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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features four pages of news, plus full pages from:

- Nova Pharmaceuticals
- Diabetes Australia

TGA head Lawler

THE new head of the TGA is Prof Tony Lawler (pictured), who was the Chief Medical Officer and Deputy Secretary for Clinical Quality, Regulation and Accreditation for the Tasmanian Department of Health from 2012 until Jun this year.

Lawler posted the news on LinkedIn saying, "I'm pleased to share that I've started a new role as Deputy Secretary, Health Products Regulation Group at the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care.

"A great new challenge and a return to the town I grew up in, very much looking forward to the next phase!"

Lawler will fill the position of Prof John Skerritt who retired earlier this year in Apr (PD 06 Feb, PD breaking news 03 Feb).



ACT's 'landmark change'

PHARMACISTS in the ACT are now authorised to administer medicines for injection, including Long-Acting Injectable Buprenorphine.

The Pharmaceutical Society of Australia's (PSA) ACT Branch President Olivia Collette said, the "landmark change", which would enhance patient access to vital injectable medications, "came after a lot of campaigning".

"We have long championed the expansion of pharmacist scope of practice and, while there is still a long way to go, this is a significant step," she shared.

"We are thrilled that our advocacy on this particular issue has borne fruit, signalling a brighter future for pharmacy and reinforcing our commitment to advancing patient-centred care."

The PSA stated it has provided comprehensive training on administering medicines by injection.



The PSA added pharmacists are encouraged to access these resources to "ensure they are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to provide optimal care".

"PSA encourages all pharmacists in the ACT to familiarise themselves with the updated regulations and embrace this progressive expansion of their professional capabilities."

"By staying informed and ensuring adherence to best practices, pharmacists will continue to play a pivotal role in enhancing patient outcomes and promoting public health," Collette concluded.

For more information [CLICK HERE](#).

SafeScript NSW research survey open

THE research project on the implementation of the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (SafeScript NSW), in New South Wales is seeking input.

The research aims to explore the perceptions and experiences of healthcare providers and consumers of SafeScript NSW.

This study is a collaboration between eHealth NSW, The University of Sydney, and The University of Technology, Sydney. The survey will take

approximately five to 20 minutes to complete, [HERE](#).

SafeScript NSW provides prescribers and pharmacists with real-time information about a patient's prescribing and dispensing history for certain high-risk medicines to improve clinical decision-making and patient safety.

Over 22,000 health practitioners have already registered for SafeScript NSW. Learn more and register, [HERE](#).

Boots closures

BOOTS in the UK is set to close 300 stores across the country over the next year, according to the Sun, and as reported by C+D.

Boots has not confirmed the locations of the 300 stores reported to close but it has indicated that they are locations that are near another branch.

These closures will bring the group's portfolio from approximately 2,200 branches to around 1,900.

Global Chief Financial Officer at Boots parent company Walgreens Boots Alliance James Kehoe shared that the group "will continue to optimise our locations and opening hours".

The group "expects to close an additional 300 locations in the UK and 150 locations in the US," he said.

Boots also told C+D that there will be no impact on pharmacy roles or other store roles, with full deployment opportunities for impacted team members.

The announcement also explained that "evolving the store estate in this way allows Boots to concentrate its team members where they are needed and focus investment more acutely in individual stores with the ambition of consistently delivering an excellent and reliable service in a fresh and up-to-date environment".

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NDSS website

DIABETES Australia has an NDSS Health Professional Webpage for pharmacists to better support those people with diabetes.

There are several online educational programs, extensive information on diabetes and other useful resources tailored to enhance the knowledge of healthcare professionals.

See more on the [back page](#).

TGA approval

THE TGA has provisionally approved Minjuvi (tafasitamab) for use in Australia.

The approval is "in combination with lenalidomide followed by Minjuvi monotherapy for the treatment of adult patients with relapsed or refractory diffuse large B-cell lymphoma who are not eligible for autologous stem cell transplant," shared its manufacturer Specialised Therapeutics.

Learn more [HERE](#).

Reducing AMR saves economy millions

FIRST of its kind research examining the impact of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in Australia has shown the clinical and economic benefits of reducing ‘superbug’ infections.

