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ACCC roadblocks Sigma-CW merger

SIGMA Healthcare Limited's proposed acquisition of Chemist Warehouse Group Holdings has been thrown into doubt as the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) has expressed preliminary concerns over it (**PD** breaking news).

In a Statement of Issues released today, the ACCC outlined potential competition problems.

"This is a significant structural change for the pharmacy sector, with the largest pharmacy chain by revenue merging with a key wholesaler to thousands of independent pharmacies that compete against Chemist Warehouse (CW)," said ACCC Commissioner Stephen Ridgeway.

Wholesaler Sigma also has under its banner Amcal+, Discount Drug Stores, PharmaSave, and Guardian.

CW, which is also a wholesaler and distributor, operates various brands, including CW, MyChemist, Ultra Beauty, My Beauty Spot, and Optometrist Warehouse.

The ACCC's concerns span both the retail and wholesale levels and it plans to gather input from other parties, including rival pharmacies.

"The transaction would create a uniquely vertically integrated

company across the pharmacy supply chain, potentially raising barriers to rival expansion or entry, thus lessening competition," Ridgeway stated.

The ACCC is specifically focused on whether the merged entity might favour CW stores or impose less favourable terms on non-CW stores, thereby increasing their costs and reducing competitiveness.

There are also concerns about CW accessing commercially sensitive data from pharmacies supplied by Sigma, which could be used to undermine competition.

Currently, Ridgeway said, independent pharmacies have three main wholesaler options.

Post-acquisition, this may effectively reduce to two, raising the risk of competitive harm.

The ACCC is also wary of the

merger's potential to lessen competition in pharmacy retailing, possibly leading to higher prices and reduced service quality for Australian consumers.

Additionally, the proposed merger could impact upstream markets for pharmacy retail products, particularly those that compete with CW and Sigma's many private label products.

The ACCC has not yet reached a final decision on these issues. *JG*

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features four pages of the latest news, including our **Beauty & Wellness** feature, plus the **June MIMS Update** and full pages from:

- TerryWhite Chemmart
- Willach

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Metformin study

FLINDERS University researchers have analysed how an antidiabetic treatment could help control the growth of tumours, potentially paving the way for the design of better cancer treatments.

The new study investigated what happens when metformin, a type 2 diabetes medication, is used to treat colorectal cancer cells, in the process, demonstrating that it could be exploited to develop new cancer therapies.

“Our work has pinpointed that metformin uses small pieces of RNA (called microRNAs) to act as a ‘circuit breaker’ and turn off certain genes that are involved in cell growth and division, so it is possible that our findings could eventually be used to develop a new targeted cancer therapy,” said lead author Dr Ayla Orang.

To learn more [CLICK HERE](#).

Blooms top retail managers awarded

BLOOMS The Chemist’s annual conference celebrated the dedication of its store staff, with Mikaela Bell (**pictured**) from the pharmacy in Bakewell, NT, winning 2024 Retail Manager of the Year.

Bell was recognised for her outstanding achievements in sales revenue, store standards, training compliance, and customer service.

Held in Sydney, Blooms 2024 Retail Managers Conference was attended by the group’s support office staff and supplier partners, and emphasised the crucial role of retail managers in promoting good health and wellbeing.

CEO Emmanuel Vavoulas commented, “having a supportive, inclusive culture is key to being an employer of choice”.

“It’s important that our frontline team members have the resources they need to prioritise their own health and wellbeing so they can continue providing expert care and advice to their communities.”

Attendees heard from various



guest speakers such as resilience and high-performance coach David Buttifant, who addressed wellness and managing work pressure.

Chris Boyle, Founder of StandbyU Foundation, provided insights into domestic violence issues.

Mental health expert and Founder of the ‘Heart on my Sleeve’ movement Mitch Wallis shared his personal experiences with anxiety, depression, and OCD.

The conference also included an exclusive retail study tour and the annual trade fair, featuring 48 supplier partner booths.

The event concluded with the Retail Manager’s Awards ceremony, where along with Bell, Tania Ison of Blooms store in Gladesville was named Retail Manager of the Year Runner-Up.

