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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features two pages of news.

New drug deal

ASTRAZENECA has struck a deal to buy US-based drug developer CinCor Pharma Inc for up to US\$1.8b to increase its stock of heart and kidney drugs, Reuters has reported.

Core to the deal is CinCor's experimental therapy baxdrostat, which is in development to treat conditions including high blood pressure and chronic kidney disease.

AstraZeneca aims to combine baxdrostat with its own Farxiga, a diabetes drug whose sales ballooned after it was also shown to benefit patients with heart failure and kidney disease.

AstraZeneca gets about a third of its revenue from cancer drugs, but its heart, kidney, and diabetes medicines are its second most lucrative business by sales, generating roughly US\$6.9b of the drugmaker's total revenue of more than US\$33b in the first three quarters of 2022.

Masks on planes

THE World Health Organization said this week that countries should consider recommending that passengers wear masks on long-haul flights, given the rapid spread of the COVID-19 variant XBB.1.5.

CW to use AI scanner for vital signs

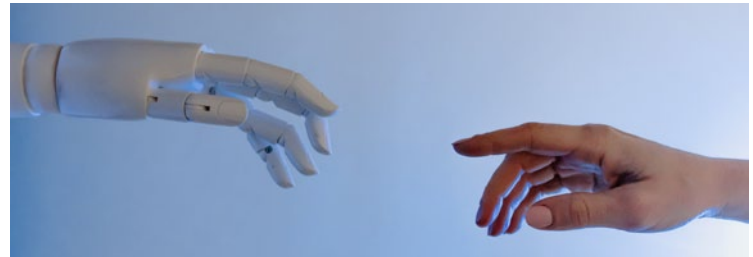
CHEMIST Warehouse has launched a digital health and well-being scanner, powered by Human Performance Engineering (HPE) technology, that measures physiological signs by using smartphone camera sensors.

Founded and developed by exercise physiologist and HPE CEO, Nicholas Harris, the Chemist Warehouse health and wellbeing scanner enables camera sensors, including a smartphone camera, to remotely measure physiological signs using proprietary Artificial Intelligence (AI) and generate predictive insight.

The app has the ability to measure heart rate, breathing, SpO2 and HRV.

The technology uses a camera to analyse the light absorption of the blood flowing under your skin.

AI then interprets this data to



measure physiological signs in real-time.

The scanner is non-contact, CW explained.

"At a time when monitoring our health and wellness has never been more important, we are excited to partner with the Chemist Warehouse to offer their

customers our truly innovative software solution that can enable any camera sensor on any device to scan your face and measure heart rate, heart rate variation, blood oxygen, breathing rate, and stress levels," Harris concluded.

Customers are able to access the service for free online [HERE](#).

Statins for many?

ABOUT 15m more people in the UK may be prescribed daily cholesterol-lowering statins to cut their risk of heart attacks and stroke, said new NHS advice, reported in the BBC.

Given the very cheap price of the tablets and the possible health gains, they should be considered more often, the draft guidance explained.

Adults in the UK with a one in 20 chance of a having a cardiovascular event, within the next 10 years, should be offered a statin.

Mayne launches contraceptive in US

MAYNE Pharma and Mithra Pharmaceuticals announced the launch of Haloette (etonogestrel and ethinyl estradiol), a vaginal hormonal contraceptive ring into the US market.

The Haloette contraceptive is a generic version of Nuvaring.

According to IQVIA, Nuvaring US brand and generic sales were approximately US\$564m for the 12 months ended Nov 2022.

Under the terms of the long-term license and supply agreement, Mayne Pharma will pay Mithra EUR1.6m.

Mayne Pharma's CEO Shawn O'Brien was pleased about the Haloette launch and said this is another example of Mayne's commitment to providing women with more contraceptive choice.

"Mayne Pharma continues to expand its women's health portfolio with the recent launch of Nextstellis (estetrol/drospirenone) in the US and Australia, and its new license agreement for Annovera, Imvexxy and Bijuva from TherapeuticsMD."

While Mithra's CEO Leon Van Rompay said: "We are pleased to start the year with the commercial launch of our affordable contraceptive alternative in the US, the world's largest pharmaceutical market.

