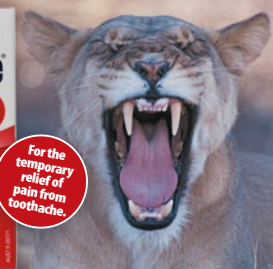


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Today's issue of PD

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

- WholeLife Pharmacy & Healthfoods
- Glucojel

Swim a new lane

ALIGNING your pharmacy with WholeLife Pharmacy & Healthfoods can help drive foot traffic and increase basket sizes, backed by a leading store design - more on **page three**.

Reasons to smile

GLUCOJEL is offering your customers the chance to win \$10,000 with purchases across the Glucojel jellybean range, so make sure your shelves are fully stocked - more on the giveaway on the **back page**.

App for kindness

THIS World Kindness Day, a new mobile app is aiming to make it easier to coordinate personalised palliative or end-of-life care.

The HELP App (developed by La Trobe University and delivered across the northern Sydney region in collaboration with Sydney North Health Network) makes asking for assistance more straightforward and eliminates the guessing game for friends, family, loved ones, and carers.

Whooping cough surge

AUSTRALIA is grappling with a record-breaking whooping cough epidemic, with more than 41,000 cases of the highly infectious lung disease reported so far in 2024, according to national disease data.

This figure already surpasses the previous high of 38,748 cases in 2011, with estimates suggesting that over 45,000 cases could be logged by year's end.

The *2024 Whooping Cough Report Card*, issued by the Immunisation Foundation of Australia, revealed that New South Wales and Queensland are the hardest-hit, with New South Wales accounting for half and Queensland nearly 30% of the cases.

School-aged children, particularly those aged 10-14, are also bearing the brunt, representing nearly 40% of all cases this year.

The report coincided with Whooping Cough Day last Fri, which is urging Australians to update their vaccinations.

Dr Laurence Luu, Research Fellow at the University of Technology Sydney, noted the epidemic's severity is compounded by declining community vaccination rates.

"We anticipated a rise in cases, but not to this magnitude," he said, warning that low booster rates across age groups are exacerbating the issue.

In 2023, only 75% of 13-year-olds received their booster, while just 20% of Australians over 50 are up to date on vaccinations.

Adults are encouraged to get a booster every 10 years to protect against this bacterial disease, which spreads more easily than the flu,



measles, or COVID-19.

Catherine Hughes, founder of the Immunisation Foundation of Australia, stressed the seriousness of the situation.

Hughes, who lost her infant son to whooping cough complications during the last epidemic, emphasised that "whooping cough remains a significant public health threat in Australia".

She noted that people with asthma are particularly vulnerable, being four times more likely to contract the infection.

Whooping cough's symptoms, including severe coughing fits and breathing difficulties, often appear after one to two weeks, making it easy to spread before detection.

The infection can be contagious for up to three weeks or until antibiotic treatment is completed.

With Nov marking a peak in cases, pharmacists are urged to inform customers to stay alert, ensure their vaccinations are up-to-date, and seek medical advice for any ongoing cough symptoms. *JG*

RSV protection

A NATIONWIDE immunisation program has been launched to shield infants from severe respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), which includes Sanofi's Beyfortus (nirsevimab).

Announced yesterday by Federal Health Minister, Mark Butler, the new program will offer eligible infants free protection during winter when RSV outbreaks peak.

The initiative combines infant and maternal immunisation to provide coverage for those most at risk.

Beyfortus, already helping reduce RSV-related hospital admissions in Qld and WA, will be accessible via hospitals, immunisation clinics, and GPs.

The program will target newborns, infants in their first RSV season, and children up to 24 months, who are still at risk of severe RSV complications.

RSV is a seasonal virus that can lead to serious respiratory conditions like bronchiolitis and pneumonia, with about 12,000 Australian infants under one admitted annually due to severe RSV.

Healthy children make up 80% of these hospitalisations.

Sanofi RSV Medical Lead Dr Desiree Anthony praised the govt's leadership, stating this program will ensure all infants nationwide have protection.

