

FIP workforce push

THE International Pharmaceutical Federation has launched a new program designed to advance pharmaceutical workforces across the globe.

The new *FIP Workforce Transformation Programme* is a “practical and flexible model which will assist countries in assessing their individual pharmacy workforce needs and priorities, support them to develop needs-based national workforce strategies and infrastructure, and provide co-created solutions, tools, mechanisms and resources for implementation,” FIP said.

The first national pharmacy body to join the scheme is the Jordan Pharmacists Association, which signed up in Amman yesterday.

FIP CEO Catherine Duggan said the workforce needs a global vision with clear and consensus-based objective consistent with global health strategies - see fip.org.

S4 codeine supply slump

LAST year’s up-scheduling of codeine medications to prescription-only (Schedule 4) has resulted in a significant decrease in the amount of codeine supplied to Australian patients, according to new figures released by the Therapeutic Goods Administration.

The TGA has analysed pharmacy industry sales data provided by IQVIA, with the results showing the total number of codeine-containing products supplied in Australia during 2018 was about 50% lower than the average total supplied in the previous four years.

Last year there were 17.1 million packs of codeine supplied, compared to an average of 34.7 million annually between 2014 and 2017, with the 2018 total also including one month’s trading in Jan prior to the up-scheduling coming into force.

The TGA said its figures also debunked suggestions that many patients were switched from low- to high-strength codeine medicines after up-scheduling.

“Between February and December 2018, the supply of high-strength 30mg Schedule 4 codeine was 7274kg, as compared with the projected 6816kg without up-scheduling...the difference was not statistically significant, the TGA said.

“Our modelling showed that the decreases in total codeine sales were not due to long term trends in the monthly per capita supply, which we found to be stable,” a summary of the outcomes added.

The TGA said the IQVIA data did not allow it to draw conclusions about codeine usage among population subgroups or trace individual patients’ medicine supply over time.

Further analyses are now under way which will include comparisons with other data sets such as PBS data to further understand the impact of up-scheduling on the amounts of codeine dispensed.

FDA affirms MMR safe

THE US Food and Drug Administration has issued a formal statement expressing its continued confidence in the safety and effectiveness of the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine.

The FDA noted the World Health Organization recently named “vaccine hesitancy” as one of the top 10 threats to global health.

Fight flu with phytos

UNIVERSITY of Sydney researchers have completed studies explaining how a popular ancient remedy, the elderberry fruit, can help the fight against influenza.

The study showed that phytochemicals from elderberries can directly inhibit the virus’s entry and replication in human cells, and can help strengthen a person’s immune response to the virus.

“It inhibits the early stages of an infection by blocking key viral proteins responsible for both the viral attachment and entry into the host cells,” said co-author Dr Golnoosh Torabian.

Curiously, researchers found the phytochemicals were even more effective at inhibiting viral propagation at later stages of the influenza cycle when cells had already been infected.

Otherwise known as *sambucus nigra*, the elderberry is a small, antioxidant-rich fruit common to Europe and North America that is still commonly consumed as a jam or wine.

CLICK HERE to access the study.

More nicotine to quit

USING higher doses in nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) when attempting to quit smoking is more effective than lower doses, according to new UK research.

A systematic review of NRT research involving over 60 trials and 41,509 participants supported the use of patches plus either a lozenge, gum or nasal spray, with bigger doses associated with 12% to 83% higher quit rates.



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Duckett plots PBS savings

PHARMACY ownership rules need to be reformed to cut red tape and reduce Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) costs, Grattan Institute Health Program Director, Stephen Duckett, believes.

In the Institute's *Commonwealth Orange Book 2019: Policy priorities for the Federal Government*, Duckett said there was "no rhyme or reason about how many pharmacies can be owned in a state".

"The PBS is completely bound up in red tape," he said.

"Who can own a local pharmacy is regulated by state governments; so too how many pharmacies they [pharmacists] can own....

[however] where new pharmacies can be located is regulated by the Commonwealth Government, with strict rules limiting competition by specifying minimum distances between pharmacies.

"This regulation benefits pharmacy owners more than customers," he said, urging governments to roll back these regulations, starting by relaxing

location rules and ownership controls in metropolitan areas "to promote competition to reduce prices and improve services".

Duckett also called for therapeutic group premiums to be extended to cover all gaps in drug costs regardless of whether molecules have been subject to price disclosure, saying the Government was "wasting money on over-priced drugs" urging the next Federal Government to "cut a better drug deal" to strengthen the PBS.

Duckett said the 'therapeutic group premium' was a "good idea in theory, but in practice is full of loopholes and no longer works".

He said the Grattan Institute had estimated savings of over \$240 million annually by extending therapeutic group premiums to cover all gaps in drug costs within the seven existing groups, while "extending Australia's relatively small list of therapeutic groups from seven to 18 could save the Commonwealth Government an additional \$205 million a year".

Adele sticks it to Senator

NSW Pharmacy Guild Branch Committee member and pharmacy owner, Adele Tahan, administered a flu vaccination to NSW Senator Kristina Keneally yesterday.

The former NSW Premier attended Tahan's Adore Compounding Pharmacy in Rozelle, Sydney for the procedure, as one of the many Federal MPs and Senators who have taken up the Guild's invitation to get their flu immunisation at a community pharmacy this year.



VPA lifts pharmacy licence fees

VICTORIAN pharmacy owners face a 12% increase in licence, registration and application fees from 01 May, following an announcement by the Victorian Pharmacy Authority (VPA).

The authority has also introduced a new \$720 fee for applications for a "licence to carry on a pharmacy business - complex", saying the higher levies are necessary to fund additional resources required to administer the Act, "including continuity of the Authority's expanded program of pharmacy business audits," the VPA said.

