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Real time scripts roll out in Tassie

TASMANIA will join the rest of the country and connect to the national Real Time Prescription Monitoring (RTPM) service, when it moves to TasScript next month, replacing the DORA platform currently utilised by pharmacists across the state.

TasScript is a mandatory system that promises to arm healthcare professionals with critical information to make safer clinical decisions, and integrates into existing clinical and pharmacy software, enabling instant identification of potential risks.

It also marks a leap forward in the management of high-risk medications, and aims to showcase the state's leadership when it comes to employing digital health solutions to tackle contemporary healthcare challenges.

This integration ensures that healthcare providers can offer optimised care by accessing



accurate and timely medication histories at the point of care.

Primary Health Tasmania will host a webinar about the new system on 11 Apr, with the talk to be led by several experts including Peter Boyles, Chief Pharmacist and Principal Advisor of medicines and poisons regulation.

Joining him will be Deputy Chief Pharmacist, Sam Halliday, as well as Rachel Rees, a patient-centred

pharmacist and practice change consultant, and Angus Thompson, Pharmacist Clinical Editor at Primary Health Tasmania.

Dr Jonathan Choong, a GP Clinical Editor and practicing physician, will also present on the frontline application of TasScript, emphasising its importance in daily medical practice for safer patient outcomes. *JG*

To learn more, [CLICK HERE](#).



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Today's issue of PD
Pharmacy Daily today features three pages of pharmacy news, plus a full page from Dispense Assist.



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SA pharmacist struck off

A PHARMACIST from SA has had his registration cancelled after being found guilty of unlawfully possessing prescription drugs and attempting to distribute them to acquaintances.

Mahn (Peter) Nguyen is also banned from reapplying for registration until November 2025.

Between 2013-2018 when Nguyen served as a senior clinical pharmacist in Adelaide, he committed a number of infractions, such as the unauthorised removal of prescription medication and drugs of dependence from his workplace, which he stored at home.

He also failed to maintain proper records of drugs of dependence, offered to supply illicit drugs and Schedule 8 and Schedule 4 medications to acquaintances and prescribed an associate pain relief medication using someone else's prescriber number without appropriate authority.

Following an internal investigation by his employer that led to his suspension and subsequent

resignation in Feb 2018, Nguyen was reported to the police in Mar of the same year.

He later admitted to the charges in Port Adelaide Magistrates Court in Sep 2019, receiving an 18-month good behaviour bond and a mandate for 60 hours of community service.

The South Australian Civil and Administrative Tribunal, acting on a referral from the Pharmacy Board of Australia and the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency, deemed Nguyen's actions as serious and deliberate.

Nguyen was also reprimanded and barred from any health service role involving unsupervised access to medications. JG

Dispensary help

CHEMSAVE Dispense Assist is a low-cost dispensary solution for those facing staff shortages and cost challenges. See more on **page four**.

Sydney home raided for fake semaglutide

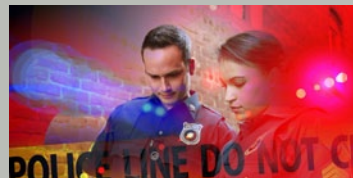
LAST week, TGA officers raided a Sydney home tied to alleged illegal activities involving the compound semaglutide.

Several items were confiscated for detailed TGA analysis.

The raid is part of a broader probe into the unauthorised creation, distribution, and international sale of prescription medicines, spotlighted by unsolicited medicine advertisements sent to medical professionals globally.

The TGA had identified adverse reactions among patients receiving this medication by mail.

Prof Anthony Lawler, Deputy Secretary of the Department of Health and Aged Care and TGA head, highlighted the gravity of the situation, stating, "not only have health professionals been duped into believing this was a legitimate pharmacy, but they have then referred their patients to have their prescriptions filled". "Some patients have also



suffered additional medical issues caused by this substance."

Prof Lawler emphasised the importance of vigilance among healthcare providers regarding unsolicited advertisements, especially via fax from unknown online sources.

"I would also recommend health practitioners to exercise deep caution...clinical judgement should be used in these cases, recognising that there may be elevated clinical risk for patients where medicines are not assessed by the TGA for safety, quality and efficacy," he added, affirming the agency's commitment to thorough investigation and legal action against any law violations.