He added Sanofi will collaborate with healthcare providers to ensure a smooth rollout by 2025, aiming to curb Australia's rising RSV cases.



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Dispensary Corner

BE HEART smart, apparently, by swapping milk for yoghurt to keep those tickers ticking.

For women who enjoy a daily glass of milk, a new study suggests it might be time to make a 'culture' change.

Research published in *BMC Medicine* hints that trading non-fermented milk (like regular semi-skimmed) for something more tangy, like yoghurt or kefir, could help reduce the risk of heart disease.

The study tracked nearly 60,000 women over 33 years and found that those drinking more than 300 millilitres of non-fermented milk per day faced a gradually increasing risk of heart issues, like ischemic heart disease and heart attacks.

The risk climbed up to 21% at a daily dose of 800 millilitres!

For men, however, it seems milk doesn't have the same effect on heart health.

Here's the heart-healthy twist: when women swapped just one glass of milk for fermented milk (hello, yoghurt!), their risk dropped by a small but encouraging 5%.

Scientists believe that yoghurt's friendly bacteria could be helping regulate blood pressure and circulation.

So, swap out your milk and your heart might just thank you with every spoonful.



UQ partners with MTM in new venture

THE University of Queensland (UQ) is expanding its drug discovery and development capabilities through a new partnership between UniQuest and global biotech firm Molecule to Medicine (MTM).

This collaboration aims to accelerate the formation of biotech companies in Brisbane and change UQ's academic research into innovative medicines.

UniQuest CEO Dr Dean Moss highlighted the partnership's potential to strengthen UQ and Brisbane's biotech ecosystem.

"MTM is known for uniting the right people, funding, and technologies to create biotech companies that can advance new therapies for patients," Dr Moss said.

The UniQuest Extension Fund has committed \$1 million to Lucia Bio, a new biotech start-up from UQ's School of Biomedical Sciences



focused on developing anti-inflammatory treatments.

Initially, Lucia Bio will explore therapies for neuroinflammatory diseases like Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, and motor neurone disease.

MTM Chair Dr Tom McCarthy praised UQ's research, saying, "the quality of UQ's research is recognised globally, and we're eager to work with UniQuest to advance innovative discoveries and close the translational gap".

CEO Kirsty McCarthy underscored MTM's commitment to fostering globally connected drug research and development ecosystems, leveraging international funding and science networks.

"Our culture at MTM drives the creation and scaling of biotech companies to maximise research translation into successful clinical programs," she said.

This partnership builds on UniQuest's relationship with Dr McCarthy, who was formerly CEO of UQ start-up Spinifex Pharmaceuticals, acquired by Novartis for \$200 million in 2015. *JG*

Gut microbiome changes tied to RA

SHIFTS in gut microbiome composition may signal the onset of rheumatoid arthritis (RA) in individuals genetically or environmentally predisposed to the disease, according to research in *Annals of the Rheumatic Diseases*.

The study found gut microbiome 'instability' in individuals at risk for RA, although it's unclear whether these changes cause or result from the disease's development.

Tracking 124 people at risk, seven newly diagnosed RA patients, and 22 healthy individuals over 15 months, researchers identified lower microbial diversity in those progressing to RA.

Participants at risk were identified by anti-CCP antibodies

- an RA-specific immune response - and recent joint pain.

Notably, lower microbial diversity was linked to higher anti-CCP levels and other recognised RA risk factors, such as genetic markers.

Certain strains, particularly *Prevotellaceae* species, appeared more frequently in those progressing to RA, suggesting a potential role in disease onset.

The study's limitations - such as its small sample size and observational design - prevent definitive conclusions, but researchers propose these microbial shifts may help identify those most at risk.

The findings highlight the need for personalised RA prevention strategies, for those nearing clinical disease development.

PSA Refresher on

REGISTRATIONS are open for the PSA's 48th Offshore Refresher Conference, set for May 2025 in Vietnam, which combines quality therapeutic education, travel experiences, and networking.

