the total number of Medicare-subsidised mental health services provided in a year, and divided this by the number of people with the most need for those services (that is, those with the highest level of mental distress).

They found that among those with the most need of care, people living in the poorest areas received six times fewer Medicare-subsidised mental health services

compared with those living in the richest areas.

However, when it comes to public community mental services, including public hospital outpatient services and other community services not funded by Medicare, a lower level of inequity was found.

Overall, when Medicare-funded and other public community mental health services were combined, people with the most need living in the poorest areas received three times fewer services than those in the richest areas.

The research "paints a picture of a two-tiered mental healthcare system, where the 'poor' are more reliant on public community mental health services, while everyone else uses Medicare", the team noted.

They proposed several potential reasons why people living in the poorest areas might access fewer Medicare-funded mental health services, including increasing out-of-pocket costs and a lack of services in many rural areas.

"Addressing inequity isn't just about more funding; it's about smarter, targeted investment," said Monash University's Associate Professor Joanne Enticott, adding that looking at equity in this way "helps ensure resources reach those most in need, not just those who can afford care". *KB*



Guild Update

Rental insights

THE Guild is offering a sneak peek into the latest trends in pharmacy leasing, in tomorrow's Pharmacy Business and Career Network webinar.

Join Phil Chapman (Lease 1) and Scott Harris (the Guild) as they share key early insights from soon-to-be-released 2025 Pharmacy Rental Report.

They will provide practical guidance for pharmacy owners on managing occupancy costs, navigating lease negotiations, and understanding their value as a tenant.

The webinar will cover the current retail leasing landscape for pharmacies; key benchmarks and industry indicators; and strategic advice for lease negotiations.

There are more than 5800 community pharmacies located in retail spaces, including shopping centres, throughout Australia.

Their stable, low-risk profile makes community pharmacies high-value tenants, and understanding this can provide a competitive advantage for leasing negotiations.

The Guild's Pharmacy Rental Report is a members-only resource updated annually with key trends and insights.

The webinar is free and available for any pharmacist or pharmacy owner.

Click **HERE** to register for PBCN's *Pharmacy rental and leasing essentials*, Wednesday 04 Dec, 7-8 PM AEDT on Zoom.

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