The new \$720 fee will apply when applicants propose to carry on a

pharmacy business pursuant to a trust, franchise agreement, licence agreement (including an occupancy licence) or a management or marketing agreement, and will help cover some of the legal fees required to have such agreements assessed for compliance.

The VPA also announced a 26% fee increase for "trust or other commercial arrangement assessments" while arrangements that are deemed non-compliant by Authority officers may be referred to lawyers for preparation of amendments necessary to ensure compliance, incurring an additional fee of \$1,900.



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Jobs of the Week

- **Pharmacist** - Mornington Peninsula, VIC (Job# 200032292)
Work 20-30 hours per week; established team; newly refurbished pharmacy!
- **Pharmacist** - Rockhampton, QLD (Job# 200032299)
2nd Pharmacist; Professional development; Highly rated surveyed employer
- **Pharmacist** - Hills District, Sydney's west (Job# 200032188)
Full-time Mon to Fri + every second Saturday; fun team; busy pharmacy.

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Pharmacy Daily



Dispensary Corner

INEBRIATION caused more than a headache for a drunk British woman, who accidentally spent more than \$500 on an Uber ride.

25-year-old Helen Dryden booked the journey to get from London to Guildford last week after a big night out, a 48km trip that normally costs about £80.

However she neglected to update the "Home" location in her Uber app, so the driver thought he was supposed to take her to an old address in Newcastle, where she had previously studied at university.

In her sorry state she fell asleep in the vehicle, awakening some time later when the Uber driver wanted to reconfirm the destination en route.

After she corrected him he did a U-turn and took her 120km back in the other direction, with the trip costing £275 (A\$505) in total.

IN what some would describe as another example of the fox entering the henhouse, cigarette manufacturer Philip Morris International is getting into the life insurance business - and is offering discounts to smokers who quit the ciggies.

A new wholly-owned offshoot called Reviti is initially selling insurance in the UK, with people who switch to e-cigarettes set to receive a 2.5% discount.

A 25% saving is offered to those who switch to the company's new heated tobacco product iQOS, while those who quit smoking totally for at least 12 months will get a 50% discount overall.

CEO Andre Calantzopoulos said one day the company hopes to stop selling cigarettes altogether.

Welsh pharmacy scripts test

COMMUNITY pharmacists in Wales are conducting trials to determine whether a "test and treat" scheme at community pharmacies may alleviate stress on general practitioners and increase appropriate antibiotic prescriptions.

Announced last year, the pilot scheme involves two select pharmacies in areas covered by

the Cwm Taf and Betsi Cadwaladr health boards, with plans for a national rollout if the project is deemed successful.

Pharmacists use an on-the-spot throat swab when patients report symptoms of a sore throat.

They are then able to run diagnostic tests to determine whether the cause is viral or bacterial, and subsequently prescribe the appropriate antibiotics if warranted.

So far, the Betsi Cadwaladr area has held 390 sore throat consultations - 86% of those cases did not need antibiotics, while 55 people were prescribed antibiotics.

Similar results were found in Cwm Taf where more than 400 people used the service, and at least 75% did not require antibiotic treatment.

The Cmw Taf health board reported that 90% of participants said that they would have scheduled an appointment with a general practitioner if the service was not active.

PBS Safety Net cards

THE Department of Human Services has advised that any orders for Pharmaceutical Benefits Safety Net cards will be filled with enough to see individual pharmacy businesses out for the rest of the calendar year.

From 01 May the Department will send enough cards, based on the number each pharmacy normally used in previous years.

Additional cards can still be ordered using the PBS Safety Net stationery order for pharmacies form (PB185).

See more at humanservices.gov.au.

Win with Dermal Therapy

Everyday this week Pharmacy Daily and Dermal Therapy are giving away a skin care pack valued at over \$30.

NEW to the range is the **Dermal Therapy Lip Balm Tub**. The tub has the same concentrated formula containing a synergistic blend of ingredients specially designed to hydrate and soften severely dry lips, keeping them smooth and healthy looking.

Visit www.dermaltherapy.com.au to find out more.

To win, be the first from VIC or TAS to send the correct answer to the question to comp@pharmacydaily.com.au

Dermal Therapy Very Dry Skin Cream promises visible difference in 1 or 3 days?

Congratulations to Wednesday's winner, Kristy-Lee Albrecht.



EMA Lynparza alert

THE European Medicines Agency (EMA) has issued a risk alert around cancer medicine Lynparza (olaparib) which is marketed in Australia by AstraZeneca.

The dosing is different for capsule and tablets meaning they can't be swapped with dosage adjustment.

Events Calendar

WELCOME to *Pharmacy Daily's* events calendar, opportunities to earn CPE and CPD points.

If you have an upcoming event you'd like us to feature, email info@pharmacydaily.com.au.

03 May: Colloquium 2019; Sofitel Melbourne On Collins; for more info and to register visit: www.colloquium2019.com.au

04 - 05 May: Pharmeducation Clinical Update Seminar; Crowne Plaza Coogee Beach, Sydney; for details visit: www.pharmeducation.com.au

05 - 13 Jun: PSA Offshore Refresher Conference; Montreux, Switzerland and Lyon, France; registrations now open: www.psa.org.au

22 - 23 Jun: SHPA Electronic Medication Management Conference; Novotel Manly Pacific, Manly, NSW; register here: www.shpa.eventsair.com

28 - 30 Jun: ConPharm 2019; Pullman on the Park Melbourne; early bird offer here: www.aacp.com.au

26 - 28 Jul: PSA19; Hyatt Regency Sydney; early bird registrations now open: www.psa19.com