

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today has three pages of pharmacy news.

Pharmacy supply struggles remain

PHARMACIES across the country are continuing to experience medication supply shortages, the ABC reports.

The national broadcaster noted a survey of 400 Pharmacy Guild of Australia members found more than half were unable to get their daily orders of medicines properly filled.

While the issues have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, Guild Victorian Branch President, Anthony Tassone, told the ABC, "there have been concerns for some years now about difficulties in getting ongoing and certainty of supply of medications".

He added the shortages were presenting significant challenges for the profession in ensuring "certainty of treatment" for patients with chronic conditions.

ACT NIP trial shows pharmacy's value

PATIENTS are voting with their feet in the ACT and opting to pay a \$20 administration charge to receive National Immunisation Program (NIP) funded influenza vaccines, under a trial in the territory, Capital Chemist Group Business Manager, Andrew Topp, reports.

Speaking to *Pharmacy Daily*, Topp described the trial program, launched last year, as "hugely successful", noting more than 2,500 NIP vaccines have been administered to patients aged 65 and older, through 21 Capital Chemist stores in the ACT since 30 Mar - a significant increase compared to last year, when 1,053 doses were supplied by the group between 16 Apr and 29 Jul 2019, as part of the trial.

"Don't forget we're talking about a model that competes against effectively a free vaccine from a doctor, so people don't mind paying," he said.

"They basically talk with their feet [and] many thousands of them are choosing to get their vaccine from a pharmacy.

"It's a model that works for consumers and certainly seems to work for the NIP, because I think we're probably getting people who

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might not otherwise go to a doctor, and it's good for the profession of pharmacy, because we can do more things for more people and meet more people's needs.

"I think it's well and truly demonstrated its value to the vaccination supply network.

"I'd be devastated if they stopped doing it, but similarly I'd hope that they expand it to other jurisdictions, because we've proven it can work."

Topp noted that the trial program did not set out any recommendations around a patient co-payment or government funding for pharmacies to provide the service.

"While the vaccine is provided to the pharmacy at no cost, the staff and facilities at the pharmacy are not free, and pharmacies have no ability to 'bulk bill,'" he said.

"We settled on a price [\$20] that we thought was fair and reasonable, and by-and-large the public have been accepting.

"We're careful with our wording, we try to avoid the use of the words 'free vaccine' - it's a funded vaccine, but there is a fee for administering it and all the clerical work around the Australian Immunisation Register, recording it appropriately and reporting to all the people we need to report to."

Education boost dental prescribing

A PILOT study designed to reduce inappropriate dental antibiotic prescribing, has shown signs of boosting dentists' use of prescription medications.

The research published by the *British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology* reported close to 55% of dental antibiotic prescribing was inappropriate.

However, the authors from the University of Melbourne,

reported that by undergoing education and using a "dentally-designed" prescribing website, dentists involved in the 12-week-long study reduced inappropriate prescribing.

They noted a 40.5% drop in the number of antibiotics prescribed by dentists after receiving the prescribing training, while paracetamol and codeine scripts fell by 56.8%.

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Lax on anti-vax

RADIO hosts Kyle Sandilands and Jackie O's failure to challenge celebrity chef, Pete Evans' anti-vaccination stance has been slammed by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) during an interview yesterday.

RACGP President, Dr Harry Nespolon, said the shock jocks had a responsibility to prevent the spread of misleading information.

WHO halts hydroxychloroquine trial

LAUDED as a potential cure for COVID-19, the World Health Organization (WHO) has implemented a "temporary pause" of the hydroxychloroquine arm of the multi-national Solidarity Trial, amid safety concerns.

The move to halt the use of the anti-malarial and autoimmune disease treatment for the novel virus came after *The Lancet* published research showing the use of hydroxychloroquine or chloroquine, when used alone or with a macrolide, was associated with "decreased in-hospital survival".

WHO Director-General, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, said the executive group of the Solidarity Trial, which has been researching potential treatments and vaccines, has agreed to review a comprehensive analysis and critical appraisal of all evidence available globally.



"The executive group has implemented a temporary pause of the hydroxychloroquine arm within the Solidarity Trial, while the data is reviewed by the Data Safety Monitoring Board," he said.

"The other arms of the trial are continuing.

"This concern relates to the use of hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine in COVID-19.

"I wish to reiterate that these

drugs are accepted as generally safe for use in patients with autoimmune diseases or malaria."

Throughout the COVID-19 crisis the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia National President, Dr Chris Freeman, has repeatedly stressed the need for prescribers to rely on "the principles of evidence-based medicine" and not "faux claims" about would-be treatments.

