

Blockchain an answer

TECHNOLOGY research and development standards group IEEE Standards Association (IEEE-SA) has analysed barriers and benefits of adopting blockchain technology for securing and optimising the pharmaceutical supply chain. IEEE-SA Global Business and Strategic Initiatives director Maria Palombini said the organisation had sought to evaluate the technology for more secure pharmaceutical supply chain operations.

"Global pharmaceutical supply chains are complex, siloed, and operate with legacy platforms that do not easily enable collaboration amongst the many partners, compliance with regulatory guidance, and cannot guarantee the security of the distribution of medicine," Palombini told *Drug Topics*.

With WHO estimating 10% to 30% of drugs are counterfeit, the technology could support verification of drug sources as well as enabling secure prescription, patient, and drug data and much more, she said.

Apr price disclosure

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration has published its summary of price disclosure price reductions for the 2018 April Cycle, which is the Fourth Remove Originator cycle, on the Price Disclosure (SPD) web page.

The posting includes details around flow-on reductions for F2 combination items.

Indicative prices for 01 Apr 2018, including price to pharmacy, dispensed price for maximum quantity and price premiums, will be published later this month, while final prices will be available from early Mar 2018.

The largest percentage reduction is a 44.22% price cut since Oct 2017 on the PBS price of Lamivudine oral solution, while reductions of more than 30% apply to cefepime, pemetrexed, esomeprazole and irinotecan.

There's also additional detail on the outcomes if a proposed amendment to legislation is passed by parliament - see pbs.gov.au.

Fred IT links with AMH

FRED IT Group and the Australian Medicines Handbook have announced a partnership which will provide users of the cloud-based solution Fred NXT system with direct access to the Australian Medicines Handbook (AMH) medicines information.

The enhancement became available yesterday, meaning Fred NXT pharmacies with a subscription to AMH Online are now able to directly access AMH content from their Fred NXT app bar whilst they are dispensing.

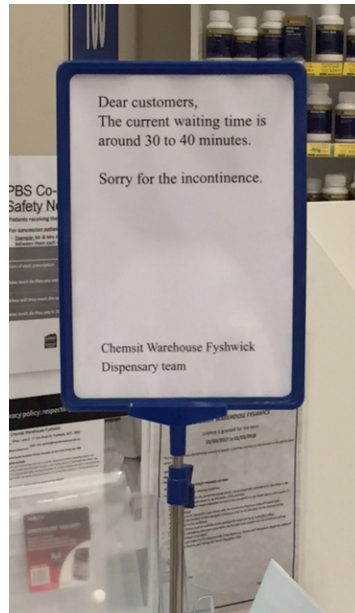
Fred IT ceo Paul Naismith said the move means pharmacists will be able to access relevant information about the drugs they are dispensing as they are doing so, supporting informed and efficient dispensing and prescribing.



"This partnership with the Australian Medicines Handbook is a fantastic example of how health and IT can work together to strengthen medication information systems whilst protecting the interests of health professionals and patients," Naismith added.

AMH gm David Dart said the new partnership with Fred was based on mutual goals of strengthening medication information systems and promoting the quality use of medicines information in Australia. "It is an important step in increasing the number of health professionals who have streamlined access to secure, up-to-date medicines information available to them during their work," he said.

Busting for a script?



PATIENTS visiting the Chemist Warehouse pharmacy in Fyshwick, ACT last weekend were confronted with an unfortunate grammatical error (**pictured**) on a sign advising of a 30-40 min waiting time.

We'll leave you to come up with some more appropriate captions - send your ideas through to info@pharmacydaily.com.au.

Rural stroke risk

NEW Australian research published in the *MJA* has revealed high risk rural patients are not receiving anticoagulant therapy when most should be taking non-vitamin K oral anticoagulant (NOAC) therapy, which has been shown to be safer than warfarin.

"Improving anticoagulation therapy rates for people with AF [atrial fibrillation] provides the greatest opportunity for reducing the incidence of ischaemic stroke in rural Australia," authors wrote.

Visit mja.com.au to access the study abstract.

Creso expansion

ASX-LISTED cannabis company Creso has announced its expansion into the cannabis and hemp-derived beverage markets with the launch of CLV Frontier Brands which will develop and globally commercialise a bespoke portfolio of alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages with cannabis and hemp ingredients, capitalising on this fast growing sector.

It is planning to start with a four beer range to begin shipping Apr/Mar this year, followed by a vegan option.

New Arrow items

ARROW Pharmaceuticals has announced the launch of two new Chemists' Own products to add to its more than 60 cough and cold items currently available: Paracetamol Plus Diphenhydramine and Ibuprofen Double Strength 400.