The study found reducing AMR in three specific hospital-acquired infections in Australia by 95% over 10 years saved 9,041 hospital bed days and avoided 6,644 daily doses of antibiotics.¹

This would result in an estimated saving of \$10.5 million in hospitalisation costs and an estimated total economic benefit of up to \$412 million to the Australian economy.

If a 10-50% reduction was achieved this would still lead to an estimated total economic benefit of \$16-\$222 million.¹

The paper, ‘*Quantifying the Economic and Clinical Value of Reducing Antimicrobial Resistance in Gram-negative Pathogens Causing Hospital-Acquired Infections in Australia*’, was



published online this month in the *Journal of Infectious Diseases and Therapy*.

“This new study shows a clear economic rationale for tackling AMR, said study co-author Prof Mark Blaskovich, Centre for Superbug Solutions, The University of Queensland.

“Part of the answer to this problem is the need for new antimicrobials, but a key challenge is that it’s a broken market.

“Australia urgently needs to adopt innovative reimbursement schemes that adequately value investment in the development and commercialisation of effective new antimicrobials,” shared Blaskovich.

“There are several overseas

examples we can look to, including subscription-style funding models being piloted in the UK.”

Data from Australian-specific research estimates that resistant bacterial infections kill 290 people annually with the numbers to rise to 10,430 people by 2050, with healthcare costs predicted to reach \$521 million.²

Separate research shows that the current clinical pipeline for new antimicrobials is unlikely to address the increasing emergence and spread of AMR, with multiple reports showing fewer than 50 antibiotics in clinical development around the world.^{3,4,5}

AMR occurs over time whenever antimicrobials are used, however, overuse and inappropriate use can amplify this effect.⁶

The 2016 estimates suggest more than 700,000 people per year globally die from AMR bacterial infections and that this figure could rise to 10 million per year by 2050.⁷ References are available [HERE](#).

Wellbeing Week

THE World Wellbeing Week (26-30 Jun) focuses on the ongoing narrative on employee burnout and how crucial a work/life balance is.

According to the *Australian HR Institute’s 2019-22 Workplace Report*, this is a key concern for businesses with two-thirds of employees believing they don’t receive the support they need from their direct supervisors, negatively impacting their wellbeing.

While the term ‘workplace wellbeing’ is commonplace, it’s also often misconstrued that excessive workplace perks and costly and time-consuming initiatives need to be established.

There are some baseline practices that employers can easily put into place without hefty investment or an organisational overhaul.

Learn more [HERE](#).



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Not 'miracle cures'

THE Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists has just published its first guidelines for psychedelic-assisted therapy, taking a conservative approach to what it describes as a “developing” field for which evidence is either limited or emerging, *SMH* has reported.

“MDMA and magic mushrooms are not miracle cures for mental illnesses and Australia must approach them cautiously,” the body stated.

The TGA has announced that authorised psychiatrists would be able to prescribe MDMA to assist treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder and psilocybin, the active ingredient in magic mushrooms, for treatment-resistant depression.

The change takes effect on 01 Jul, and treatment is initially expected to cost \$25,000 or more out-of-pocket.

Iron screening engages the health talk

WITH one in eight people over two years of age not consuming enough iron to meet their daily needs¹, and around 8% of pre-school children, 12% of Australian women, & 20% of people older than 85 years being anaemic², a “large portion of our pharmacy customers would benefit from having their iron levels checked and monitored,” said Zena Daher, pharmacist-owner, Blooms The Chemist, Burwood, NSW.

It’s widely known, iron is a crucial dietary mineral that plays a role in various bodily functions, including the immune system and transportation of oxygen in the blood.

Symptoms of iron deficiency include looking pallid, breathlessness, dizziness, tiredness and fatigue, and a compromised immune function with increased susceptibility to infection.²

“The issue with these symptoms is that they are also common for various other conditions including, ironically, high iron levels and



the iron overload condition haemochromatosis³,” explained Daher.

“This highlights the importance of testing and making sure we know the cause of the patient’s symptoms, such as a 30-something woman complaining of feeling tired does not necessarily equate to having low iron.

“By promptly identifying abnormal iron levels, using a quick and low-cost test, individuals can receive timely treatment to prevent associated symptoms, like fatigue, and other possible, more serious indicated co-morbidities such as organ damage, diabetes, and arthritis³.”

