



GPs open to crisis dispensing changes

GENERAL practitioners would welcome discussions on ways to bolster patients' access to medications during emergency situations.

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) President, Dr Harry Nespolon, told *Pharmacy Daily* that the organisation backed the current emergency dispensing measures in bushfire affected parts of NSW and Queensland, announced by the Department of Health on Tue.

However, he said the RACGP would be open to the possibility of granting pharmacists greater autonomy to dispense Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) listed medicines during major crises.

"There are already state and territory and national schemes in place to allow for the emergency supply of prescription medication," he said.

"This allows patients to access



these medicines where it's not practical to obtain a prescription.

"I welcome discussion on any proposals designed to ensure those impacted by emergencies such as the catastrophic bushfires have access to the medication they need.

"However, we must of course be vigilant that any changes don't disrupt continuity of care or jeopardise patient health."

Pharmaceutical Society of

Australia National President, Dr Chris Freeman suggested that pharmacists should be given the authority to dispense "at least a month's supply of medicines" in emergency situations (*PD* yesterday).

Freeman added that current state and territory legislation rules around dispensing could impede pharmacists from ensuring continuity of medicines supply.

Diabetes Day

TODAY is World Diabetes Day with the theme 'Family and Diabetes' and a social media campaign under the hashtag #mydiabetesfamily.

See more at idf.org.

In bad shape...

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration has alerted consumers about a product called Me2Shape capsules which contain the undeclared substance fluoxetine.

GuildSuper wins innovation gong

GUILDSUPER has been recognised at the World Pension Summit in The Hague for its innovative SUPERSUPER program, which has won the Innovation in Communication and Member Engagement Award announced during the event.

The Guild-backed product beat out finalists from seven different countries to take the accolade.

SUPERSUPER is a shop-and-save

rewards program with selected retailers which lets participants add more to their super through everyday shopping.

GuildSuper launched SUPERSUPER 12 months ago (*PD* 01 Nov 2018), and claims to have saved participants thousands of dollars in additional contributions, with 60% coming from grocery shopping.

See guildsuper.com.au.

Today's issue of *PD*

Pharmacy Daily today has four pages of news plus a full page from *Wizard*.

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Coroner backs festival pill testing

POLITICAL leaders in NSW are being urged to back medically supervised pilot pill testing trials at music festivals across the state this summer.

Following the inquest into the deaths of six festival patrons who died after consuming illicit substances at events in the state between Dec 2017 and Jan 2019, NSW State Deputy Coroner, Harriet Grahame, recommended in a report that the Department of Premier and Cabinet permit and facilitate trials in an effort to reduce fatalities as a result of festival-goers consuming toxic agents.

Grahame recommended that the State Government should facilitate a NSW Drug Summit to develop evidence-based drug policy focused on harm minimisation, including the introduction of targeted education programs.

She also urged the Government to work in conjunction with NSW Health and NSW Police, to fund the establishment of permanent drug



checking facilities similar to the Dutch Drug Information Monitoring System.

In her report, Grahame noted evidence presented to the inquest by Swansea University Medical School Senior Lecturer, Dr Amira Giurgius, that a pharmacist-led pill testing service trial in the UK had yielded positive results.

"We were able to convince a few not to use the sample at all, and

not to buy from the dealer, this dealer at all," Dr Giurgius told the inquest.

"I think that it was very, very positive, and if we would have continued we could have had more people come in to us."

Arborvitae inks deal with API

AUSTRALIAN complementary medicine company, Arborvitae, has entered a distribution arrangement with pharmaceutical wholesaler API, opening the products up to API's network of 3,400 pharmacies.

This follows a successful national deal struck with Blooms The Chemist earlier this year.

The company now has a range of health tonics created using pycnogenol, a maritime pine bark extract.

CM advertising changes afoot

COMPLEMENTARY

Medicines (CMs) advertising pre-approvals are to be phased out in Jun 2020.

In the lead up to this, The Complementary Healthcare Council of Australia (CHC) said it will stop receiving new applications for advertising approvals from today, 14 Nov.

Applications currently in process will be finalised no later than 31 Jan 2020.

New plans will be announced "shortly" - more at tga.gov.au.

Med cannabis conference

MEDICINAL Cannabis Industry Australia (MCIA) has launched an industry-led Australian medicinal cannabis conference, *ACannabis*, set for Melbourne 03 - 04 Mar 2020.

MCIA Chair, Peter Crock, said, "ACannabis is the platform to gain a deep understanding of ground-breaking research, an inside perspective on global trends and a unique opportunity for the agritech and medtech sector to have the conversations required to leverage our advantages".

