



## Pharmacies sell contaminated CAMs

**COMPLEMENTARY** and alternative medicines (CAMs) tainted with over-the-counter (OTC) molecules, animal DNA and potential allergens including nuts, are being sold through some of Australia's largest pharmacy groups, a study reveals.

Research conducted by the University of Adelaide, Murdoch University and Curtin University, found almost 50% of CAMs tested during the study had contamination issues in terms of DNA, chemical composition or both.

Of the 137 samples assessed, 86 were listed on the Therapeutic Goods Administration's (TGA) Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods (ARTG), with six of the ARTG-listed products testing positive for "unexplained pharmaceuticals including caffeine, synephrine, ephedrine and related alkaloids, paracetamol, chlorpheniramine and trace amounts of mycophenolic acid and buclizine".

Of the contaminated products 25% contained animal DNA from creatures including rats, dogs, cows and pigs.

"The data generated in this study continues to highlight a number of concerns with herbal CAM products," the authors said.



"The large number of products containing undeclared plant ingredients indicates either widespread ingredient substitution or that current methods used to identify plant ingredients are inadequate. Many products were contaminated with animal DNA that cannot be explained based on the ingredient list and may speak to poor manufacturing processes.

"5% of the samples contained undeclared pharmaceuticals, at least two of which are clear cases of adulteration.

"This lack of regulatory compliance demonstrates serious shortfalls in quality control and/or manufacturing processes."

The researchers warned the presence of undeclared allergens

including DNA from the cashew nut and walnut families, increased the potential for adverse and allergic reactions, because consumers are unable to make informed choices.

"This study has shown that contaminated and adulterated products are not minor, niche-market remedies, but are sold in some of the biggest health food stores and pharmacies in Australia," the authors said.

### Today's issue of *PD*

*Pharmacy Daily* today has three pages of news including our weekly **Health & Beauty** feature plus a full page from **Pharmacy Assistant National Conference**.

### Sandoz MS deal

**NOVARTIS** has announced a global deal for its Sandoz generics division to commercialise a proposed biosimilar natalizumab for the treatment of relapsing-remitting multiple sclerosis.

The medicine is currently in Phase III clinical development, with creator Polpharma Biologics to maintain responsibility for manufacture and supply while Sandoz will distribute it in all markets upon approval, under an exclusive global licence.

## TGA caffeine clampdown

**HIGHLY** concentrated caffeine in any dosage form will become ineligible for listing in Australia, under new measures announced yesterday by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA).

The move follows a review of current toxicology data relating to caffeine, following a referral from the NSW Coroner's Court in Jun 2019 in regard to the death of an individual associated with acute caffeine toxicity.

The caffeine is suspected to have been ingested from an unlabelled pure or highly concentrated caffeine powder, with Health Minister Greg Hunt also writing to Food Standards Australia New Zealand to request

a review of the safety of high caffeine content products.

Caffeine as an individual ingredient remains only for oral use and at a maximum daily dose of 100mg, the TGA said.

"However caffeine when present as a component of other herbal ingredients will now have dosage restrictions so that the medicine does not provide more than 400mg total caffeine per day," new regulations stipulate.

A maximum dose of 100mg per three hours will also be required, and warning statements have been adjusted to increase consumer awareness of caffeine intake and additional concerns in pregnancy, lactation and children.

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## AMA urged to “learn more about pharmacy”

**AUSTRALIAN** Medical Association (AMA) representatives are being urged to learn a little more about the skills pharmacists possess before dictating their scope of practice.

A number of pharmacists have taken to social media to challenge the AMA's insistence that pharmacists should not be allowed to practice beyond their current scope, while issuing apocalyptic warnings that pharmacist prescribing and treatment of minor ailments would undermine patient-safety, repeatedly stating “pharmacists are not doctors”.

The AMA's stance prompted one pharmacist to ask, “what is the AMA's view on the scope of practice for lawyers?”

“Engineers perhaps? Or [is it] just pharmacy where they presume the right to dictate what another profession should do?” the pharmacist asked in a tweet.

“Exactly what does the AMA know



about pharmacists?

“No disrespect, but how about finding out a bit more?”

Another pharmacist described the AMA's comments about pharmacy as “laughable”, adding “it is not appropriate for you to dictate the scope of practice of another profession”.

Pharmaceutical Society of Australia South Australia/Northern Territory Vice President, Samuel Keitaanpaa, suggested the AMA was “obsessed” with reining in pharmacists' scope of practice.

### MA disclosure

**MEDICINES** Australia has launched a new “Centralised Reporting System” website with the aim of making it easier than ever to understand interactions between pharmaceutical companies and health professionals.

CEO Elizabeth de Somer said [disclosureaustralia.com.au](http://disclosureaustralia.com.au) was the next stage in MA's “already rigorous transparency model”.

### Disability report

**THE** Australian Institute of Health and Welfare has released a new report on the “diverse experiences of more than four million Australians living with disability”.

