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Repatha on PBS

THE Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme listing of Repatha (evolocumab) will expand to include the treatment of Australians living with a genetically inherited risk of high cholesterol. Health Minister Greg Hunt announced the addition to the PBS from 01 Nov, with the use of Repatha expanded to cover heterozygous familial hypercholesterolaemia (HeFH) in those with LDL-C measurements of greater than 5.0 mmol/L, or 3.0mmol/L in those with symptomatic clinical atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease. Repatha is a PCSK9 inhibitor which targets and blocks the PCSK9 protein to assist with lowering the amount of “bad cholesterol” in the patient’s blood.

Fruit & veggie failure



A NEW report from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare has revealed Australians don’t eat enough vegetables or fruit. The report was designed to investigate the adequacy of the Australian diet across various life stages to help inform the evidence-base in relation to nutrition-related health determinants for chronic conditions. Nearly four out of every five adults (77%) do not have adequate fruit intake, the report said. Similarly 99% of Australians aged 2-18 years and around 90% of those 19 years and older do not eat enough vegetables. Visit aihw.gov.au for access.

MedAdvisor pharmacies up

LISTED digital medications management company MedAdvisor now has 55% of Australian pharmacies on board, with numbers at 3,100 after a strong Sep quarter expansion spurt. Connected users now exceed 1.1 million, the company said. Cash receipts for the period amounted to \$1.86m, up 36% as against Q1 FY 18 at \$1.36m. CEO Robert Read said “we continue to grow our domestic business while scaling up to take advantage of significant growth opportunities in both domestic and international markets”.

Bod cannabis script

ASX-LISTED medicinal cannabis firm Bod Australia has secured its first medicinal cannabis prescription and is entering into a research collaboration agreement with Cannabis Access Clinics and the Biologics Research Institute Australia (BRIA). The first prescription was for MediCabilis, received from a Cannabis Access Clinics patient. The collaboration will lead to an observational trial to study the effects of Bod’s MediCabilis cannabis oil on “a broad range of patient outcomes”, the company said in a statement last week. Once Bod completes the Phase I Clinical Trial of its sublingual cannabis wafer (*PD* 25 Jul 2018), it will also be made available through the Cannabis Access network. Bod CEO Jo Patterson said the agreement also provided the company with a “large pool of potential patients and prescribers from the Cannabis Access Clinics network that will provide independent and ongoing feedback around our medicinal cannabis product offering”.

Read highlighted the growth in sites using PlusOne and said “the increased engagement will ensure growth of programs that can be delivered to the 7 million-plus patients at these pharmacies, further driving user-based revenue from transactional fees”. He also commented that while the opportunity in the hospital market is significant, the company is now focused on developing the offering and simultaneously improving its services to GPs. In addition Read said the company would increase both the global connectivity of the platform and its business development activities in its core international markets, especially in the US where founder and Product Manager International, Josh Swinnerton, has relocated.

“These markets have the potential to rapidly change the scope and scale of MedAdvisor,” Read noted. “We are optimistic about international opportunities in the markets that we are focusing on and are well advanced in the US,” he said, with the integration of MedAdvisor into the platform of US dispensing software provider PDX “progressing on track.”

NSW Gardasil alert

PHARMACY authorities in NSW are reportedly warning their counterparts in other jurisdictions about the potential for pharmacies to be illegally exporting Gardasil 9. Shortages of the HPV immunisation in China have led to price rises, and a NSW pharmacist was charged along with an accomplice last week after allegedly exporting more than 2,400 units of Gardasil 9 to Hong Kong. Pharmaceutical industry newsletter *Pharma in Focus* cited “people with knowledge of the investigation” saying other states were being advised to watch for pharmacies ordering unusually large quantities of Gardasil.

New influenza drug

THE US Food and Drug Administration has approved a new oral antiviral flu medication called Xofluza (baloxavir marboxil). The product was developed by Japanese firm Shionogi Co and will be marketed in the US by Genentech, a member of the Roche Group of companies. Xofluza is indicated for the treatment of acute, uncomplicated influenza, or flu, in people 12 years of age and older.



