

## Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today has two pages of news plus a full page from Pharmacy Assistant National Conference.

## Tramadol import jail

A BRITISH woman has been sentenced to three years in an Egyptian prison for attempting to bring almost 300 tramadol tablets into the country.

Laura Plummer, 34, said she wasn't aware that Tramadol was illegal in Egypt, given it is available on prescription in the UK.

Customs officials arrested her in Oct last year when she flew into the Red Sea resort town of Hurghada and a court case ensued, with Plummer claiming she was bringing the tablets into the country to support her partner, Omar Caboo, an Egyptian, who suffers from severe back pain.

"I thought the appeal judges would see sense and realise I couldn't have known the tablets were banned. It's just so absurd," she told the UK Sun newspaper.

However the court ruled that ignorance of the law was no defence and sentenced her to three years imprisonment.

## OTC sildenafil pharmacy fail

**AUTHORITIES** in New Zealand have highlighted a high proportion of pharmacists inappropriately supplying erectile dysfunction medication sildenafil.

A Pharmacy Quality Audit Update issued by the country's Medsafe regulator relates to audits undertaken in the first quarter of 2018, which have been introduced under a new risk-based framework currently being phased in.

The document cites examples of sildenafil supplied outside of guidelines, such as to patients with high blood pressure or other

cardiovascular issues.

Some supplies were in quantities greater than the allowed maximum of 12 tablets, or in broken packs, and pharmacies were not always able to demonstrate that there was a system in place for recording consultations related to the resupply of the medication.

The issues were highlighted under a specific quality criterion which stated that medicines requiring supply by an accredited pharmacist should be "recorded, sold and labelled in accordance with regulatory and professional requirements".

Of more than 70 pharmacies audited during the period, on either a pre-notified or unannounced basis, just 17% were found to have attained the required standard.

Almost a third of the pharmacies (29%) were classified as having "high" or "critical" risk levels in this area, with Medsafe saying the significant level of non-compliance was concerning.

"The pharmacy sector is encouraged to work towards significant improvement in this area, particularly in the supply of sildenafil," the regulator advised.

## Influenza deaths data

**THE** Australian Bureau of Statistics has released data relating to deaths in Australia revealing that in 2017 there were 1,255 deaths due to influenza, up from 464 in the prior year.

An individual dying from influenza in 2017 was most likely to be female, aged over 75 years, have multiple co-morbidities and live in the eastern states of Australia.

Females died at a rate of 6.0 per 100,000 capita (744 deaths) while males died at a rate of 4.2 per 100,000 (511) - [abs.gov.au](http://abs.gov.au).

## PA2018 one stop shop

**THE** Pharmacy Assistant National Conference (PA2018) will be held from 25-27 Oct at Sea World Resort on the Gold Coast, with pharmacies registering two or more pharmacy assistants to receive a free registration to APP2019, valued at \$940 - see **page 3** for more.

## Sinonasal irrigation

**GUILD** Learning and Development has partnered with Care Pharmaceuticals to launch an online course titled 'Optimising nasal health: the role of saline irrigation'.

This course is intended to provide pharmacists with guidance in managing sinonasal complaints and recognising when sinonasal irrigation is suitable and where referral is more appropriate.

More info is at [myCPD.org.au](http://myCPD.org.au).

## \$36m suicide project

**FIFTEEN** different organisations will receive funding to support suicide prevention projects, including Suicide Prevention Australia, which will receive \$1.2 million to continue its national leadership role for the suicide prevention sector.



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## Dispensary Corner

**WITH** TV shows like *The Block* all the rage in Australia at the moment, we're wondering if the concept of DIY could be stretched to preparing for our own deaths?

Founder of the Kiwi Coffin Club Katie Williams certainly thinks so, an elderly woman who started the unusual group because she loves the idea of constructing her own wooden box of death.

Williams was soon joined by other interested Kiwis, with the reasons for joining varying from seeking a sense of community, others joined to try and overcome their fear of dying, while the remainder simply wanted to save a bob or two on the funeral.

The range of novelty coffins being worked on in the morbid woodwork group included one dedicated to a woman's pet chickens, and a lady by the name of Raewyn (pictured), who simply wanted to pay homage to Elvis "The King" Presley.



**THOSE** wacky Filipinos have set another world record, this time for gathering a crowd of almost 7,000 people to apply lipstick simultaneously.

The stunt was coordinated by local celebrity Vice Ganda, who as well as being a pop star is the founder of Vice Cosmetics Co.

The 6,900 participants had to wear the lipstick for at least 60 seconds to qualify for the record, previously held by Mary Kay.

## Researchers challenge TGA

**RESEARCHERS** from Monash University and Friends of Science in Medicine (FSM) have argued that the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) "has failed, and will continue to fail, in its duty to protect Australians from ineffective health products".

The scientists and public health officials continued their anti-TGA rhetoric at the annual Australian Public Health Conference held in Cairns this week.

Homeopathy asthma products were cited as remedy examples promoted with no warning to consumers that in severe disease their use could result in death, said Professor Ken Harvey.

"The TGA's latest response to these concerns was to make no decision," Harvey said describing this as "regulatory paralysis".

Malcolm Vickers, from Monash University, examined the way the TGA handled referrals from the independent Complaints Resolution Panel (CRP) of unacceptable, often fraudulent, advertising.

He claimed the TGA failed to deal with around 90% of 755 complaints referred for regulatory action.

FSM president Professor John Dwyer criticised the move in Jul this year to abolish the CRP, placing the complaints management process in the hands of the TGA.

Dwyer said initial experience with the TGA complaint system confirmed his worst fears, citing the lack of a search function to assist in evaluation of products.

Conference chair Harvey added, "While this is convenient for industry and the TGA, it's appalling consumer protection.

"Regulators are meant to keep everyone on a level playing field.

"Without publicising and enforcing regulatory breaches, the door is wide open for misleading and deceptive advertising and poor-quality products.

"We are now seeing a proliferation of shonky products and a race to the bottom by manufacturers and advertisers."

See more at [medreach.com.au](http://medreach.com.au).



## Travel Specials

**WELCOME** to *Pharmacy Daily's* travel feature. Each week we highlight a couple of great travel deals for the pharmacy industry, brought to you by *Cruise Weekly*.

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### Specialty Danube APT Cruises Offers

**APT** Cruises has announced a range of new Danube cruises aboard its "new concept" river cruiseship *AmaMagna*.

The new vessel is twice the width of traditional river ships, giving the 196 passengers much more space, but restricting the journeys to the Danube River, making it the Danube specialist, with many options.

One option is the 'Melodies of the Danube' cruise, Budapest to Prague from \$6,795 per person.

See your travel agent or view the brochure by **CLICKING HERE**.

### Holland America Line Explore4 Deals

**HOLLAND** America Line is offering its Explore4 deals on a range of cruises, including a Signature Beverage Package, Pinnacle Grill dinner, reduced fares for 3rd/4th guests and 50% reduced deposits.

Choose from a world-wide list such as seven day Canada & New England Discovery voyage priced from \$1,759 per person - visit [hollandamerica.com](http://hollandamerica.com).

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