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FIP postpones World Congress in Spain

PLANS to host the 80th World Congress of Pharmacy in Seville, Spain, this Sep have been pushed back until 2021 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) reveals.

In an announcement made last night in conjunction with Spain's General Pharmaceutical Council, FIP President Dominique Jordan, said the decision to postpone the event until 14-16 Sep 2021, reflected the organisation's duty of care to its members, volunteers and congress participants.

FIP also revealed that registrations that have already been paid will be transferred



to the 2021 event, with cancellations subject to a 10% administrative fee to help the not-for-profit organisation "to survive the huge financial setback of rescheduling the congress".

The FIP Council Meeting and other satellite events will take place virtually.

CLICK HERE for more.

MRP goes S3

PHARMACISTS are being urged to engage with patients purchasing modified release paracetamol products, ahead of the formulation being upscheduled to Pharmacist-Only from 01 Jun.

Speaking earlier this month, Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) National President, Dr Chris Freeman, said pharmacists should "start socialising the change" to avoid "widespread confusion about it being an S3 medicine".

Former PSA President, John Bell, said moving the drug to S3 would provide opportunities for pharmacists to discuss treatment plans.



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Dispensary Corner

WE'RE all familiar with robotic dispensing of medications - but what about robotic dispensing of beer?

A new "bionic barman" (pictured) has debuted in Spain to help ensure social distancing is maintained as COVID-19 restrictions ease.

The robotic beverage server has been installed during the lockdown period at a bar called La Gitana Loca (The Crazy Gypsy) in Seville, and can happily serve drinks without any risk of contamination.

Spain is gradually easing its coronavirus lockdowns, but a high death toll has meant bars and restaurants are only just starting to reopen now.

The bar's owner, Alberto Martinez, said he bought the robot before the pandemic escalated, but had not been able to activate it before the bar was forced to close.

However "we thought it would be ideal for reopening in phase one," he told AFP.

"It's all very self-service," he added, with disposable plastic cups used and no contact whatsoever between customers and other items in the bar - which unfortunately is still limited to a maximum of 12 patrons at a time.



Psychologist lands ban

A VICTORIAN psychologist who used "energy medicine" to treat a patient's pain, and suggested he develop a relationship with her husband, had been reprimanded and banned from practice for two years.

The patient was referred to Sheridan Leanda Meulblok, by his GP for issues relating to excessive alcohol consumption, depression, anxiety and stress, a Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal heard.

The Tribunal found that between 01 Aug 2017 and 02 Feb 2018, Meulblok had "transgressed the professional boundaries that should and ordinarily do exist between a psychologist and her patient and/or former patient", as she entered an inappropriate personal and intimate relationship with the patient.

Between Aug and Nov 2017 Meulblok provided "treatment that was not evidence based and was not clinically justified" when she touched the patient in areas associated with his physical pain, as part of "energy medicine" therapy.

In mid-Oct 2017 Meulblok told the patient she had feelings for



him, a few days later she went to his home, where they embraced and kissed, the Tribunal heard.

At a later appointment during the week starting 21 Oct 2017, in her consulting rooms the psychologist "straddled" the patient and told him that due to professional regulations they would have to wait two years before having sex.

The Tribunal heard that in Nov and Dec 2017 having ceased treating the patient, Meulblok breached patient confidentiality, discussing the prospect of the patient resuming treatment with her, and by encouraging him to pursue a relationship with her husband.

Guild Update

World No Tobacco Day

TOBACCO smoking remains the leading preventable cause of death and disease in Australia. This year's World No Tobacco Day on 31 May aims to debunk some of the myths the tobacco industry uses to promote its product.

Community pharmacies play a pivotal role in helping people quit smoking through special programs and nicotine replacement therapy.

World No Tobacco Day, developed by the World Health Organisation (WHO), has identified a range of tactics used by companies to sell tobacco products, including

- Adding flavours that appeal to children in smokeless tobacco, shisha and e-cigarettes
- Promoting tobacco products and distributing of free samples at popular events for young people
- Advertising and product placement on movies and TV shows, and through social media platforms with paid influencers

The WHO says tobacco products kill more than 8 million people every year, and that tobacco and related industries "must continuously find new consumers to replace the ones that their products are killing to maintain revenue".

More details of World No Tobacco Day can be accessed [here](#).

Win With Aromababy

Everyday this week Pharmacy Daily and AROMABABY are giving away a set of their products worth RRP\$39.95

Aromababy is celebrating 25 years of caring for sensitive skin. From newborn to older children, choose from a complete range of naturally soothing products to cleanse, moisturise, protect and pamper. Offering a variety of unscented options, AROMABABY prides itself on a long history of safety and efficacy as a pharmacy specialist brand. To learn more about the products click [HERE](#).

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