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Clinical trials hub

THE Federal Government has announced \$24.6 million in funding for a new clinical trials hub which aims to boost opportunities for patients across the country to participate in trials of new treatments and other interventions as close as possible to home.

The Community Health and Hospitals Fund support for the Australian Clinical Trials Network's "TrialHub" will create partnerships with regional hospitals to expand the reach of, and participation in, clinical trials, with the first partner institutions including hospitals in Rosebud, Casey and Bendigo in Vic.

TrialHub's initial focus will be on rare cancers and other diseases, prostate cancer and melanoma.

The program is a collaboration between Monash University and Alfred Health to boost the number of available clinical trials in Vic.

CVS selling CBD

AMERICAN pharmacy giant CVS has confirmed it has started selling products containing hemp-derived cannabidiol (CBD) in some US states.

Cannabis company Curaleaf last week announced that more than 800 CVS stores in 10 states were selling its products, which include topical items such as creams, sprays, roll-ons, lotions and salves.

However CVS is not selling any supplements or food additives containing cannabidiol.

It is still illegal in the USA to add CBD to food and beverage products, because the compound is the active ingredient in prescription medication Epidiolex.

Pharmacists back S4 codeine

MOST pharmacists believe last year's controversial decision to up-schedule codeine-based analgesics to prescription only will benefit patients, new research reveals.

The study conducted by RMIT's School of Health and Biomedical Sciences between Mar and May 2018, found over 40% of pharmacists believed the change from S3 to S4 would positively impact their ability to manage pain, while a further 30% were neutral.

"Many pharmacists viewed the codeine rescheduling as a positive move, as the tighter restrictions to prescription only will now encourage the patients to be more willing to speak about their pain", the researchers said.

"Furthermore, this will further encourage the patients to come into the pharmacy to discuss the matter with a pharmacist, rather than simply come into the pharmacy for the OTC purchase then depart with limited consultation," they said.

"Additionally, encouraging patients to discuss their pain

provides better opportunities for pharmacists to get more involved with pain management discussions/strategies and to recommend alternative pain management strategies/other analgesics available."

While many pharmacists supported the move to up-schedule codeine, the change to S4 has reduced the number of OTC analgesics they can offer patients.

"It was noted by pharmacists that the patients are now disadvantaged, as well as the pharmacists' ability to recommend an appropriate codeine product was limited given that they felt paracetamol with or without NSAIDs (which are the only OTC options available now) are not sufficient in some cases, especially when patients are unable to take NSAIDs," the researchers said.

"An additional concern commented on by many pharmacists was the added burden that is now shifted to the GP/physicians as patients now are forced to see their GPs."

The research was published in the *International Journal of Clinical Pharmacy* - [CLICK HERE](#).

Compounder's 10 yrs

A PHARMACIST in Florida in the USA has been sentenced to a decade in prison for his part in a US\$121 million compounding pharmacy fraud scheme.

The Justice Department said from 2012 to 2015, Ademola Adebayo conspired with others to defraud insurers by submitting fake claims for compounded drugs that were never provided to the patient.

Board case studies

THE Pharmacy Board of Australia has developed a new page on its website where case studies will be published to help practitioners understand and meet their obligations as a registered pharmacist.

Recent additions to the site include a case where the practitioner allegedly allowed a pharmacy student to prepare and dispense a patient's methadone dose without direct supervision and failed to check the dose before it was provided to the patient.

The outcome saw the Board considering it necessary to restrict the pharmacist from acting as a preceptor of interns or students, as well as undertake formal education.

Another new case describes an allegation where a practitioner dispensed a medication to the incorrect patient.

When collecting the prescription, the patient was provided with a medication belonging to another patient with the same surname but different surname by a pharmacy assistant.

The patient took a medication not prescribed for them and suffered adverse effects - see the case study page at pharmacyboard.gov.au.

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5-fingered discounts

FAKE tanning products are the most likely items to be pilfered from Irish pharmacies the Irish Pharmacy Union reports.

