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Union backs PSA's 2023 pay goals

PHARMACIST union group, Professional Pharmacists Australia (PPA), has backed the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia's call for a base salary of \$80,000 plus superannuation, for newly registered pharmacists by 2023.

The PSA outlined proposals to empower pharmacists to practise to their full scope, and to earn a starting salary comparable to their peers across other health professions in its *Pharmacists in 2023: Roles and Remuneration* report (PD 29 Jul).

Welcoming the PSA's vision, PPA President, Geoff March, noted remuneration had been in "dire decline" over the past decade, before recent increases to the Pharmacy Industry Award.

"We welcome the contribution of the PSA to refining roles and future remuneration levels," he said.

"We have discussed possible industry classification structures with the PSA and will continue to

work collaboratively on pay and career progression."

The PPA's *Community Pharmacists Employment and Remuneration Report 2018*, found less than half of community pharmacists reported receiving a pay rise in the 12 months to Dec 2018, and for 40% of those that had, it was required under the award.

The union noted that the "gradual decline in community pharmacist rates of pay was finally reversing, with average growth of between 0.4% and 2.5% depending on a pharmacist's classification in 2018.

Speaking to *Pharmacy Daily*, PSA President, Dr Chris Freeman, said "we've had a focus around how poor remuneration actually is, but no one has taken the leadership role in articulating what the remuneration should actually be".

"We drew a line in the sand and said, 'this is where we believe pharmacist remuneration should be'; it's very hard to start to advocate for any change if we don't



know where we're going.

"So this document takes that first step."

Under the PSA's vision pharmacists' salaries would increase based on their attainment of advanced practice qualifications and experience, with those achieving Advanced Practice Level Three and more than five years' experience earning a minimum of \$140,000 excluding superannuation, or \$67.05 per hour.

Endone defect



ASPEN Pharma, in consultation with the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA), is undertaking a product defect correction for one batch of Endone 5 mg tablets - batch number CW612, expiry Nov 2020 - tga.gov.au.

One pack of Endone 5mg in South Australia was found to contain a blister sheet of Anamorph 30 mg tablets, a four-times stronger medication with a blister sheet of similar appearance.

As a further precautionary measure, pharmacists are also being asked to visually inspect the contents of packets of Endone 5 mg tablets from the affected batch to ensure they are correct before dispensing.

Indigenous prescribing suboptimal

MORE than 60% of Indigenous patients aged 45 and older living in the Kimberley have at least one form of suboptimal prescribing, research published in the *Medical Journal of Australia* reveals.

The authors found "potentially inappropriate prescribing" in one-in-five patients, while there was evidence of under-prescribing in 12% of the

population, with "potential prescribing cascades of drug interactions" identified in 4% of the group.

The study reported more than half of patients were prescribed five or more medications, with the authors warning older indigenous people could be at risk of medicines-related harm.

See more at mja.com.au.

Statins and >75's cardiac risk

HEALTHY over 75-year-olds who stop taking their statins have an increased risk of heart problems, according to international researchers.

The study investigated more than 120,000 people in France who had been taking statins for two years and found those who stopped taking them had a 46% increased risk of being sent to

hospital for cardiac concerns, and a 26% increase in blood vessel-related problems such as stroke.

While the study was observational and could not prove causation, the researchers recommended healthy patients should continue taking their prescribed statins, even after they reach 75.

Source: academic.oup.com.



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Tainted supplements

ATHLETES are being urged to steer clear of supplements by the Australian Sports Ant-Doping Authority (ASADA), with the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) noting many products are unregulated.

ASADA reissued its long standing advice that “no supplement is safe for use”, noting the seemingly innocuous products were one of the main reasons for failed drug tests, after news that Australian swimmer, Shayna Jack, had tested positive for a banned substance.

Jack’s support team has reported she believes she inadvertently consumed, Ligandrol, after using a contaminated supplement.

While the anti-doping body said the best way to avoid consuming a contaminated product was not



to use supplements, it added that those who are advised to use them should only consume products that have been tested for banned substances by HASTA or Informed Sport.

The TGA warned unregistered products may not provide a full list of ingredients, while counterfeit supplements, that are available online may be tainted with banned substances.

Guild hails generics supply options

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia has urged the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) to adopt a raft of measures to address the chronic medicines shortage situation in Australia (**PD** 30 Jul).

The Guild was commenting in its submission to the TGA consultation: *Reforms to the Generic Medicine Market Authorisation Process*.

A total of 23 submissions were received, including those from the Australian Self Medication Industry (now rebadged to Consumer Healthcare Products Australia), Consumers Health Forum of Australia, Medicines Australia and some pharmaceutical companies and public health groups.

The strongest point made in the submission related to the time-wasting impact on pharmacy businesses needing to source alternative medicines to those prescribed.

The Guild said that is time that could be better spent “providing counselling and clinical care” with patients.

Proactive planning should be a normal expectation to

maintain supply and at the same time, applications to the TGA for registration and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) for listing on the PBS should be synchronised, so that the process “is not prohibitive for the sponsor,” the Guild wrote.

