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Pharmacies must be safe workplaces

PHARMACY owners are being urged to develop and implement internal policies to tackle issues around harassment and bullying, following revelations of sexual harassment in a blog post written by a former pharmacist earlier this month.

A Pharmacy Guild of Australia spokesperson told **Pharmacy Daily** that the organisation did not "tolerate or condone" the behaviour outlined in the blog.

The article was highlighted by the Pharmacists' Support Services on Twitter, and has led to wide-spread support for the author, who had been a 21-year-old intern at the time the alleged harassment took place, while working for "one of the largest discount pharmacies in Australia".

In the blog the former pharmacist said she decided to leave the profession due to the impact the experience had on her mental health.

She said that she had been rostered to the night shift with a male colleague who had been transferred to the store following a complaint by a female employee at another pharmacy in the discount group.

The other employee had alleged he had poked her with a sex toy.

The blogger reported the harassment started with comments about her appearance, and escalated to him touching her.

"I didn't feel comfortable making waves so early in my career," she said.

"I did what most girls in my situation do. I didn't feel strong enough to tell him to leave me alone...so instead of speaking up, I shut down.

"I pretended I didn't notice him staring. I laughed it off when I would catch him quietly sitting behind me as I worked, with his face inches away from my buttocks."

She said she was not the only female he was harassing, and colleagues had complained about his behaviour, however, management did little other than inform him who had contacted them.

Five years after leaving the profession the author shared her experiences in a letter to the pharmacy group's HR department only to be told it would be "too hard" to investigate and "unfair on the other pharmacist", adding it



needed to be informed of sexual harassment within three months of the event to investigate allegations.

"Their system made it easier for him to continue to abuse women than for us to make a complaint about it," she said.

A spokesperson for the Guild said pharmacy owners needed to ensure they "adhere to all relevant legislative requirements to maintain a safe workplace".

"The Guild also advises members to develop and implement internal policies on harassment, bullying and discrimination which include the education of their employees on this matter," the spokesperson said.

"In addition, members are advised where a complaint has been raised by an employee it should be investigated."

Spring Spotlight



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UK HRT shortage

MANY common forms of hormone replacement therapy for women are in short supply in the UK due to "manufacturing delays".

The Department for Health and Social Care said alternative HRT products were available, but some pharmacies report they are already out of stock.

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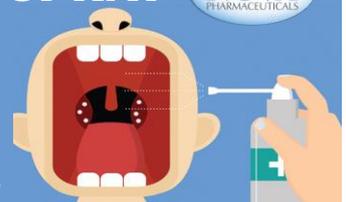
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Opioid packs to shrink

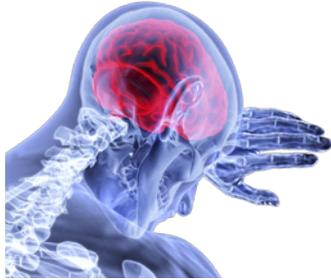
MOVES to mandate smaller pack sizes for opioid medications from 01 Jan 2020, are being welcomed by the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA).

Speaking at the SHPA's 2019 Medicines Leadership Forum in Canberra on Wednesday, Federal Health Minister, Greg Hunt, reiterated his commitment to making medication safety a National Health Priority.

During his opening address Hunt confirmed the Government will require medication manufacturers to provide opioids in smaller pack sizes next year, include better labelling warning and customer information, and introduce restrictions on the use of fentanyl patches, in line with recommendations from the SHPA's *Reducing Opioid-related Harm* report.

SHPA CEO, Kristin Michaels, welcomed the initiatives, aimed at reducing opioid dependency and misuse.

"SHPA's *Reducing Opioid-related Harm* report called for support



for clinicians to prescribe the smallest quantity of analgesics – including dispensing partial packs of analgesics – where this is appropriate for the needs of the patient, so we are pleased to see this is forthcoming from the Department of Health and Therapeutics Goods Administration (TGA)," Michaels said.

"In this complex area, communication is key and we welcome moves toward clearer information on opioid labelling relating to the risk of long-term use and overdose, as well as more comprehensible Consumer Medicines Information (CMI) leaflets."

Chemist Warehouse supports AFL club

PHARMACY chain Chemist Warehouse has teamed up with Darwin's St Mary's Football Club as a major partner in a two year commitment.

The arrangement will see the pharmacy group providing the local football club with vital support to ensure the club can continue to grow and prosper,

while fostering talent from the community.

In addition to an injection of funds, Chemist Warehouse has pledged to donate footballs to the club for all grades in addition to those on the Titi Islands and the Wadeye community to help with community activities and events.

The language of medicines - NPS

AS PART of Be Medicinewise Week, Aug 19-25, NPS MedicineWise is encouraging pharmacists to help their customers get to know the language of medicines.

"Pharmacists have always been at the forefront of Be Medicinewise Week," said Adj A/Prof Steve Morris, pharmacist and CEO of NPS MedicineWise. Access resources at nps.org.au.

