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## Adherence research

A NEW study recently published in the *Journal of Psychometric Research* has highlighted two previously unidentified factors which may affect patients' adherence to treatment.

The research found some patients were reluctant to take medication as it was a "reminder" of their illness, while the other new factor was a desire to "test" the treatment, by reducing or omitting it entirely to see if their illness is present.

The study involved patient cohorts from three different clinical areas: hypertension (n=175), oncology (n=115) and gout (n=196).

The University of Auckland study was highlighted by Sydney-based Atlantis Healthcare, which works to develop health psychology evidence-based patient adherence solutions - see the full publication at [sciedirect.com](http://sciedirect.com).

## PSA welcomes bipartisan support

POLICY leaders from Australia's two major parties and the Greens have voiced their support for pharmacists, in their responses to five key pre-election commitments called for by the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA).

PSA President, Dr Chris Freeman, welcomed the bipartisan support for the profession and the role pharmacists can play in tackling the rise of medicine-related harm.

"Medicine-related problems cause 250,000 hospital admissions and 400,000 emergency department presentations in Australia each year, costing the healthcare system \$1.4 billion annually. At least half of this harm is avoidable, and pharmacists are the key to improving the safe and quality use of medicines," Dr Freeman said.

"To meet community health needs, we must ensure pharmacists can practise to their full potential, develop within a team of health

professionals and have a quality agenda for the services and care they deliver.

"PSA looks forward to working closely with an incoming Government to empower pharmacists to do more to deliver better healthcare for all Australians."

While the PSA noted the three major parties supported its call to take steps to combat medicine-related harm and for greater integration of pharmacists into multidisciplinary teams, the PSA has not confirmed whether it had received support to include it as a signatory to the 7th Community Pharmacy Agreement, which was one of the five commitments it requested (PD 15 Apr).

*Pharmacy Daily* understands that the PSA's advisory relationship with Australian Healthcare Associates (AHA) the administrator of the 6CPA Community Pharmacy Programs, may need to be examined if it is to be a signatory to the next agreement.

## POTY 2020 entries

APPLICATIONS for the Pharmacy Guild's 2020 Pharmacy of the Year competition formally opened yesterday, with the format once again providing for three categories: Business Management, Community Engagement and Professional Innovation.

Entries must be lodged by Thu 01 Aug 2019 and the winners will be announced at APP2020, 19-22 Mar next year - see [guild.org.au](http://guild.org.au).

## US homeopathy alert

THE US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has advised of warning letters sent to five companies which make products labelled as homeopathic, for "significant violations of current good manufacturing practice (CMP) regulations".

Four of the letters related to companies which jointly produced a homeopathic product called Puriton Eye Relief Drops which posed a significant safety risk to consumers, because the purportedly sterile items were not shown to be sterile in testing of multiple samples by the FDA.

An FDA spokesperson said products labelled as homeopathic were often marketed as natural safe alternatives to approved prescription and non-prescription products, but "may cause significant and even irreparable harm if they are poorly manufactured, which can lead to contamination, or may contain active ingredients that are not adequately tested or disclosed to patients".

## Rural health priority

AUSTRALIA'S key political parties are failing to deliver clear rural health policies, says the National Rural Health Alliance (NRHA).

NRHA CEO Mark Diamond said the Greens were the only party to have put forward a serious strategy for improving health services in remote and rural areas, calling on the major parties to clearly articulate their rural health policies before Sat's election.

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\*New from Ego Pharmaceuticals.  
 References: 1. Australian Medicines Handbook (online). Dermatological drugs - Tables. Comparison of potency and uses of topical corticosteroids [Internet]. 2018 [cited 2018 July 25]. 2. Dermatology Expert Group. Therapeutic Guidelines: Dermatology, version 4. Dermatitis: Atopic dermatitis. Therapeutic Guidelines Ltd [Internet]. 2018 [cited 2018 July 25]. 3. Kloxema Cream Approved Product Information, 12 September 2017. Before recommending please review full Product Information [link].

