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AMA continues attacks on pharmacy

FRESH calls for Australian pharmacists to be empowered to work to their full scope of practice are once again being rebuffed by the Australian Medical Association (AMA).

AMA members, including National President, Dr Tony Bartone, and WA President, Dr Andrew Miller, have taken aim at Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President, George Tambassis, for suggesting that pharmacists could help ease out-of-pocket spending.

Quoted in an article published in *News Corp* publications last weekend, Tambassis said Guild modelling using data from the *Better Evaluation and Care of Health General Practice Report*, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare and Medicare showed patients were paying about \$181 million in out-of-pocket costs to see their GP who then told them

to use an over-the-counter (OTC) medication, which a pharmacist could have recommended without the added cost of GP fees.

"Making greater use of pharmacists in the healthcare system would mean families don't need to pay for a doctor's appointment every time they need repeat prescriptions, treatment for a common ailment, or a vaccination and would ease pressure on already overworked GPs to spend more time with their patients, treating serious issues," Tambassis said.

Bartone responded by suggesting that if pharmacists wanted to "take over the work of doctors" they should have studied medical degrees, while Miller pointed the finger of blame for the latest escalation of tension between GPs and pharmacists at Tambassis.

"The Guild's protectionism and attacks on GPs and their work have



been going on for years," he said on Twitter.

"GPs are done with it, just deregulate."

Responding to Miller's tweet, Guild Victorian Branch President, Anthony Tassone, said the AMA was "misconstruing advocacy for best utilisation of pharmacists as 'attacks on GPs'".

Meanwhile Pharmaceutical Society of Australia South Australia and Northern Territory Branch Vice President, Samuel Keitaanpaa, noted the AMA has repeatedly published articles "directed against pharmacy" over the last two year.

"Neither side can take the moral high ground here," he said.

Keitaanpaa also refuted the suggestion that diagnosing illnesses was the sole domain of doctors.

"I already diagnose illnesses and prescribe medicines to treat them... all within my scope of practice," Keitaanpaa said.

"I don't need a medical degree to be a pharmacist."

Today's issue of *PD*

Pharmacy Daily today has three pages of news including our weekly **Health & Beauty** feature and a full page from **eze Allergy**.

Guild CPD record

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia's education arm, GuildEd, has reported a "bumper" Continuing Professional Development (CPD) year, with an increase of 20,000 assessments completed on the platform compared to the prior CPD year.

A total of 123,205 assessments were completed on the platform in the 2018/19 CPD year, during which more than 30 new CPD accredited courses were made available to pharmacists.

Courses attracting the most interest related to education on new drugs, health conditions and business related topics, the Guild said.

More than 50,000 pharmacists and pharmacy assistants are now registered to the GuildEd platform.

With the commencement of a new CPD year, pharmacists are encouraged to visit GuildEd now and create their Learning Plan using GuildEd's free myLearning Plan tool.

For more information on accessing the system pharmacists can contact GuildEd on 1800 049 056.

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Reference: 1. Data held on file at Ego Pharmaceuticals Pty Ltd.

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NSW regulator raids ORT pharmacies

NEW South Wales Health has recently conducted a blitz against pharmacies which provide opioid-replacement therapy (ORT) services, resulting in members of PDL seeking support in handling regulator inquiries, the indemnity insurance provider has advised in its latest Practice Alert.

Inspections have been, and will continue to be, conducted without notice at any time, with breaches being very quickly reported to the regulator, PDL said.

"Pharmacy inspectors will check the inventory of ORT products, check the prescriptions for ORT clients, observe the dosing of ORT and take photographs of the premises and any other component of ORT dispensing that is deemed necessary," the alert explained.

Penalties such as restrictions on practice for pharmacy owners and employed pharmacists can be imposed.

"These incidents highlight the importance of adhering to current

State-based legislation when dealing with all S8 medications, including ORT products such as methadone syrup, Subutex and Suboxone."

PDL reports that common discrepancies found included: poor record keeping, Dangerous Drugs (DD) register not available for inspection, or filled out by non-pharmacist staff.

Some inspections have found entries in the DD register crossed out, missing or incomplete, or methadone and biodone recorded on the same page.

There have also been instances of large discrepancies of quantities of opioids used in ORT, all of which should be reported to the Pharmacy Regulation Unit, while storage and security issues around S8 products were also identified.

Performing regular self-audits and training will ensure that, should an inspection occur, the pharmacy can display compliance in the area of ORT, PDL recommended.



