

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features three pages of news, plus a full page from the University of Technology, Sydney.

Time to bust LARC myths

MYTHS around the use of hormonal long-acting reversible contraception (LARC) need to be busted to boost uptake of the highly effective contraceptive, a study reports.

Researchers from Monash University found the rate of supply of LARC started to plateau in 2015, with overall uptake rates in Victoria and NSW falling significantly behind other states.

While reporting the reasons behind the drop-off in use of LARC were "uncertain" the authors flagged previously noted barriers, including misperceptions regarding appropriateness and safety.

The study was published in the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology*.

No going back on e-Health: Samson

PHARMACISTS can no longer sit back and wait for changes in the health service to be thrust upon them, Commonwealth Department of Health Special Advisor and pharmacist, Emeritus Professor, Lloyd Sansom AO, believes.

Addressing a webinar reflecting on the role of pharmacy in 2020, Sansom said the shift toward e-health seen as a result of the COVID-19 was unlikely to change - a point highlighted by today's announced by Federal Health Minister, Greg Hunt, that telehealth services will be a permanent part of the Medicare system.

Sansom noted that "something like 70% of all medical consultations are being conducted by e-health", while the advent of electronic prescriptions and home delivery services have changed how patients access healthcare and medicines.

"That dynamic is not going to change," he said.

"We are going to see the acceleration of e-health and that's quite interesting, because what we're seeing in telehealth is the depersonalisation to some extent [of healthcare].

"So the role of the pharmacist -



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that way of being really accessible - is going to change enormously.

"The requirement of that person to be a partner within a broader structure is going to be even more critical.

"There's a whole dynamic [shift that's going to happen] not within the next decade, but within the next six to 12 months.

"So what I want to see is some leadership... to say, 'this is our direction, this is what we predict the future will be, this is how we can interact within it'.

"We've got to build

interprofessional bridges, and getting pharmacists into general practice for example is going to be critical - not to takeover the role of the community pharmacist, but to engage more actively with the community pharmacist, bringing community pharmacy into the loop in a way.

"It's those types of status quo issues that 2020, COVID, the bushfires and everything else has really brought into focus.

"We can no longer sit and wait for the future to be dictated to us, we've got to make that future."

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Final days of mo-grow for PSS

PHARMACY Daily Editor, Nick O'Donoghue is in the final days of his mo-growing efforts to raise funds for the Pharmacists' Support Service (PSS).

O'Donoghue and *Australian Journal of Pharmacy* Editor, Chris Brooker, have been cultivating somewhat less than attractive facial fuzz throughout Nov to highlight the work of the volunteer-run peer-to-peer mental health and wellbeing service.

PSS Executive Officer, Kay Dunkley, has reported that the service has seen an increase in calls throughout the year, as pharmacists worked on the frontline of the bushfire and COVID-19 crises.

CLICK HERE to donate.

Bushfires fueled inhaler sells surge

DATA from pharmacies in areas impacted by last summer's bushfires showed large increases in sales of inhalers corresponding to the spread of the fires, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) reveals.

The AIHW's *Australian bushfires 2019-20: exploring the short-term health impacts* report found pharmacies in NSW's Mid North Coast region jumped by 144% for the week commencing 10 Nov 2019, compared with the same week in 2018, as several fires burned at Emergency Warning level in that area.

Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) data showed that during the week beginning 29 Dec 2019, salbutamol prescriptions in the Capital Region of NSW, which includes Batemans Bay, increased by 63%, on the previous corresponding period, with the



dispensing rates for the medication remaining high throughout Jan 2020.

A case study of bushfire smoke in the ACT during the crisis showed inhaler sales in the Territory surged by 194% in the week starting 29 Dec, compared with the same week in 2018, with pharmacies reporting a 204% increase in sales the following week.

PBS data for the region showed

prescriptions for inhalers increased over the same weeks by 81% and 134% respectively, compared with the same weeks in the previous year.

The report also noted that the Therapeutic Goods Administration had made efforts to inform the public about the availability of salbutamol throughout the crisis to discourage stockpiling and panic-buying of the medicines.

Capital Chemist Bowral's winning habit

CAPITAL Chemist Bowral is celebrating taking out the Southern Highlands Local Business Award for Outstanding Pharmacy for the fourth time in six years.