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## Dispensary Corner

**PHARMACISTS** are regularly described as the most accessible health professionals, and this mantle is expected to ring truer than ever when the British Open Golf Championships take place in Northern Ireland this coming Jul.

One medical clinic near the Royal Portrush Golf Course in County Antrim, where the tournament will be held, has warned patients it will be offering restricted services over the course of the four-day tournament.

"Due to severe parking and waiting restrictions imposed during The Open golf week, please be aware we are only able to offer a limited service for patients," a spokesperson for the beleaguered clinic told the *Belfast Telegraph*.

"The GPs will endeavour to ensure all patients requiring immediate and necessary treatment will be cared for to the best of our ability.

"Unfortunately all review and routine appointments will have to be suspended for this week."

The announcement has prompted concerns that local hospitals' emergency departments could be flooded with patients seeking treatment for minor ailments.

However, nearby pharmacists have been identified as potential saviours, with the district's Health and Social Care Board suggesting that telephone triage services could be set up, along with prescription pick-ups from pharmacies seen as one possible way to keep sick Northern Irish people away from the world's best golfers.

## Amcal+ Life Clinic launch

**SIGMA** Healthcare yesterday confirmed the upcoming debut of a new Amcal+ Life Clinic pharmacy format, with the first concept store under the brand expected to be fully operational within eight weeks in Burwood, Vic.

The Amcal+ Life Clinic format expands health services provided in the community, including "extensive consultation suites to incorporate allied health services," according to CEO Mark Hooper, who detailed the initiative at the company's annual general meeting.

Hooper also confirmed that Sigma's "well-managed wind-down of supply to Chemist Warehouse" was proceeding to plan.

The cessation of the Chemist Warehouse contract on 30 Jun will see about 300 jobs lost, as well as providing the catalyst for Sigma's "Project Pivot" which has seen the company review its entire operations and structure.

Over \$100 million in efficiency gains have been identified as achievable over two years, with Hooper saying follow-up analysis from the initial estimates had

"given us great confidence that the benefits are real, are achievable, and are commercially sensible".

He noted the success of Sigma in the latest tender for the Community Service Obligation funding pool, adding that engagement with both major political parties in the lead up to this Sat's Federal Election had been encouraging in terms of recognition of the important role played by CSO distributors in supporting the health of the nation.

Hooper said Sigma's community pharmacy network continued to perform well, highlighting the Whole Life Pharmacy and Health Foods differentiated pharmacy model launched by Discount Drug Stores, with nine such outlets now operating in Qld, WA and NSW.

For the three months to 31 Mar 2019 like-for-like sales in Sigma's own brands are up more than 4%, he said, with Amcal performing particularly well and a "healthy pipeline of prospective members" alongside "good signs of growth" in Sigma's independent community pharmacy offer.



## Travel Specials

**WELCOME** to *Pharmacy Daily's* travel feature. Each week we highlight a couple of great travel deals for the pharmacy industry, brought to you by *Travel & Cruise Weekly*.

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## Win with Nutri-Synergy

Everyday this week Pharmacy Daily and Plunkett's are giving away an NS prize pack valued at \$30.

Dry, rough cracked hands? NS Working Hands is an intensive repair treatment, it absorbs quickly so that hands get back to work fast. For dry, sensitive or problem hands, NS Protective Hand Cream and NS Cuticle and Nail Repair will soften, nourish and restore them back to their natural, healthy state. Visit: [www.NutriSynergy.com.au](http://www.NutriSynergy.com.au) for more.

To win, be the first from SA or NT to send the correct answer to the question to [comp@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:comp@pharmacydaily.com.au)

Fill in the blanks: NS Working Hands is a non-slip treatment so hands get back to work \_\_\_\_?

Congratulations to yesterday's winner, Song Huan Eow.