Reference documents are available - [CLICK HERE](#) or [HERE](#).

PDL members are urged to ensure they have these documents available either in hard copy in the pharmacy or in an electronic form.

Cannabis research

THE Federal Government has announced a commitment of \$3 million from the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) to examine the benefits of medicinal cannabis for pain, symptom and side effect management for cancer patients.

Minister for Health, Greg Hunt said, "Our Government is committed to ensuring a safe, quality supply of medicinal cannabis to Australian patients, but only when it is prescribed by a medical professional".

The medicinal cannabis industry has the potential to make a significant contribution to exports, employment and economic growth, particularly in rural and regional areas, Hunt added.

Mesalazine PBS

WITH Asacol EU (mesalazine 800mg enteric tablet 90) being delisted 01 Apr 2020, its PBS listing changes from STREAMLINED to Authority Required (Telephone) effective this month - pbs.gov.au.



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Dispensary Corner

PHARMACIES are often at the heart of the communities they serve and it's only natural that from time-to-time the pharmacist-patient relationship slips into a more personal friendship.

However, when it comes to relationships, it's important that lines are not crossed as one Scottish pharmacist has learned the hard way, British news website *metro.co.uk* reports.

Michelle Thomson told a General Pharmaceutical Council hearing in London that she had "befriended" a patient she met in the pharmacy she was working in and the pair began to exchange "racy" text messages and meet up socially.

"There was a lot of tongue-in-cheek humour and sexual banter too," she told the hearing.

"I knew from an outsider's perspective this behaviour could be classed as unacceptable.

"I naively never considered the consequences."

However, she denied the relationship ever went any further than friendship, which the male patient refuted, claiming the pair had an affair, which he alleged ended when he had finished laying a patio in her garden.

The case came to light after the patient told his GP that he had been "used and abused" by the pharmacist.

Thomson was found to have slept with the man at her home at least once, and has been suspended from practising as a pharmacist for 12 months.

Naturopath banned forever

A **NATUROPATH** who recommended a sodium bicarbonate treatment as a cure for cancer has been permanently prohibited by the NSW Health Care Complaints Commission (HCCC) from providing any health services.

The Commission conducted an investigation into the professional conduct of Barbara O'Neill following a series of complaints around her dangerous health claims.

O'Neill was the Health Director of the Misty Mountains Health Retreat for 15 years in the small NSW town of Bellbrook, where she held consultations and conducted courses.

As well as claiming that cancer was a fungus that could be treated with bicarbonate soda wraps, O'Neill taught visitors to her practice that raw goat's milk was

an appropriate substitute for breast milk in infant nutrition.

The fake clinician also said that pregnant women diagnosed with Strep B do not have to take antibiotics and that there are no safe vaccines, falsely claiming that vaccinations have caused an epidemic of ADHD, autism, epilepsy and cot death.

The HCCC investigation found O'Neill had "limited qualifications in the area of nutrition and dietetics, which she attained more than 10 years ago".

Further, she did "not recognise that she [was] misleading vulnerable people (including mothers and cancer sufferers) by providing very selective information".

CLICK HERE for the full Public Statement of Decision.

UK answer to drug shortages

THE UK Department of Health and Social Care has introduced measures to allow pharmacists to supply alternative strengths of a drug in short supply, without contacting a prescriber.

The new measure is the first under the umbrella of the 'serious shortage protocols' (SSP); in this case it helps manage shortages of the antidepressant fluoxetine.

Royal Pharmaceutical Society President, Sandra Gidley, welcomed the new measure saying, "If a pharmacist can sort out a patient's requirements from existing stock it will save a lot of time and this can only be good news for patients".

NEW PRODUCTS

Suppliers wanting to promote products in this feature should email newproducts@pharmacydaily.com.au

Lanostick Scrubba-Balm

Lanolips' new wind-up **Lanostick Lemonaid Scrubba-Balm** gently & naturally buffs away dead skin flakes, leaving behind a layer of protective, rich & restorative lanolin balm. The balm exfoliates with extra fine sugar crystals & crushed orange peel - which you pat or lick off, resulting in smooth, bouncy, softened lips.



Stockist: 02 9337 1111
RRP: \$18.95
Website: www.lanolips.com

New Favic for Cold Sores



Chemists' Own has launched its new **Favic for Cold Sores**. Favic is a single-dose, anti-viral treatment for recurrent cold

sores - each tablet contains famciclovir 500mg. Read the label. Use only as directed. The pharmacist must decide if this product is right for an individual. Aust R 212115.

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