The organisation's crime survey found three-quarters of pharmacies reported experiencing at least one crime in the last 12 months.

Shoplifting was the most prevalent crime perpetrated on pharmacies, with fake tan accounting for 50% of items stolen by light-fingered shoppers.

Almost one in five pharmacies reported falling victim to fraud, while a similar number had controlled or prescription medicines stolen from their premises.

The survey found 68% of pharmacies impacted by crimes reported them to the police, with a third of pharmacies saying they had no faith that the criminal would be charged, while 35% of those to report a crime to the police saying they were not satisfied by the response.

San Francisco e-cigs may be banned

LAWMAKERS in the US city of San Francisco have proposed a new regulation which would ban the sale of electronic cigarettes.

The authorities say they want to stop the devices from being sold until their health effects have been evaluated by the US Food and Drug Administration.

The move aims to slow down the rising adoption of e-cigarettes by young people, with a further measure aiming to prohibit making, selling or distributing tobacco on city property.

MedAdvisor US expansion

AUSTRALIAN-LISTED digital medicines management company MedAdvisor has announced a new partnership with Adheris Health, a US patient adherence and engagement company, to accelerate its roll-out to the US market (**PD** breaking news Fri).

The initial arrangement is a 12-month "Digital Partnership Agreement", under which Adheris Health will promote and jointly sell MedAdvisor-powered digital adherence programs in the US to its existing pharmaceutical clients as an extension of its current suite of patient performance solutions.

Adheris currently reaches more than 197 million patients on behalf of 26,000+ pharmacies and claims the largest network for patient and prescriber access in the US.

As well as the 197 million patients, there are 295,000 prescribers engaged, giving access to 2.2 billion prescriptions per year.

The main additions to Adheris' suite are MedAdvisor's SMS and web-based offerings.

Pfizer gene therapy

PFIZER Inc has announced the US\$51 million acquisition of a 15% stake in French gene therapy biotech company, along with an exclusive option to acquire the rest of the business.

The move will see Pfizer and Vivet collaborate on the development of VTX-801, a treatment for genetic disorder Wilson disease.



MedAdvisor will charge a setup fee as well as the per patient fee relating to the size and complexity of the campaign.

MedAdvisor Welam US President Keith Kiariis commented,

"The resulting combination will be an unmatched multidimensional approach to patient support in the US, a market more than 10 times the size of Australia".

MedAdvisor CEO Robert Read added that this partnership deal had been brewing for six months and both parties have hopes of an ongoing relationship.

Revenue from the combined efforts will be derived on a per patient, per communication basis and is expected to begin in during the current calendar year.

More sartan recalls

BRITAINS Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has recalled three batches of Losartan tablets, due to contamination with the nitrosamine N-nitroso-N-methylamino butyric acid (NMBA).

The move is part of the ongoing investigation into nitrosamine contamination of sartan containing medicines, with this latest recall relating to products supplied by Accord Healthcare Limited.

The regulator noted the recall was a precautionary measure, citing "no evidence at present that medicines containing NDMA, NDEA or NMBA had caused any harm to patients".

New EMA chair

THE management board of the European Medicines Agency has re-elected Christa Wirthumer-Hoche as its chair for a further three years.

Wirthumer-Hoche has been head of the Austrian Medicines and Medical Devices Agency since 2013, with her re-election marking her second and final mandate as chair.

Itchy skin?



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Dispensary Corner

OKAY, it is certainly true that having cockroaches lurking around your house can spread germs and be detrimental to your health, but perhaps call pest control rather than take matters into your own hands.

That's the advice a 50-year-old man from Detroit Michigan should've followed when he tried to kill a bug by throwing one of his many guns at it.

The revolver went off after hitting the ground and shot him in the foot, putting him in hospital where he is in a stable (and embarrassed) condition.

Ironically, we understand the cockroach is likely to have escaped the incident unharmed.



