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TGA recall procedure

TODAY the Therapeutic Goods Administration's (TGA's) new Uniform Recall Procedure for Therapeutic Goods is in effect.

This version of the procedure protocol clarifies requirements around 'quarantine' and provides greater flexibility for sponsors when communicating information about consumer level recalls.

The new requirements are accessible at tga.gov.au.

New tobacco device damages lungs

A NEW study that directly compares new heated tobacco devices with vaping and traditional cigarettes shows that all three are toxic to human lung cells.

Researchers from University of Technology Sydney, University of Tasmania and University of Sydney suggests that the new device, which heats solid tobacco instead of an e-liquid, is no less toxic to the cells than ordinary cigarette smoke.

Lead scientist Dr Pawan Sharma concluded these new heated tobacco devices are as harmful as smoking traditional cigarettes.

CLICK HERE for access to the work.

Blackmores slams 60 Minutes

EXCLUSIVE

BLACKMORES says a story about complementary medicines broadcast last night on Channel Nine's *60 Minutes* program was "not accurate, and was unnecessarily alarmist".

The program highlighted the case of a particular patient, with allegations she had experienced liver damage linked to a Blackmores product containing valerian.

The patient's doctor apparently claimed valerian was the "culprit," and Blackmores told *PD* it had repeatedly asked both *60 Minutes* and the doctor for details of the patient's allergic adverse reaction.

Information sought including when the reaction started, the dates she was taking the product, her age and medical history, and other medicines consumed during the 18-month period she is claimed to have taken the valerian.

"We have not received any of the above critical information," Blackmores said, adding "we take information related to consumer adverse reactions extremely seriously."

"The *60 Minutes* case had not been reported to Blackmores by the consulting doctor, the patient, nor the hospital," the company said, adding that since

being notified by the show, it had reported the case to the TGA "out of abundant caution, based on the very limited information available".

Blackmores noted it had been selling products containing valerian since the 1950s, and since the current product range was registered with the Therapeutic Goods Administration 13 years ago almost 80 million doses had been consumed by Australians, with zero serious adverse reactions.

"The media has a responsibility to report accurately, fairly and with balance in medical matters...that was not the case on Sunday night."

MEANWHILE Blackmores CEO Richard Henfrey wrote to Darren Wick, the Nine Network's National Director of News & Current affairs two weeks ago, expressing his serious concern about the story.

He noted the company's repeated unsuccessful attempts to gain more information so it could thoroughly look into the matter.

"We are very keen to investigate this further because in the event that this was indeed a direct response to one of our products, we need to be able to take appropriate action," Henfrey wrote, saying the company had not been informed of any adverse reactions since its current valerian product range was registered with the TGA.

"Responsible and accurate reporting is important to ensure that the large number of Australian consumers using complementary medicines are not unnecessarily scared and concerned for their own health," he added.

Specialist community pharmacist roles

BOOTS UK is introducing a specialist pharmacist practitioner role to recognise pharmacists who are "operating at the cutting edge of community pharmacy practice", according to a report in the *Pharmaceutical Journal*.

Boots UK Chief Pharmacist Marc Donovan (pictured) said the company wants to attract and retain the very best of the profession as the role of the pharmacist continues to evolve.

Consequently pharmacists with the highest level of competence, such as those conducting pharmacy research or carrying out extensive work in the local community, will be eligible to apply for the program.

Applicants must however, have been qualified for at least 18 months and should preferably be an independent prescriber and a Royal Pharmaceutical Society Faculty member, Donovan said.

Applications will be reviewed by a specialist practitioner review panel and successful candidates will be appointed to the role for a set period.

"As the landscape of pharmacy changes, the role of the pharmacist is evolving to respond to the additional opportunities to further impact patients' lives — and as an organisation, we want to ensure we attract and retain the very best pharmacist colleagues."



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Dispensary Corner

SCIENTISTS from Rockefeller University in New York have found a possible way to make mosquitos less blood-suckingly hungry, simply using human appetite suppressants.

They tested female *Aedes aegypti* mozzies - the ones that bite because they need proteins in blood to produce their eggs - by feeding them a saline solution containing neuropeptide Y (NPY) Y2 receptor drugs.

They found the insects' appetites plummeted after they were exposed to the medication, similar to human reactions to the NPY drugs.

While the work is still in early stages, it could lead to a "novel approach to control infectious disease transmission by controlling mosquito behaviour".