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\$5,000 grant prize

THE University of Technology Sydney has opened nominations for the 2018 Innovative Pharmacist of the Year with the prize of \$5,000 sponsored by AstraZeneca.

Nominations close Fri 16 Nov and individuals can self-nominate or nominate a colleague - uts.edu.au.



Weekly Comment

Welcome to Pharmacy Daily's weekly comment feature.

This week's contributor is Angelo Di Sapia, Commercial Manager at NICM Health Research Institute.



An exciting time for Complementary Medicine research

THE challenges that the Complementary Medicine industry has faced will certainly continue to be highlighted as the industry grows at a phenomenal rate.

This challenge is an opportunity to build and look at how we as an industry can improve – research is one way we can do so as it is a fundamental pillar which validates our traditional systems and medicines.

NICM Health Research Institute based out of Western Sydney University has been pioneering research in the Complementary Medicine industry in various forms for over 20 years.

My role as commercial manager is to bridge the gap between research and industry so we can work together to continue to raise the bar and develop world class research.

There are many ways that NICM can work together with industry through our consulting services, TGA licenced laboratory, clinical research services or IP development of ingredients and products.

With a number of grants available and regulations changing towards evidenced based models it is certainly a great time to invest in research as the benefits and return on investment is at an all-time high.

Dispensary Corner

AN AMERICAN performance artist has turned his sights on questionable health claims of some products by launching a new range of "Hot Dog water".

On display outside a Vancouver health summit convened by actor Gwyneth Paltrow based on her "Goop" range, the parody items see artist Douglas Bevans portray himself as a health drink entrepreneur, selling his products for a whopping \$37.99 a bottle.

Billed as a "gluten-free wonder drink rich in sodium and a source of electrolytes," Hot Dog water is exactly what it says it is - water left over when hot dogs are boiled.

Slick packaging (pictured) includes a hot dog in each bottle, with the drink served chilled.

Bevans says the product is "Keto compatible" with a range of claims including that it can help users lose weight, increase brain function, look younger and boost their vitality.

"The impressive sodium re-uptake provided after drinking Hot Dog water aids your body's ability to access the calcium channel receptors in your heart," a blurb promises, touting "patented carbohydrate restrictors which also trigger autophagy and anti-inflammatory processes".

Bevans says the stunt is intended to be a commentary on the "snake oil salesmen" of health marketing.



The hearing Advantage

DURING the month of Oct, more than 70 Advantage Pharmacies around Australia partnered with Australian Hearing to deliver a national hearing check campaign.

Almost 500 adults were given a free hearing test screening.

More than one third of those tested were subsequently referred to their local hearing clinic for further testing due to identified hearing loss.

Advantage Pharmacy Group Director Michael Gray is not surprised that pharmacies have a higher referral rate compared to average hearing screening centres.

"The numbers don't lie," he said. "Pharmacists and their teams

are excellently positioned to offer the community targeted health services," Gray added.

"At Advantage we believe prevention is better than cure



and we are looking forward to working with Hearing Australia again on this important community outreach program."

Due to the success of the program, Gray said the banner group is intent on partnering with Hearing

Australia to roll out the Hearing Check Campaign again in 2019.

Pictured are the team at Woolgoolga Advantage Pharmacy who participated in the Hearing Check Campaign.

Win with SkinB5

This week **Pharmacy Daily** & **SkinB5** are giving away each day the NEW SkinB5's Clear Skin Superfood Booster valued at \$63.90.

Specifically formulated for acne / blemish prone skin, SkinB5's Clear Skin Superfood Booster delivers over 63 key skin health ingredients including Vitamins B5, A, C, D, E, minerals, essential fatty acids, amino acids, digestive enzymes, probiotics and prebiotics, Marine Collagen, Australian Organic Hemp protein, Organic Zinc, Maca, probiotics, prebiotics, Turmeric, Ginseng, Ashwaganda, Alkalisng Greens and colourful super fruits. Follow www.facebook.com/skinb5pro for more.

To win, be the first person from NSW or ACT to send the correct answer to comp@pharmacydaily.com.au

What ingredient do you need for Glowing skin starting with C?

Check here tomorrow for today's winner.