LAWs pertaining to autonomy over the human body can be a controversial topic, none more so than a bill introduced this week in the Georgia General Assembly which wants to make men aged 55 and older self-report immediately to their nearest law enforcement office each time they ejaculate - yes, really.

HB 604, nicknamed the "Testicular Bill of Rights", includes a ban on vasectomies and also requires men to obtain written permission from their sexual partners before obtaining a prescription for erectile dysfunction medication.

The proposal, by five female Democratic representatives, is a response to "double standards" in a controversial abortion bill.

Choosing Wisely program release

NPS MedicineWise has released the outline of the upcoming 2019 Choosing Wisely Australia National Meeting, which is scheduled to take place on Thu 30 May 2019 at Epicure, Melbourne Cricket Ground.

The event will see attendees engage with the Choosing Wisely Australia community and foster the exchange of ideas, with presentations on "practical and implementable examples of projects on Choosing Wisely and their impact to date".

Key themes will include spreading the Choosing Wisely message, changing culture through health professional education and training, and ideas to measure or evaluate the impact of the program.

Discounted rates of \$190 are available for registrations made and paid before Thu 13 Apr, after which the standard registration fee increases to \$300 - **CLICK HERE**.



Arthritis strategy

ARTHRITIS Australia has engaged a number of stakeholder organisations, including the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, to create the National Strategic Action Plan for Arthritis.

All levels of government are being called upon to invest in implementing the plan.

The Action Plan provides an "evidence-based blueprint to guide national efforts to improve health and quality of life for people living with arthritis, reduce the cost and prevalence of the condition, and reduce the impact on individuals, their carers and the community," according to Arthritis Australia Chair Kristine Riethmiller.

"Implementation of the Action Plan will go a long way towards ensuring people with arthritis get the right treatment, care and support they need to live well with their condition.

"However, significant upfront and ongoing investment to implement the actions set out within this plan is absolutely essential if we are to make any progress in our fight against this debilitating and costly disease," she said.

Concerns exist around management of these conditions which affect four million Australians, and the Action Plan outlines "quality policies, programs and services to prevent arthritis, and deliver high-value care to improve health and quality of life." See arthritisaustralia.com.au.



Welcome to Pharmacy Daily's weekly comment feature.

This week's contributor is **Amit Saha**, Pharmacist & Technical Manager at Dermal Therapy.



(Not) Scratching that Itch

THE colder weather is fast approaching us, and it brings a higher likelihood of people suffering from dry and itchy skin. This occurs due to the increase in hot water use on the skin, drying the skin and stripping it of moisture and oils, creating that "winter itch".

Pruritus (itchy skin) can also be caused by other factors, such as skin conditions e.g. eczema, insect bites, allergies, sunburn, cuts and abrasions, minor burns, menopause or a potential side effect of chemotherapy and radiation therapy.

Without proper treatment, constant scratching at itchy and irritated skin can lead to red, swollen and even broken skin. It is important for patients to develop a regimen of care to prevent, treat and manage itchy skin before it worsens to broken skin and potential infection.

Using soap free washes and reducing the temperature of shower / bath water are effective preventative measures. But if eliminating the cause of itchy skin isn't an option, a topical application is recommended.

Ensure that it is a pH balanced, petrochemical free formula that can be used on both small and large surfaces. Some creams are thick and hard to apply, a lotion to compliment the cream to use on large skin surfaces is a more complete regimen to manage skin itch.

Win with skinb5

This week **Pharmacy Daily** & **skinB5** are giving away each day their **NEW** premium products from their Australian Botanicals Range - Cleanser and Hydrating Essence valued at \$85.90.

skinB5's Australian Botanicals Cleansing Mousse uses botanical extracts sourced from the Australian landscape to provide a soothing, non-drying cleanse that is rich in potent active nutrients specially selected for acne prone skin.

For more info see www.skinB5.com.

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

Check here tomorrow for today's winner.

How many native anti-acne extracts are in the Australian Botanical Cleanser?