The pharmacy which previously won the title in 2015, 2016 and 2017, was named the winner on Mon, with co-owner, Catherine Yee, saying "it's great to be back in the winner's circle".

Yee's business partner, Dickson Yan added that it was "thrilling

to be nominated...because nominations come initially from our customers, followed by a formal assessment by judges and mystery shoppers".

"It has been an amazing year for Capital Chemist Bowral, completing a shopfit during the pandemic while dealing with the community angst that the pandemic brought," Yan said.

"Customers have been supportive and reassured by our clear commitment to their safety."

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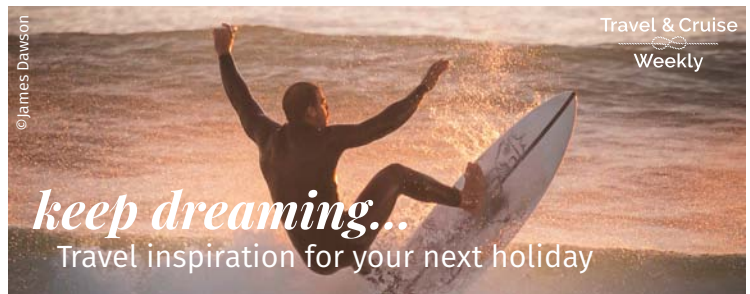


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Vax-only time push in UK pharmacies

ENGLISH pharmacists are seeking approval to allocate times where they can focus solely on the provision of influenza and COVID-19 vaccines, *The Pharmaceutical Journal* reports.

The proposal has been put to the National Health Service (NHS) England by the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee (PSNC), in a effort to address pharmacy workload and staffing pressures, as the country battles with a second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A PSNC spokesperson told the Royal Pharmaceutical Society's publication that provisions exist under the NHS pharmacy regulations to facilitate a temporary closure to enable pharmacists to administer immunisations, however, it requires NHS England and NHS Improvement to make a national announcement.

During the UK's initial lockdown period, a national "closed door allowance" was granted, as a way of managing the increased demands being placed on the community pharmacy sector during the pandemic.

The allowance was retained in some jurisdictions, with



Community Pharmacy Wales Director of Contract Services, Judy Thomas, reporting pharmacies in the principality have been working behind closed doors for the first hour of each day, and for an hour at lunchtime.

"The feedback we have had from contractors is that this is currently sufficient to meet the workload pressures, though of course the vaccinations aren't delivered in this period," she said.

Meanwhile, in Scotland provisions under the *Coronavirus Act 2020*, have empowered health boards to commission pharmacies

to provide NHS flu vaccines for the first time, with Community Pharmacy Scotland Policy and Development Pharmacists, Adam Osprey, saying the organisation was "engaged with Scottish Government colleagues on the matter of COVID vaccination".

"As the only healthcare setting still easily accessible to patients and the public across Scotland, the priority for the community pharmacy network is maintaining continuity of service delivery and medicines supply, so any arrangement would have to take this into consideration," he said.



Dispensary Corner

THERE'S nothing quite like a celebrity endorsement to sell a product, and US cannabis manufacturer TPCO is ramping up the star power by appointing rapper and entrepreneur Jay-Z as its "chief visionary officer".

The company said the artist would help guide strategy and use his "unparalleled cultural influence" to enlist other leading artists and entertainers to promote the business - perhaps even his wife Beyonce?

Of course there's a corporate social responsibility angle too so users can all feel good about getting high, with Jay-Z set to lead TPCO's investments in minority-owned cannabis firms and initiatives to "rectify the wrongs" done when the drug was still illegal.

Jay-Z is also getting right into the cannabis action, last month launching his very own brand of weed called Monogram.

AND while we're on the subject of not-so-illicit drugs, officials in Thailand who touted a US\$1 billion seizure of ketamine have red-facedly been forced to admit the powder they impounded was actually trisodium phosphate, normally used as a cleaning agent.

The country's Justice Minister Somsak Thepsuthin described the incident as a "misunderstanding" which was caused by a glitch in the field.

Apparently preliminary tests, which turn purple in the presence of ketamine, also react in a similar fashion to trisodium phosphate.

PPA slashes membership fee

PHARMACIST union, Professional Pharmacists Australia (PPA), is offering a 50% discount on its full membership fee for new members.

The PPA noted that throughout the COVID-19 pandemic it had campaigned to "keep pharmacies safe".

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