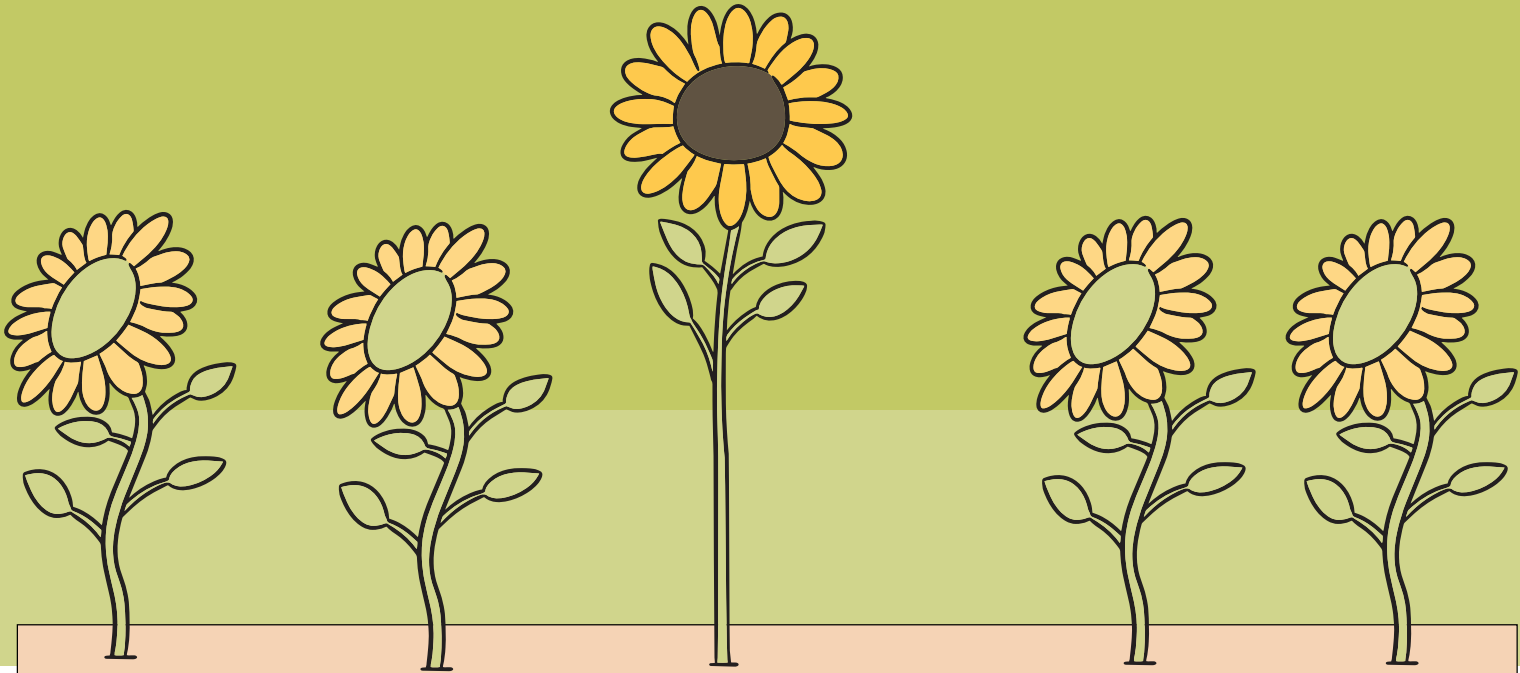
This event offers pharmacists, pharmacy assistants, GPs, and other allied health professionals over 50 CPD Group 2 credits.

The main conference is in Hoi An and Ho Chi Minh City from 14-22 May; the pre-conference tour from 8-14 May visits Halong Bay and Hanoi; and the post-conference event from 22-28 May visits Cambodia, Siem Reap, and Angkor Wat.

A certificate of attendance will be sent post event - to learn more, **CLICK HERE**.



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