Jamie Khan of Blooms The Chemist Cranbourne won the Customer Service award.

The Training Champion of the Year award was taken out by Erin Gatty of Blooms The Chemist Cola.

AFT Pharmaceuticals received the Supplier Award for the highest percentage growth.

Further, the Shining Light awards went to Janette Houghton, Stockland; Emma Sheekey, Goulburn; Natalie Parker, Stud Park; Rommel Mendoza, Northbridge; Sarah Scanlon, Bathurst Stockland; Sharon Clarke, Lismore; and Rachel Nickisson, Bullcreek.

The Blooms conference was sponsored by Symbion, AFT Pharmaceuticals, Aspen, Beiersdorf Australia, Caruso’s Natural Health, Haleon, Reckitt, and Vidacorp. *JG*

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Editor's Choice: tbh Skincare kicks goals with new partnership

TIKTOK-VIRAL cosmetics brand, tbh Skincare, has added a sporty twist to its popular pimple patches.

The company has partnered with Australia women's national football team, the Matildas, to release a limited-edition co-branded set of soccer-themed pimple patches.

Designed to speed up the recovery time of active pimples, the patches are infused with ascorbic acid to help correct post-breakout pigmentation, tea tree oil to reduce redness and swelling, niacinamide to soothe damaged skin, and salicylic acid to remove congestion.

The pimple patches work



overnight to gently absorb excess fluids, protect the wound, and prevent scarring.

Each pack contains 60 patches in a variety of sizes, featuring 24 new unique green and gold

patches in addition to 36 in the original clear design.

Tbh Skincare x Matildas pimple patches (RRP: \$19.95) are available exclusively in-store at Priceline Pharmacy.

MCoBeauty additions



AUSSIE brand MCoBeauty, which is stocked in Chemist Warehouse, is highlighting a range of new products, including Fragrance Roll Ons in four different scents.

Retailing for \$14, the roll ons deliver light, buildable scents in a convenient, on-the-go rollerball bottle - the perfect size for a customer's pocket or purse.

Also new to the MCoBeauty collection is the Summer Daze Lip Oil, a luscious, tinted lip oil with a high-shine finish (RRP: \$18), and a Golden Glow Lip Oil for RRP: \$16.

Adding to the range of lip products are the Lip Whip Intense Repair Balm (RRP: \$18), Sweet Lips Sugar Scrub (RRP: \$14), Hydro Boss Gloss Balm (RRP: \$14), and Hyaluronic Lip Balm (RRP: \$18).

For a healthy pop of colour, customers can opt for the Summer Blush Cheek & Lip Cream (RRP: \$20), while the Loose Powder Cool & Set (RRP: \$28) offers a silky setting powder enriched with skincare ingredients.

Rounding out the latest goodies from MCoBeauty is the Microbrows Ultra-Fine Crayon (RRP: \$18) for precise brows, and the Super Pen 4-in-1 Liner (RRP: \$18) for all your touch-up needs.

Reveal radiant skin

SKIN Physics' new 15% Vitamin C and Ferulic Acid Serum has hit the shelves in Priceline Pharmacies around Australia.

The high-strength brightening formula is designed to fight against dull skin, correct uneven texture, balance out skin tone and combat signs of ageing, for smooth, bright, and more resilient skin.

The appearance of dark spots, hyperpigmentation and dullness are reduced, thanks to pure ascorbic acid, a potent antioxidant.



QV's new cleansing solutions for sensitive skin



EGO Pharmaceuticals' skincare brand for sensitive skin, QV, has introduced two new cleansers to its product range.

Both the QV Face Gentle Oil Free Cleanser (RRP: \$16.99) and QV Face Oil Free Foaming Cleanser (RRP: \$14.99) are ideal for dry and sensitive skin types.

Enriched with safflower oil, the non-soap cleansers work to gently remove impurities, make-up and excess oil, and are PH balanced, which means they won't strip the skin of its natural protective oils.

The company recommends using the cleansers morning and night.