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Dispensary Corner

MEET Emo, not your average bot with a mood ring, but an AI-driven robotic head that's schooling itself on the fine art of human expression, especially the universal human sign of goodwill: the smile.

For years, the brainiacs over at Columbia University's Creative Machines Lab in the US have been toiling away, not on making robots that can beat us at chess (that's old news), but on crafting one recently that can smile at us, frown, or look utterly baffled in perfect sync.

The development of a robot that can anticipate, and mimic human facial expressions touches on the broader implications for mental and emotional wellbeing.

Their latest creation, Emo, doesn't just smile - it is able to see yours coming 840 milliseconds before you even crack one and mirror it.

The team, led by the AI and robotics whiz Hod Lipson, had their work cut out.

Imagine the complexity of teaching a robot to not only understand the subtleties of a grin or a grimace but to also decide when it's the perfect moment to unleash one.

And how did they teach Emo to be so emotionally intuitive?

The old-fashioned way: by letting it watch endless videos of human faces, turning it into the most diligent student of the School of Human Expression.

Emo could just be leading the charge where robots are our empathetic companions, one smile at a time.

The massive cost of mito



FOR the first time, a study has revealed the true cost of mitochondrial disease (mito), which drains more than \$1 billion from Australia's economy each year.

The *Preventable burden of mitochondrial disease* report, which was commissioned by the Mito Foundation, shines a light on the economic impact of the rare and debilitating disorder.

Approximately 4,500 Australians are affected by the disease, while an additional 124,000 carry a genetic risk factor for mito, and could be unknowingly experiencing its early effects.

According to the Mito Foundation CEO Sean Murray, the report is a massive step towards understanding the wider impact of the genetic disorder, which can help unlock better treatment and greater prevention.

"This report is a groundbreaking development in the fight against mitochondrial disease because for the first time, we are able to

see just how much it is costing Australians," he explained.

"This research has shown that more than 80% of the \$1 billion cost of mito is due to the lost quality-of-life of those who either die from the disease or have to live with the pain and disability it causes."

Annually, Australia loses 10 children and 70 adults every year to mito, and those living with the condition miss out on a combined 1,805 years of better health.

"Improving how mito is diagnosed, ensuring access to prevention options and increasing research into new treatments are all part of the solution," Murray emphasised.

The Mito Foundation is urging the government to improve the health workforce's ability to recognise symptoms of mito, as well as remove barriers to genetic testing.

It also highlights the importance of growing a network of accessible Centres of Expertise in mito, and increasing in the number of clinical trials in Australia. *JM*

Alarming rise of prostate cancer

RESEARCHERS from Australia and around the globe have forecasted a dramatic escalation in prostate cancer incidences worldwide.

The numbers, revealed at the European Association of Urology Congress on Fri, are expected to soar from 1.4 million cases in 2020 to an estimated 2.9 million by 2040, according to findings from *The Lancet* Commission on prostate cancer.

This alarming increase was attributed primarily to ageing populations and an upswing in life expectancy.

A significant portion of this rise in cases and subsequent deaths was predicted to impact lower and middle-income countries (LMICs), which lag behind in screening advancements made by wealthier nations.

The researchers stressed the urgent need for LMICs to enhance their diagnostic and treatment capacities for prostate cancer.

Meanwhile, higher-income countries were advised to refine their screening processes, concentrating efforts on individuals at greater risk and minimising over diagnosis.

The study also highlights an expected 85% jump in global prostate cancer fatalities over two decades, climbing from 375,000 in 2020 to nearly 700,000 by 2040.

Under-reporting in LMICs, due to under-diagnosis and data collection gaps, suggested that the actual figures could be much higher.

Diabetes drug helps slow Parkinson's

A DRUG used for diabetes, which works in a similar way to Ozempic, has shown some promise in a clinical trial for early-stage Parkinson's disease.

The drug, lixisenatide, is a

glucagon-like peptide-1 receptor agonist and compared to the placebo it has been found to help slow the progression of motor disability after 12 months in a small phase 2 trial.



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