Pictured below, the paracetamol product RRP is \$9.95 for 20 tabs, and the ibuprofen product RRP is \$8.99 for 30 tabs.

Interested pharmacists can order by visiting chemistsown.com.au or by calling 1300 9 ARROW (27769).



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Dispensary Corner

IF IT'S true that smoking can stunt your growth, then the Portuguese village of Vale de Salgueiro may be resigning itself to a very petite future by encouraging its children to light up and smoke.

The spate of juvenile smoking is in aid of the annual Epiphany celebration, ironically an event aimed at celebrating the concept of 'life', marking the Christian Epiphany & winter solstice.

The strange practice has been passed down for centuries for the cultural celebration, however it remains unclear why jamming a durrly in the mouth of a child is required to dance the night away?



DRINK driving can be seriously hazardous to your health, but it makes it even worse if you find yourself driving a military tank.

A Russian man was arrested recently after he stole an armoured vehicle and crashed it through the front wall of a supermarket.

The man, who was also found in possession of a bottle of wine, said he stole the tank because he was "bored", puzzling the police and witnesses at the scene.

Given the man's proclivity for crushing his malaise by stealing heavy vehicles and running amok with military grade equipment, maybe someone should give this guy a jigsaw puzzle pronto before he gets his hands on a thermonuclear weapon.

E-cigarette research boost

IN WHAT could prove to be a game-changer for the marketing of e-cigarettes, or vaping devices, various experts from the EU and UK have argued that a switch policy to move tobacco smokers across to e-cigarettes would be pro-health.

Public Health England (PHE) said that "best estimates show e-cigarettes are 95% less harmful to your health than tobacco" and witnesses at the House



of Commons Science and Technology Select Committee hearing agreed that switching from normal cigarettes to e-cigarettes had "substantial health benefits", according to a report in the *Pharmaceutical Journal*.

Italy's University of Catania professor of internal medicine Riccardo Polosa even suggested selling larger refill containers may reduce costs and encourage the switch to vaping, saying it should be a priority to switch smokers to less harmful products.

Queen Mary University in London professor of clinical psychology Peter Hajek told the committee that "overall, studies have shown that the cancer risk of e-cigarettes is less than half the cancer risk of normal smoking".

As to the issue of vaping being a gateway to smoking, "E-cigarettes with nicotine are spectacularly unattractive to non-smokers," said Hajek, citing data he said shows they are "rarely" a stepping stone from not-smoking to smoking.

PBA call for board members

THE Pharmacy Board of Australia is currently calling for applications to fill multiple upcoming vacancies on the board due to the scheduled expiry of terms of appointment.

Final decisions will be made by the Ministerial Council, with successful appointees taking up positions for up to three years.

Applications for the roles can be submitted until 19 Feb - for details see www.ahpra.gov.au.

Win with Milkman

Each day this week Pharmacy Daily and Milkman are giving readers the chance to win a Milkman Grooming Co King Of Wood™ Beard Oil valued at \$32.00.

Softer | Smoother | Healthier

What's the point of having a beard if it is dry, itchy, brittle or irritating? Get your hands on this revitalising professional-grade beard oil made in Australia by Milkman Grooming Co for your best-looking beard every single day. Complex formulation of botanical oils blend to hydrate + soften your beard for a luscious feel that's so easy to style. www.milkmanaustralia.com.

To win, be the first person from QLD to send the correct answer to the question below to comp@pharmacydaily.com.au



What are the things that the Milkman Grooming Co King Of Wood™ Beard Oil will do for your beard?

Congratulations to yesterday's winner, Janine Hando.

Another AD drug fail

EVER elusive, yet another drug that showed great promise for treatment of Alzheimer's Disease (AD) has failed in late phase studies.

Lundbeck's idalopirdine showed no benefits in Phase III clinical trials, published in *JAMA* - see jamanetwork.com for the study.

Guild Update

MEDSASSIST - the real time recording system developed by the Pharmacy Guild of Australia to help reduce the misuse of over-the-counter combination analgesic medicines containing codeine - will be discontinued nationally from 31 January. The reason for the shutdown is that all of the medicines recorded in the MedsASSIST system will shift to prescription only from 1 February, and the system will become redundant at that time.

Introduced nationally in March 2016, MedsASSIST was designed specifically to record over-the-counter medicines containing codeine. MedsASSIST was not designed to record prescription medicines, and has no legislative underpinning to do so.

The MedsASSIST clinical decision support tool has recorded over 10 million transactions since it was introduced. The number of pharmacies voluntarily using MedsASSIST peaked at around 70 per cent.

The system has enabled pharmacists to identify risk factors and either refuse supply, or refer patients to their doctor or to counselling pathways to address dependency.