Collating data from a range of key sources, the report covers areas such as education, health, social support and employment, and is available online at [aihw.gov.au](http://aihw.gov.au).

## Bod's MediCabilis scripts jump 95%

**ASX-LISTED** medicinal cannabis business, Bod Australia Limited, reported a 95% increase in prescribing rates for its MediCabilis product in Aug.

The firm saw prescribing rates almost double in Aug compared to Jul, with 613 scripts dispensed in the current calendar year, including a large number of repeat prescriptions.

Bod Australia CEO, Jo Patterson, said prescribing rates had risen dramatically since Jun, when 58 MediCabilis scripts were filled.

“We are pleased to have witnessed another substantial increase in medicinal cannabis prescriptions,” Patterson said.

“Growth has been underpinned by uptake through distribution partners Burleigh Heads Cannabis and Cannabis Access Clinics, as well as through our physician education programs.



“It is pleasing to observe the amount of repeat prescriptions that the Company is receiving, as it clearly indicates the benefit it is providing to patients and product superiority,” Patterson said.

“Bod is confident that it will continue growth in prescription volumes as it progresses relationships with distributors in new markets and commences dispensing in the United Kingdom in the coming weeks.”

## Win with ULTRASENSITIVE

This week Pharmacy Daily and ecostore are giving readers the chance to win a prize pack of products from ecostore's ULTRASENSITIVE home and body range, valued at over \$50.

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

What are 3 key benefits of ecostore's ULTRASENSITIVE home and body care range?

Congratulations to yesterday's winner, Alyson Webster.

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## Dispensary Corner

**MOST** people know junk food is bad for you - but the message clearly didn't get through to a very unfortunate British teen who has tragically gone blind after years of eating only white bread, processed ham, sausage, French fries and Pringles.

The journal *Annals of Internal Medicine* published a case study this week describing the boy's "nutritional optic neuropathy" which was apparently caused by a diet low in nutrients.

Scientists from the Bristol Eye Hospital described the various presentations of the boy, who initially complained of tiredness at the age of 14, at which stage vitamin B12 injections and dietary changes were recommended.

A year later he had developed hearing loss, and by the time he was 17 the condition had sadly progressed to the point of blindness.

Investigations found he was suffering from a range of vitamin and mineral deficiencies, at which point he finally admitted to avoiding foods with certain textures since he was in primary school.

Unfortunately by the time the diagnosis was confirmed the youngster had suffered permanent vision loss.

The study's authors said the outcome indicated that "fussy eating" was a form of eating disorder, urging diagnosticians to consider nutritional optic neuropathy in all cases of unexplained vision loss involving people with a poor diet, regardless of their BMI.

## Pharmacy Guild Health Care Home push

**THE** Pharmacy Guild of Australia has strongly encouraged pharmacies located close to participating Health Care Home (HCH) practices to meet with practice staff "to discuss how your pharmacy can support their HCH patients through the Community Pharmacy in Health Care Homes Trial Program" (PD 02 Jan).

The enrolment period for the broader Health Care Home program closed on 30 Jun, with more than 10,000 patients currently enrolled across about 130 GP practices.

The program is active in 10 Primary Health Care Network regions across the country, with the Guild now anticipating that participants will shift their focus to the broader "health care neighbourhood," integrating community pharmacies and allied

health into care teams.

The incorporation of Medication Management Plans into patients' shared care plans is also anticipated, with all Health Care Homes patients eligible to participate in the Community Pharmacy in Health Care Homes Trial program.

"Right now is the time for you to contact your nearest HCH practices to discuss how your pharmacy can support their HCH patients," according to an update on the Guild's [6cpa.com.au](http://6cpa.com.au) website.

The Guild said it was committed to the success of the trial "and will continue to work closely with the 10 Health Care Homes Primary Health Networks to ensure that all Health Care Homes are aware of the significant patient and practice benefits on offer through the



Community Pharmacy in Health Care Homes Trial".

Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Care Services are also part of the Health Care Homes program, with a full list of the participating HCH practices available on the Health Department website at [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au).

Further information on the 6CPA pharmacy HCH trial is also available by **CLICKING HERE**.

## HEALTH & BEAUTY

Suppliers wanting to promote products in this feature should email [newproducts@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:newproducts@pharmacydaily.com.au)



### Allergy season has arrived

Give your customers the Sensitive Choice® with **ecostore's ULTRASENSITIVE Multi-Purpose Spray**. When it comes to avoiding common irritants or allergy triggers, we typically look to what we put directly onto our skin or in our bodies; however, what goes into our home can be equally as important for those living with sensitivities. ecostore's ULTRASENSITIVE Multi-Purpose Spray is soap, nut, fragrance and colourant-free. It also excludes Propylene Glycol, Synthetic Perfumes and Synthetic Dyes. Approved by Sensitive Choice, a community service program created by the National Asthma Council Australia, ecostore's ULTRASENSITIVE range, with plant and mineral based ingredients, for Australians living with sensitivities.

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