QV products can be found in pharmacies around Australia, including Chemist Warehouse.

MEANWHILE, the QV Healthcare Practitioner Student Scholarship is still accepting applications from pharmacy students until 11.59pm AEDT 27 Jun.

The scholarship will award a total of \$30,000 in prize money, in a bid to advance the education of the next generation of Australian healthcare practitioners.

For more info, [CLICK HERE](#).

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Beauty & Wellness
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Dispensary Corner

FORGET counting sheep!

New research in *JAMA Ophthalmol* suggests that melatonin, the go-to medicine for insomniacs, may also be your eyes' best friend as you age.

A team of international researchers, who must have stayed up late themselves, pored over health records of over 200,000 people.

They discovered that those popping melatonin pills had a lower risk of age-related macular degeneration compared to those who didn't.

The study divided folks into two camps: those with no signs of decline and those already squinting a bit.

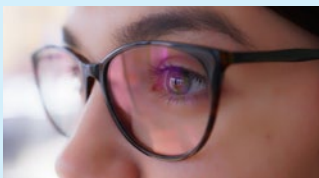
The melatonin munchers in both groups had better chances of avoiding or slowing further deterioration of their peepers.

However, the researchers, not quite ready to declare melatonin the miracle eye cure, noted that other lifestyle factors might have skewed the results.

So, they're calling for more research - perhaps with less late-night work.

In short, if you want to keep your vision sharp, you might consider adding melatonin to your nightly routine.

Just think, those little sleep aids could be pulling double duty: tucking you in and keeping your eyes sparkling for many years to come.



MM2024 kicks off program

PROMINENT speakers and early bird registrations have been announced for the 48th SHPA National Conference, Medicines Management 2024 (MM2024).

This year's event, scheduled to take place in Adelaide from 14-16 Nov, will feature presenters such as journalist Stan Grant, artist and visual storyteller Simon Banks, and thought leader Yemi Penn.

Following Federal Health Minister Mark Butler's address, the conference will kick off with a keynote presentation by Grant.

The second plenary session will begin with an address by Shadow Health Minister Senator Anne Ruston, followed by Banks.

Closing the program, Penn will encourage a shift in perspective to improve performance sustainably.

Dr Kate O'Hara, SHPA Vice President, highlighted the impact of the speakers.

"Simon will use design theory, utilising visual storytelling and drawings, to challenge the



pharmacists and dispensary technicians in the audience.

"Yemi's strong affirming energy and 'rebellious curiosity', will compel the audience to really sit back and listen.

"And, of course, we are especially honoured to have Stan take us on a journey through his remarkable life as a journalist and fearless advocate to show us how important communication is when questioning justice and fighting for the rights of First Nations people."

O'Hara also urged practitioners to show that "spark that could ignite a whole new way of thinking", by submitting an abstract by 11:59pm AEST on 15 Jul - see more [HERE](#). *JG*

Nasodine 'germ killer' to be sold in SIN

AUSTRALIAN Firebrick Pharma Limited's Nasodine Nasal Spray is now on sale in Singapore (SIN).

Customers can order the product through Firebrick's newly launched website dedicated to Singapore sales.

Nasodine is classified as a topical antiseptic and does not require approval or licensing by Singapore's Health Sciences Authority (HSA) before sale.

Additionally, Firebrick has received HSA approval for its consumer advertisements for Nasodine as of yesterday.

Nasodine will be the first PVP-I nasal spray available in the region, marking it as a "first-in-

class" product.

"We believe that Nasodine will be a valuable product in the wake of the COVID pandemic because of increased awareness and concern about nasal germs," said Firebrick Executive Chairman, Dr Peter Molloy.

In Singapore, Nasodine will be promoted as "the nasal spray that kills germs".

However, in other markets, such as the US, it is marketed solely as a nasal cleanser.

Initially, Nasodine will be sold online, but in the future, it may also be available through pharmacies and other marketing partners, the company stated.

Concussion test

A **NEW** blood test has emerged from research led by Monash University, offering a precise method for detecting the lingering effects of sport-related concussions, and determining when it's safe for athletes to resume play.

