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## Today's issue of PD

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

- TerryWhite Chemmart
- Glucojel
- Direct Chemist Outlet

## Data on depression

**BLACK** Dog Institute has taken a step today towards how we treat depression with the launch of the Centre of Research Excellence in Depression Treatment Precision at Parliament House with pharmacist and Minister for Mental Health Emma McBride.

Researchers from Black Dog Institute and UNSW Sydney will use AI and data analytics to generate new insights into depression and develop more effective treatments.

The Centre aims to improve the effectiveness, timeliness, and cost-effectiveness of depression treatments.

# Scheduling changes offer “liberty” to all

**HEALTHCARE** discussions at APP2024 last week focused on the role of pharmacists in medication management, and how down-scheduling of medicines gives pharmacists the “liberty” to offer early intervention to patients for distressing conditions such as allergic rhinitis and migraines.

Bringing relief to around 4.5 million sufferers of the condition, Dymista Allergy is the combination allergy treatment currently available in Australia without prescription due to the TGA’s down scheduling of the product last year.

Manufacturer of the product and APP program sponsor, Viatrix Australia’s Country Manager Sylvain Vigneault shared insights with *Pharmacy Daily* that navigating the healthcare system for hayfever patients can be complex, often involving referrals from general practitioners to specialists.

“A proper conversation around the disease and the ability to provide medication immediately is extremely important in bringing

the condition under control,” Vigneault remarked, highlighting the significance of empowering pharmacists in patient care.

He also discussed how the availability of over-the-counter medicines granted pharmacists the “liberty to engage in meaningful discussions with patients”, and recommend appropriate treatments to their patients.

This shift reflects a broader conversation around the scope of practice in healthcare, demonstrating that effective patient care extends beyond prescription-based products, Vigneault said.

“We believe in bridging the gap between accessibility and quality healthcare,” he stated, emphasising the company’s commitment to patient-centric approaches.

Moreover, Vigneault delved into the process of down-scheduling medications, citing the example of the company’s antimigraine product Relpax, now also accessible without a prescription.

This move toward increased accessibility aligns with efforts to streamline overall healthcare delivery and ensure timely access to essential medications.

Another crucial aspect addressed was the importance of local manufacturing in ensuring medication availability.

Vigneault stressed the need to capitalise on locally produced products to mitigate supply chain challenges, particularly in light of recent global disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic and logistical constraints.

“Local manufacturing not only strengthens supply chains but also fosters economic resilience,” Vigneault remarked, underlining the significance of domestic production in safeguarding medication access.

In conclusion, Vigneault’s insights underscored the evolving dynamics of healthcare delivery, emphasising the need for collaboration, innovation, and a patient-centric approach. *JG*

## DRAW THE LINE... When it comes to Minor Skin Infections



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## Roche wants early checks

RECENT data has underscored the enduring threat of cancer as the leading cause of burden of disease in Australia, due in part to the gap left in screenings by the COVID-19 pandemic.

With cancer now accounting for three in every 10 deaths, Allison Rossiter, Managing Director of Roche Diagnostics Australia, stressed the imperative of regular screenings, highlighting the pivotal role of early detection in improving patient outcomes.

“As Australia navigates the aftermath of the pandemic, healthcare professionals such as pharmacists and other organisations must continue to advocate for timely cancer screenings,” said Rossiter.

Campaigns such as ‘Breast Cancer Won’t Wait’ and ‘Don’t Wait Mate’ underscore the urgency of prioritising health checks and not postponing essential screenings.

According to projections by the Australian Institute of Health and



Welfare, the number of people diagnosed with cancer is expected to surpass 200,000 by 2033.

A report by Cancer Australia revealed an 8% drop in selected diagnostic procedures in 2020, resulting in 163,595 fewer services than expected.

This trend persisted in Victoria, where 6,600 fewer cancer diagnoses occurred between 2020 and 2022 due to decreased screening and diagnostic activities during the pandemic.

Despite incremental increases in cancer diagnosis rates, a post-pandemic lag persists, with screening rates yet to fully recover.

Only 41% of people returned a bowel cancer screening kit in 2020-21, and just 50% of women underwent a screening mammogram in 2021-22. JG

## Two in five struggle to manage health

IN THE past year, more Australians are prioritising their health and wellbeing, although more are unhappy with their quality of life, according to the Bupa Pulse Check report.