Costs around these processes should also be reconsidered so they are not too prohibitive especially for smaller companies to introduce generics to cover a shortage for products which otherwise have a dominant share.

The Guild also supported the questions around incentives for sponsors to bring more generics to Australia and to address shortages and expenditure.

A broader recommendation from the Guild was that the TGA make “greater diversity of available formulations”.

“A more robust supply of generic medicines will enable proactive management of potential medicine shortages, which will reduce stress on the Australian Health system and result in better health outcomes for patients.”

Pharmacy Board case studies

THE Pharmacy Board of Australia (PBA) has published two new case studies as practical advice for pharmacists.

Case 1: The PBA was advised of a pharmacist who published “inappropriate comments” in the form of personal opinions relating to abortion on his personal Facebook page.

Although the Facebook page was a closed group, pharmacy patients were members of the group.

Case 2: A notifier alleged that



a pharmacist failed to ensure patient privacy by affixing the pharmacy dispensing label to the primary container over the top of another label showing another patient’s details.

Read more on the website at pharmacyboard.gov.au.

\$10,000 Pfizer Young Pharmacist Grant

THE Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA), in conjunction with Pfizer Pharmaceuticals, has announced the return of the \$10,000 Pfizer Young Pharmacist Grant.

Applications for the grant are now open and will close Thu 26 Sep 2019 with the winner announced at Medicines Management 2019, the 45th SHPA National Conference in Gold Coast in Nov.

SHPA Chief Executive, Kristin Michaels, said the grant provides SHPA members with under 10 years’ experience in hospital pharmacy “an invaluable opportunity to advance their professional and clinical development through either a national or international preceptorship.

“The opportunity to learn from

some of the best and brightest minds in the industry provides emerging pharmacists with a launching pad in their own career that will, in turn, assist with service improvement in Australian hospital pharmacies,” Michaels said.

“The 2019 Pfizer Young Pharmacist Grant will again focus on research as a component of a professional preceptorship, whether with a research mentor, as part of a research team or through dissemination of research via a clinical journal.”

Applications should outline pharmacy experience and achievements, a plan or outline of a proposed preceptorship, rationale for undertaking a preceptorship, a letter of support and outline of publication plans.

Visit shpa.org.au for more.

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Dispensary Corner

PHARMACIES are frequently targeted by thieves looking to make off with cash or opioids, but one gang of pharmacy bandits in Ireland zeroed in on sweet-scented perfumes.

Police told the *Irish Mirror* the fresh smelling bandits appear to have adopted a tactic of burgling pharmacies located in rural towns near motorways.

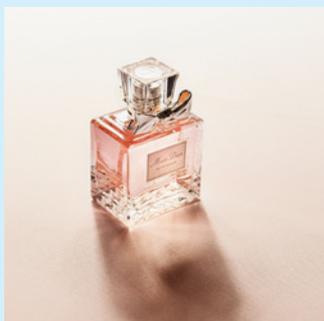
The paper reported the thieves made off with €20,000 worth of fragrances and other high-end products after a recent raid in Cahir, Co Tipperary.

"They were driving a black car, what could be a Volvo, and broke into the shop using a large sledge hammer," a police spokesperson said.

"They stole thousands of euro worth of perfumes, for men and women, and a large amount of other products also.

"The theory is that this gang, possibly Eastern European, are a mobile burglary gang travelling from Meath or Dublin on the motorway. They hit only towns within a short distance from the motorway.

"There is a fear that this could be the beginning of a new tactic and blitz by these criminals."



H&S above the rest

MORE than 15.7 million Australians aged 14+ bought shampoo in an average six months in the year to Mar 2019, with Head & Shoulders (H&S) on top at 16.4% of market share, according to data from a Roy Morgan Single Source survey.

The H&S share is up 1.9% from four years ago the survey indicated, followed by Alberto (13.8% up 1.2%), TRESemme (13.6% also up 1.2%), Pantene (12.8% up 0.7%) and Dove (6.6% up 1.7%).

Proctor and Gamble is the leading manufacturer with its brands H&S, Pantene and Clairol Herbal Essences bought by almost one third of shampoo buyers (32.4%).

Unilever has 23.7% of the market (Alberto, TRESemmé, Dove & Sunsilk) while in third place sits L'Oreal on 13.7% including leading brands such as Garnier Fructis.

Men comprise more than three-fifths of all H&S shampoo buyers and the research showed "the quintessential buyer of Australia's leading shampoo brand is a Millennial man aged between 25-



34 years old".

The demographic data revealed he is a family man, with children aged between 0-11 years old and holding down a skilled or semi-skilled position with an average household income of \$110,000.

Alberto is the leading shampoo brand for women with over 1.35 million Australian women comprising nearly two-thirds of the brand's market.

The woman who buys Alberto is likely to be aged 35-49 years old and work in a white-collar job full-time with an average household income of \$115,000, Pantene buyers are slightly older and represent the traditional "middle Australia", the poll showed.

See more at roymorgan.com.



Travel Specials

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