The test measures two brain-specific proteins in the blood, offering insights into neurobiological recovery, a critical aspect often overlooked in concussion management.

In a study published in *JAMA Network Open*, researchers analysed blood samples from 137 players in the Victorian Amateur Football Association, comparing those who experienced concussions with non-concussed individuals.

They found that levels of glial fibrillary acidic protein (GFAP) and neurofilament light (NfL) in the blood could track the duration of brain recovery, aiding in decisions regarding return-to-play protocols.

Dr Stuart McDonald, the study's lead, emphasised the meticulous approach, with repeated blood tests conducted over six months.

The most striking finding was the variability in biomarker changes among individuals, with over 20% of concussion cases showing substantial and persistent increases in both GFAP and NfL, which remained elevated compared to non-concussed footballers for over four weeks.

Individuals with these extreme biomarker changes were substantially more likely to have lost consciousness as a result of their head knock.

To learn more, [CLICK HERE](#).

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- Michael Burdelof, Pharmacist Proprietor
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New Products

- **Avacopan (Tavneos)** is a selective antagonist of the human complement 5a receptor (C5aR1 or CD88) and competitively inhibits the interaction between C5aR1 and the anaphylatoxin C5a. The specific and selective blockade of C5aR1 by avacopan reduces the pro-inflammatory effects of C5a, which include neutrophil activation, migration and adherence to sites of small blood vessel inflammation, vascular endothelial cell retraction and permeability. *Tavneos, in combination with a rituximab or cyclophosphamide-based regimen, is indicated for the treatment of adults with anti-neutrophil cytoplasmic autoantibody-associated vasculitis (granulomatosis with polyangiitis and microscopic polyangiitis).* Tavneos capsules contain avacopan 10 mg and are available in packs of 180 capsules.
- **Clascoterone (Winlevi)** is an androgen receptor inhibitor. It is structurally similar to non-androgen corticosteroids and may exert its efficacy by means other than the androgen receptor. The main metabolite of clascoterone, cortexolone, is an intermediate in the synthesis of glucocorticoids and exhibits weak glucocorticoid properties. The exact mechanism of action of Winlevi for the topical treatment of acne vulgaris is unknown. *It is indicated for the topical treatment of acne vulgaris in patients 12 years of age and older.* Winlevi cream contains clascoterone 1% and is available in a 60 g tube.
- **Teclistamab (Tecvayli)** is a bispecific antibody that targets the CD3 receptor expressed on the surface of T cells and B cell maturation antigen, which is expressed on the surface of malignant multiple myeloma B-lineage cells, as well as late-stage B cells and plasma cells. *In vitro*, teclistamab activated T cells, caused the release of various proinflammatory cytokines, and resulted in the lysis of multiple myeloma cells. *Tecvayli as monotherapy has provisional approval for the treatment of adult patients with relapsed or refractory multiple myeloma who have received at least three prior therapies, including a proteasome inhibitor, an immunomodulatory agent and an anti-CD38 monoclonal antibody.* Tecvayli solution for injection contains teclistamab 30 mg/3 mL or 153 mg/1.7 mL and is available in packs of 1 vial.

New Indications

- **Bimekizumab (Bimzelx)** is now also indicated for the treatment of adult patients with active psoriatic arthritis who have had an inadequate response to or who have been intolerant to previous disease modifying antirheumatic drug therapy; with active nonradiographic axial spondyloarthritis with objective signs of inflammation as indicated by elevated C reactive protein and/or magnetic resonance imaging who have had an inadequate response to or are intolerant to nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs; and with active ankylosing spondylitis who have responded inadequately or are intolerant to conventional therapy.
- **Somatropin (rmc) (Saizen)** is now also indicated for growth disturbance (current height standard deviation score (H SDS) < -2.5 and parental adjusted H SDS < -1) in short children born small for gestational age with a birth weight and/or length below -2 standard deviations, who failed to show catch-up growth (height velocity SDS < 0 during the last year) by 4 years of age or later.

*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.*