Policy makers, government, global leaders, healthcare professionals, cultivators, manufacturers, patients, industry and more will come together to share - visit acannabis.com.au for more.

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Costs put patients off their medicine

AUSTRALIANS living in the most socio-economically disadvantaged areas are twice as likely to delay or not get a prescription filled than those in the least disadvantaged areas, data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) reveals.

The *Patient Experience Survey* found 18.5% of Australians went to a pharmacist to seek "advice only" in the last 12 months, with 82.8% of respondents saying they had visited their general practitioner in that period.

Of patients who saw a GP, 67.4% received a prescription, with one-in-15 of those reporting that they delayed filling or did not fill the script due to cost, with close to one-in-10 patients from the most socio-economic disadvantaged areas putting off or not buying the



medication because of financial concerns.

Roughly three-quarters of respondents reported that they felt their GP "always listened carefully to them", with a similar proportion claiming they believed their doctor

spent sufficient time assessing them.

Patients aged 65 years and older were more likely to report that their GP showed them respect (87%), than patients aged between 15 and 64 years (79.4%).

New naltrexone indication

GRIFFITH University researchers from the National Centre for Neuroimmunology and Emerging Disease have demonstrated that the opioid agonist, naltrexone, significantly restored the function of faulty receptors associated with myalgic encephalomyelitis, also known as Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFS).

Published in the *Frontiers in Immunology* journal, the study concluded that naltrexone may have potential for use as a treatment for the seriously debilitating illness ME/CFS, whose aetiology is unknown.

To access the research, visit frontiersin.org.

Excreted antidepressants disrupt fish

RESEARCH out of Monash University has shown "the pervasive antidepressant pollutant, fluoxetine... disrupted the frequency of aggressive interactions and food consumption" in aquatic wildlife.

The implications include reduced body weight when mosquito fish were investigated in their social context.

Psychoactive pollutants are becoming more pervasive, the authors wrote - [CLICK HERE](#).

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Dispensary Corner

NEXT time you're encouraging someone to eat their greens, consider that they may be genetically predisposed to dislike vegetables.

New US research has found that two genes in particular can affect how foods like brussels sprouts and broccoli taste, and could explain why some people find it difficult to include enough vegies in their diet.

Pity those who suffer from this particular genetic configuration, because it can also apparently make beer, dark chocolate and coffee taste unpleasant too.

The next phase of the research aims to discover whether using certain spices can help mask the perceived bitter taste of leafy green vegetables to make them more appealing to people who are "hard-wired to dislike certain varieties," according to a BBC report.

A BABY who was born on the dance floor of a French nightclub earlier this week has been given free entry to the venue for life.

The "beyond the velvet rope" privilege was granted to the child of an energetic 19-year-old woman who had defied the exhaustion of her late pregnancy and spent the night grooving to the beat.

Staff were closing up the Depeche Club in the southern city of Toulouse at about 5.30am when they were alerted to the crisis, contacting emergency services who talked them through the delivery of a healthy baby.

Merck serves up new office



THE official opening of Merck's new Sydney office in Macquarie Park (**PD** yesterday) saw former Aussie tennis champ, and now local MP, John Alexander OAM, assist Merck Chairman, Dr Frank Stangenberg-Haverkamp, in the official ribbon cutting.

"Merck has a 351-year heritage and as the family of owners, we want to build on this successful legacy for future generations," said Dr Stangenberg-Haverkamp.

"We are proud of our company and its people – about 56,000 curious minds dedicated to human progress...they are pushing the boundaries of possibility to create

opportunities for everyone – here in Australia and in more than 60 further countries around the world," he said.

Also participating in the ceremony (**pictured**) were Merck Healthcare MD and GM for Australia/NZ, Leah Goodman and Bradley Simpson, the company's Life Science Managing Director for the region.

Simpson said the move to consolidate Merck's Sydney-based Healthcare and Life Science divisions would further drive the success of the business, demonstrating that Merck is "truly a vibrant science and technology company".

Self Care Corp debuts Blossoms deal

SELF Care Corporation, the manufacturer of the "freeze-frame" clinical skincare brand, has announced a new partnership with Sydney based Blossoms BH Wholesale.

The pact covers the distribution of the brand, also known as FF within the Chinese community, into the Australian specialty gift store channel. All freeze-frame products are made in Australia at TGA-licensed and GMP-certified manufacturing facilities. Self Care noted it had formally terminated its relationship with Freeze-frame Co Limited, and had won court injunctions relating to fake freeze-frame products.

The new partnership with Blossoms will ensure a consistent supply of authentic products, the company said, with the relationship complementing existing agreements with API, Sigma, DHL & Symbion.



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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