Blackmores profits slide

AUSTRALIAN vitamins and supplements brand, Blackmores, has announced a 19% decline in its underlying net profit after tax for the 2019 financial year, to \$55 million.

In a statement to the ASX, the company revealed its full year revenue climbed 1% to \$610 million, with changes to Chinese e-commerce laws negatively impacting sales (down 15% on 2018).

However, the company's in-country business recorded strong growth, with sales up 22%.

Within the Australian market, Blackmores retained its status as the number one supplement brand with 15.9% market share, with sales of \$267 million in Australian and New Zealand.

The company also announced total dividends for the year at \$2.20 per share, fully franked.

Blackmores is expecting to gain operational efficiencies in H2 FY2020, as a result of business improvement initiatives.

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Jobs of the Week

- **Pharmacist Manager** - Grampians & West Coast, VIC (Job# 200032972)
Opportunity for Partnership; great salary; Collaborative team; Flexible hours.
- **Pharmacist Manager** - Toowoomba, QLD (Job# 200031829)
Oversee operations; good team; owner support in beautiful Toowoomba.
- **Pharmacist in Charge** - Mid central northern NSW (Job# 200032983)
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Dispensary Corner

IT'S hard to imagine being so foolish to spy on someone's electronic health record once, but a Canadian pharmacist has recently been suspended from practice for six months for spying on the data of 46 different people.

In Jul, the Nova Scotia College of Pharmacists suspended Robyn Keddy's license to practice pharmacy and fined her \$5,000.

She was also ordered to pay another \$4,000 in costs and complete a course in business ethics.

Keddy, the manager of a Nova Scotia pharmacy operated by Sobeys, targeted her former classmates, a person with whom she'd had a car accident, her doctor and even her child's girlfriend, using the provincial Drug Information System to trawl through their records over the course of two years.

Keddy was also overheard discussing the details with her husband, telling him their child could no longer see his girlfriend as a result of the medications the young woman and her parents had been prescribed.

Nova Scotia Information and Privacy Commissioner Catherine Tully found Keddy had even created false profiles to access the system.

This was not enough though, as she continued to access the information even after her suspension.

There's every chance Keddy probably said "just this once", before embarking on her intrusive jaunt.

Boots translation service

BRITISH pharmacy group, Boots, is to use an on-demand interpretation service pilot for non-English speaking pharmacy patients to broaden the accessibility of healthcare.

With an estimated 726,000 residents in England and Wales who cannot speak English easily, and a further 138,000 unable to speak English at all, the program is hoped to help almost one million UK residents.

The App-based system is called VOYCE, intended to be "patient-centred, easy-to-use and accessible via in-store iPads".

With just a few taps, VOYCE connects colleagues and patients with experienced interpreters who can translate over 245 languages.

The free service is currently being trialled in five stores across Belfast, Birmingham, Knightsbridge, Leicester, and Southampton.

Boots Pharmacy Director, Richard Bradley, said, the group had a history of being at the forefront of health innovation.



"This pilot scheme is a great example of how technology can help us drive better patient outcomes, through a simple, innovative service that will help our pharmacy teams make sure that our patients get the most from their medicines, without language as a barrier," he said.

Bradley added that the pilot is part of Boots UK's larger plans to transform its pharmacy experience for patients and customers.

Earlier this year, Boots developed the Free Online NHS Repeat Prescription Service, giving patients the convenience of ordering repeat prescriptions from their mobiles, arranging collection from a store or having it delivered to their home for free.

New indications

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration has posted details around the use of new medicine indications relating to overactive bladder, migraines and haemorrhoids. Visit tga.gov.au.



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.

05 - 07 Sep: Pharmacy Connect; Hilton Hotel, Sydney; for details and to register visit: www.pharmacy-connect.com.au

09 Oct: 2019 Annual Conference & 20th Annual Industry Awards; Doltone House, Sydney; register here: www.cmaustralia.org.au

11 - 13 Oct: Pharmacy Assistant National Conference; Sofitel Brisbane Central; for more info and to register see: www.pharmacyassistants.com

27 - 30 Oct: Pharmacy Alliance Members' Forum; Pullman Cairns International; early bird ends 31 Aug: www.pharmacyalliance.com.au

14 - 16 Nov: SHPA Medicines Management 2019 (MM2019); GCCEC, Gold Coast; early bird registrations close 16 Sep: www.mm2019shpa.com

Win with Plunkett's

Everyday this week Pharmacy Daily and Plunkett's are giving away the NEW 125ml Plunkett's Vita E Natural Vitamin E Quick Dry Oil and a 100g Vita E Natural Vitamin E Cream valued at over \$40.

Introducing Plunkett's High Potency Vita E Natural Vitamin E Quick Dry Oil, enriched with Rosehip Oil and infused with Mandarin Oil. The quick dry formula leaves the skin feeling beautifully soft. Ideal to help soften scars, stretchmarks and dry, damaged skin. Visit: www.Plunketts.com.au for more.

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

Is Plunkett's Vita E Natural Vitamin E Quick Dry Oil suitable for face and body?

Congratulations to yesterday's winner, Vicki Whalland.