The full abstract was published in the *Cell* journal - cell.com.

AND while we're on the subject of annoying insects, a zoo in the USA has come up with a special not-so-romantic Valentine's Day promotion involving creepy-crawlies.

The El Paso Zoo in West Texas has announced a "Quit Bugging Me" campaign, offering to name a cockroach after your ex and then feed it to a meerkat live on camera.

The special event will be streamed on Facebook and the zoo's website so you can watch it live from wherever you are in the world, with a spokesperson for the zoo saying it was a "fun way to get the community involved in our daily enrichment activities".

You can message your ex's name to [facebook.com/elpasozoo](https://www.facebook.com/elpasozoo).

Opioid use guide

THE National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction (NCETA) at Flinders University is today launching a new publication *Responding To Pharmaceutical Opioid-Related Problems: A Resource for Prescribers*.

The intention of the publication is to reduce the chance of Australia reaching the levels of prescribed opioid abuse that has spiralled in the US, where an estimated 1.7 million people suffer from disorders from prescribed opioids each year.

Between 2001 and 2012, rates of fentanyl, oxycodone, and methadone deaths in Australia all rose significantly, averaging increases of around 40%, 16% and 3% respectively.

NCETA Director Professor Ann Roche said, "Pharmaceutical opioids are very valuable medicines.

"However, Australia is currently experiencing a range of harms associated with their use", but we also need to support codeine-dependent individuals, he added.

The new guide is available in hard copy or soft: nceta.flinders.edu.au.

Vale Medsafe's Stewart Jessamine

THE New Zealand health sector is in mourning this week after the untimely death of Stewart Jessamine, who worked at the NZ Ministry of Health from 1993 until 2018 in a range of senior roles including as Group Manager of Medsafe and the Director of Protection Regulation & Assurance Health Division.

Jessamine, aged 60, was a major innovator during his career, with the Australian Self-Medication Industry paying tribute to his "decent, fair, reasonable and open-minded" approach and his longstanding legacy of reform.

BioCeuticals research

THE 7th BioCeuticals Research Symposium in The Hilton Hotel, Sydney from 03 to 05 May 2019 is running with the theme 'Mood, Genes and Cognition'.

New therapies for Alzheimer's, using genetic tests to improve autism and depression, and the gut-brain connection are amongst the key topics to be presented by leading international researchers and clinicians.

More than 500 delegates are expected to attend the Symposium, held by Australian nutraceuticals and supplement company BioCeuticals.

Registration and more information is at bioceuticals.com.au.



Weekly Comment

Welcome to Pharmacy Daily's weekly comment feature. This week's contributor is - **Robert Whelan, Managing Director of AP Group.**



Graduate Employment in Pharmacy

WHAT really is the state of play for pharmacy graduates in Australia and how employable are they when all that study is finally done and dusted?

Pharmacy has traditionally held up well as a highly employable vocation, with 2018 survey results showing that 92.5% of pharmacy graduates are attaining fulltime work within four months of graduation.

While no-doubt welcomed, these figures need to be viewed through the highly-regulated lens of pharmacy in Australia. The regulation of pharmacy ownership throughout the states and territories, coupled with location rules applying to community pharmacy pose a significant problem.

There are simply not enough pharmacies in the country (around 5600) to accommodate a reasonable rate of ownership or at least a partnership scenario for the recently graduated.

Recent registrant data from the Pharmacy Board of Australia tells us there are now just over 31,000 registered pharmacists in Australia, with well over half of those under 45 years of age. That means there's now approximately five registered pharmacists for every one pharmacy in Australia.

The fact that 92.5% of graduates are in full time employment within four months is fantastic, but the reality is a genuine lack of ownership opportunities for first-time buyers and pharmacy graduates.

Like many other industries, pharma graduates must look at what other skills they can bring to the table.

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.

Clear Skin Superfood Booster is an innovative nutritional approach to skin wellness for blemish and acne prone skin, using specially selected ingredients to supply the body with key vitamins, minerals, essential fatty acids, amino acids, digestive enzymes, probiotics & prebiotics. Available from Sigma PDE CODE 301911 and API PDE CODE 43816. Watch the YouTube video **HERE** for more. For more info see www.skinB5.com.au.

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



How many ingredients are in the Clear Skin Superfood Booster?

Check here tomorrow for today's winner.