"This key milestone has been reached thanks to the support of our Mithra CDMO, highlighting its unique expertise in developing and manufacturing complex pharmaceutical devices."

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Dispensary Corner

CLEANLINESS is next to godliness, as the old saying goes, but the concept is apparently being stretched in Japan, where young people are increasingly being attracted to apartments without a shower or bathtub.

High real estate prices as well as a yen to live more simply are believed to be behind the trend, as well as an increasing number of public baths and gyms where people can maintain personal hygiene.

Nikkei Asia has highlighted strong demand from people in their twenties and thirties who want to live in Central Tokyo for its vibrant lifestyle and proximity to work - and it's much more affordable to rent a room with just a toilet and sink, rather than a full bathroom.

Aficionados say showering at the gym helps them more easily switch their mindset between work and home, and they also apparently like not having the regular chore of keeping the bathroom clean.

Get CBD smart

THE Smartraveller update for Hong Kong reported that from 01 Feb, cannabidiol (CBD) will be listed as a dangerous drug in the country under its new national security law.

The maximum penalty under this law in Hong Kong is life imprisonment.

The Australian Government can't intervene in the Hong Kong judicial process.

Boil nuts to desensitise

BOILING peanuts for up to 12 hours could help overcome children's allergic reactions, according to the results of a clinical trial which found up to 80% of children with a peanut allergy became desensitised to eating peanuts.

The clinical trial, which was funded by the Channel 7 Children's Research Foundation and published in the journal *Clinical & Experimental Allergy*, tested whether a therapy delivering sequential doses of boiled peanuts, followed by roasted peanuts, may help children overcome their peanut allergies.

The trial built on previous research of Prof Tim Chataway from Flinders University.

In the current trial to achieve the multi-step process known as oral immunotherapy, the researchers asked 70 peanut-allergic children (six to 18 years) to consume peanuts boiled for 12 hours for 12 weeks, two-hour boiled peanuts for 20 weeks, and roasted peanuts for 20 weeks.

This novel two-step therapy was tested in anticipation of achieving the daily targets of participants consuming 12 roasted peanuts without allergic reactions.

The results show 56 of the 70 participants became desensitised to the target dose of peanuts.

Treatment-related adverse events were reported in 43 of the participants, however, only three withdrew from the trial as a result, demonstrating a favourable safety profile.

Flinders University's College of Medicine and Public Health and South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute Associate Professor Luke Grzeskowiak, the lead author of



the study, explained that up to 3% of children in Western countries are grappling with peanut allergies, "the clinical trial could help develop a novel treatment pathway to reduce the risk of accidental peanut exposure and significantly improve quality of life for peanut-allergic children and their carers.

"With no currently approved treatment for peanut allergy in Australia there is a lot more research still to be done.

"Unfortunately, oral immunotherapy doesn't work for everyone, and we are in the process of improving our understanding of how these treatments work and what factors can influence how people respond to treatment," Grzeskowiak explained.

"This will be really important for assessing individual suitability for treatment and improving treatment decisions in the future."

The study was undertaken in collaboration with paediatric allergist Dr Billy Tao, who has been developing the novel desensitisation process to treat peanut allergies for the past decade after being inspired by similar research in the 90s.

For more information **CLICK HERE**.

Money for a job

PREVIOUSLY, it was believed that providing a financial incentive to get vaccinated would lead to some bad behavioural consequences, but new research from Europe shows this is probably not the case.

The researchers offered over 5,000 people in Sweden money to take the first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, and reported that the cash did not affect the timing or likelihood of them getting their second or third jab, even though they were payment-free.

Additionally, they found the money had no negative effect on a person's sense of civic responsibility, their trust in vaccination providers, or perceptions about how safe and effective the vaccines would be.

Learn more **HERE**.

Hit the books!

LANDMARK Edith Cowan University research has found that better education has a strong genetic correlation and a protective causal association with several gut disorders.

The study examined the genetic information of more than 766K individuals, and its lead researcher Dr Emmanuel Adewuyi outlined that policy effort aimed at increasing educational attainment or cognitive training may contribute to a higher level of intelligence, which could lead to improved health outcomes and reduced risk of gut disorders.

Find more information **HERE**.