The results of iron testing provides guidance on next steps,

such as recommending a visit to a doctor or advising on dietary changes, lifestyle modifications, or incorporating iron supplements to address a deficiency.

Further, iron deficiency has emerged as a common concern among patients with cardiovascular disease, according to a recent study published in the *European Heart Journal*.

The research further suggests that the prevalence of iron deficiency rises along with the severity of cardiac and renal dysfunction and may be more prominent among women.⁴

Considering the study findings and the vital role of iron levels in maintaining good overall health, “engage in the conversation about a customer’s health and iron status and encourage them to be screened to determine if low iron could be the cause of their presenting symptoms,” Daher concluded.

References are available, [HERE](#).

Pharmacy Daily 2023

PHARMACY CAREERS SUMMIT

If you are looking for your dream intern role, then this is the must-event for you.

Eleven of Australia’s leading community pharmacy banner groups will all be together, on one day, in one place, virtually, and with over 40 representatives available to talk to you.

No virtual event has ever had this many banner groups! It is an amazing show of support for those looking to learn more about careers in pharmacy.

With over 30 industry experts presenting, across 14 sessions, the event is also great if you are considering studying pharmacy or you are a current or potential owner of a community pharmacy.

To be part of this exciting, free, virtual event, secure your free place and register now at <https://pharmacycareerssummit.com.au>. It all happens on 7 July 2023

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Dispensary Corner

FITNESS and fashion often go together - but usually it's a trendy set of sneakers or some lycra workout gear.

However, a Spanish serial record-breaker has added a new dimension this week by running 100 metres in under 13 seconds - wearing a pair of stilettos.

34 year-old Christian Roberto Lopez Rodriguez wore 2.76-inch (7cm) high heels to undertake the stunt, breaking the record held by Germany's Andre Ortoff who set a 14.02 second 100m time in 2019, according to *Guinness World Records*.

Strict requirements for the record stipulate a minimum 7cm heel and a maximum width of 1.5cm at the tip, meaning platform shoes are not allowed.

The new record-holder said, "the preparation was very exhaustive and specific...I find it very challenging to be able to run in high heels at high speed".

Rodriguez said he had made the attempt to prove that people with Type 1 diabetes such as himself "can do as much or more things than people without diabetes".

He holds a number of other 100m records for being the fastest to run the distance blindfolded (12.45s), in clogs (12.58s), backwards (13.17s) and hopping backwards (24.7s).



More babies born, and to older mums

IN AUSTRALIA there was a record increase in babies born in 2021.

Overall, 315,705 babies were born, about 20k more than the year before (a 6.7% increase), according to an Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) report, *Australia's mothers and babies*.

"In 2021, the birth rate was 61 births per 1,000 women of reproductive age (aged 15-44 years), up from 56 births per 1,000 women in 2020, but lower than the most recent peak in 2007 (66 births per 1,000 women)," said AIHW spokesperson Deanna Eldridge.

Consistent with previous trends, more women are giving birth later in life.

In 2021, around one in four women who gave birth were aged 35 years and older.

"Average maternal age continues

to increase for first-time mothers (from 28.4 years in 2011 to 29.7 years in 2021) and for those who have given birth previously (from 31.3 years in 2011 to 32.2 years in 2021)," said Eldridge.

Despite higher risks of health complications associated with later-in-life pregnancies, most mothers aged 35 years and above and their babies do well.

In 2021, more than nine in 10 babies born to women aged 35 years and over were born at-term and had a healthy birth weight (between 2.5kg and 4.499 kg).

Fewer than one in 10 babies were born pre-term (8.2%) or had low birthweight (6.3%).

Overall, the number of pre-term and low birthweight babies has remained stable over the past decade.

In general, more Australian mothers, including First Nations mothers, are accessing antenatal care.

In 2021, 80% of all mothers accessed antenatal care in their first trimester, and 95% had five or more antenatal care visits.

"We continue to see a consistent downward trend in the number of women who smoke while pregnant.

"In 2021, 8.7% of mothers reported smoking during their pregnancy, down from 13% in 2011.

"Furthermore, more than one in five mothers who smoked at the start of their pregnancy quit after the first 20 weeks," said Eldridge.

Mothers aged 35 years and above were less likely to report smoking during pregnancy (5.5%) compared with mothers aged 20 years and under (33%).

PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

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