Conducted by Quantum Market Research, the results showed that two in five Aussies are struggling to manage their health and wellbeing.

Making healthy choices, the report found that 45% of respondents were cutting back on alcohol, 62% are taking vitamins or supplements and 49% have taken up at least one physical activity.

Australians also reported that they are now more likely to use an online exercise program than in previous years, with an increase to 13% of respondents from 11% in 2022.

One in three feel technology is negatively impacting their mental wellbeing, a sentiment held by over half of those aged 18-29.

The report also found that one in six rate their mental health as being poor and 53% have accessed at least one form of support in the past 12 months.

Meanwhile, 35% reported they believe their perceived quality of life has worsened due to the current housing and rental market, up from 31% last year.

“Given the current cost-of-living crisis, we need to help Aussies overcome financial barriers to exercise and to know there are alternatives,” said Quantum Market Research Managing Director Richard Frost.

“You don’t need the latest on-trend equipment or membership to stay fit - and that’s why we’ve seen a big uptake in running, walking or cycling outdoors.”

“Given all the wellness tools and services we have at our disposal, it’s surprising that younger Aussies feel their generation is not as healthy as the one before it,” added Frost. JHM

# Goodbye yellow brick road.

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## Dispensary Corner

**IN A** tale that smells more like a sour lemon than a sweet vanilla breeze, a US woman found herself in a sticky situation after a Bath & Body Works air freshener allegedly went kaboom in her car.

Kyndal Chandler took to TikTok to share her misadventure, complete with a hospital visit and a hefty ER bill.

In the viral video, Chandler can be seen nursing her eyes and showing off what appears to be a bleach-splattered car roof, courtesy of the explosive freshener fiasco.

With over 42 million views, Chandler's plight has struck a chord with fellow drivers, sparking a wave of sympathy and cautionary quips.

Comments ranged from wary side-eyes at innocent air fresheners to pun-laden jests such as "bath and body works? more like...eyes and body hurts, amirite?".

But Chandler isn't alone in her aromatic agony.

Another TikTok user chimed in with their own seat-melting horror story, prompting a flurry of cautionary tales and precautionary measures from Bath & Body Works air freshener aficionados.

While Chandler's injuries thankfully seem less dire than initially feared, the call for legal action is in the air.

So, as Chandler's cautionary tale wafts through the online ether, it may pay to remember that when it comes to air fresheners, it's better to be safe than scent-sorry.

## JA program to shorten diagnosis delays

**THE** Minister for Health and Aged Care, Mark Butler, today announced that the Australian Government is set to tackle the protracted delays in diagnosing Juvenile Arthritis (JA), a painful autoimmune disease affecting many children.

The newly unveiled program aims to arm pharmacists, general practitioners and other health professionals with critical clinical guidance and information from the peak Australian Paediatric Rheumatology Group.

This initiative is designed to enhance awareness of JA's symptoms and diagnostic criteria, significantly reducing the time it takes to identify the condition and begin effective treatment.

Labelled as "unacceptable" by health experts, these delays have



remained unchanged for over two decades, impacting up to 10,000 Australian families.

Currently, the journey to a JA diagnosis stretches an average of 10-11 months, a period that hasn't seen improvement in more than 20 years.

Butler said, "this delay not only exacerbates the daily suffering

of young Australians but also heightens the risk of permanent joint deformities, loss of vision, and lifelong dependence".

The program, titled 'Juvenile Arthritis: Early Diagnosis - Early Intervention Changing Children's Lives,' emerges in the wake of vigorous advocacy by the Juvenile Arthritis Foundation Australia and is a principal recommendation from a recent Parliamentary Inquiry into Childhood Rheumatic Diseases.

Dr Ben Whitehead, Chair of the Australian Paediatric Rheumatology Group, highlighted the low awareness and common misconceptions surrounding JA, emphasising that many believe "kids don't get arthritis".

This program seeks to dispel such myths and ensure early and accurate diagnosis. *JG*

## PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

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- Peter Fairgray, TWC 2023 Pharmacist of the Year, TerryWhite Chemmart Arana Hills



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\*Source: Bliss Mobile post campaign reporting



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