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Today's issue of PD

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

- Dispense Assist
- Nova Pharmaceuticals
- MIMS October Update

Low-cost solution

DISPENSE Assist is a low-cost staffing solution with dispensary technicians available 24/7 at rates as low as \$6.37 per hour, for services that include compounding and DAAs, among others.

Learn more on **page three**.

New medication

NOVA Pharmaceuticals emergency contraception Novella-1 is available now to order for dispensing by pharmacists to appropriately counselled customers.

See more on **page four**.

Sigma's share price rally

SIGMA Healthcare Limited's share price has surged this week, reaching \$2.06, up from \$1.46 seven days ago.

This sharp rise reflects growing market confidence in Sigma's handling of its proposed acquisition of Chemist Warehouse, with the court-enforceable undertaking offered to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) (*PD* 01 Oct).

The ACCC's concerns centre around potential market dominance and the misuse of confidential pharmacy data, which could harm competition.

In response, Sigma's undertaking includes allowing franchisees to terminate agreements without penalty for three years and limiting the use of sensitive data during that period, as well as staying within the Community Service Obligation for five years.

While the ACCC is seeking public feedback on this latest move by the wholesaler, market sentiment

around the acquisition has strengthened as evidenced in the stock price rally.

Retail expert and CEO of Retail Doctor Group Brian Walker described it as "a vote of confidence by the market in Sigma's approach".

"Their undertaking has clearly alleviated fears around competition and data use, boosting investor confidence in the company's future," he told *Pharmacy Daily*.

The proposed acquisition, which effectively results in a reverse takeover, will see Chemist Warehouse shareholders owning 85.75% of the merged entity.

Walker commented, "this merger could grow Sigma's and Chemist Warehouse's share of the retail market considerably, solidifying their dominance".

He also said as the ACCC continues its investigation, the market's positive reaction underscores the belief that Sigma's efforts to comply with competition regulations will ensure the deal's success. *JG*

Mpox vaccinations

NSW Health is urging the public to get two free doses of the mpox vaccine as cases surge in the state.

Since 01 Jun, NSW has reported 433 mpox cases, with 26 hospitalisations due to severe symptoms.

NSW Chief Health Officer Dr Kerry Chant expressed concern over the rising cases, noting that most hospitalisations occurred among unvaccinated or partially vaccinated people.

"While in vaccinated people their cases are generally milder and shorter," she said.

Happy holidays

PHARMACY Daily will take a brief publishing break over the Labour Day long weekend, and wishes all its readers a relaxed holiday.

We will return on 08 Oct with the latest pharmacy news.

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*Peter RU and Rocjarz-Barthauer U, Br J Dermatol 1995;132(3)441-5. Department of Dermatology, University of Munich, Germany. Janssen Research Foundation.

Dispensary Corner

AMBRA Collina, a 37-year-old Italian woman, has officially licked the competition to become a *Guinness World Records* holder.

Collina now holds the record for having the largest female tongue, with a circumference larger than a ping pong ball.

It all started when Collina (pictured below) saw images of Dante Barnes, the former US male record holder, and thought, "hey, I could beat that!"

Collina had always been the life of the party, showing off her impressive tongue, but little did she know, her hidden talent would earn her a world record.

Her tongue was measured three times by a doctor, and the average circumference of 5.44 inches sealed the deal, dethroning Oregon's Jenny DuVander, who previously held the female title with 5.21 inches.

Collina's pride was clear, "I've admired *Guinness World Records* holders since I was a kid".

"I'm thrilled to join their ranks."

As for the male title, that honour currently belongs to Belgian Sacha Feiner, whose tongue measures a whopping 6.69 inches.

Collina, however, is content as the reigning queen of tongues - for now.



Oral drug for kids with T2D

JARDIANCE (empagliflozin) has become the first oral treatment to be available on private script for type 2 diabetes (T2D) in children and adolescents, since metformin was indicated for use in this growing patient group.

Approved by the TGA, Jardiance is now available for patients aged 10 years and older and can be prescribed alongside metformin to help manage the disease.

Prof David Simmons, Chief Medical Officer at Diabetes Australia, emphasised the significance of the new development, as despite the 17% increase of T2D in young people in the last decade, treatment options have remained limited.

"This milestone will lead to a

significant shift in the way the disease is managed in this younger patient population, allowing for glycaemic management to be intensified without injections," Simmons explained.

Jardiance is a sodium-glucose co-transporter-2 (SGLT-2) inhibitor, and works by reducing reabsorption of glucose in the kidneys and increases the excretion of glucose in urine.

The recommended starting dose of Jardiance for children and adolescents is 10mg taken once daily, with or without food.

In patients tolerating this daily dose and still requiring additional glycaemic management, the dosage can be increased to 25mg once daily.

"Early onset type 2 diabetes is associated with poor long-term outcomes, including roughly a 15-year reduction in life expectancy," Simmons said.

"If not well managed, type 2 diabetes can also reduce a child's ability to concentrate, thereby limiting their learning and ability to perform to their full potential.

"It is essential that the disease is detected and treated optimally early in its course," he added. *JG*

Haleon fellowship

CONSUMER healthcare company Haleon has announced a five-year fellowship program at the University of Sydney to research the therapeutic role of supplements in managing osteoarthritis symptoms and explore digital technologies to improve mobility.

The fellowship will support a postdoctoral researcher working under osteoarthritis expert, Prof David Hunter.

Hunter said, "this is a disabling disease and collaborating between researchers and manufacturers will drive innovation in management strategies".

Osteoarthritis, affecting over two million Australians and 595 million people globally, is a significant public health issue, particularly among ageing populations.

Mental health aid

A **NEW** project led by Flinders University aims to assist Australian teenagers facing long wait times for mental health treatment.

The project, titled 'Left to their own devices', focuses on helping GPs better support adolescent patients while they await specialist services.

Prof Bridianne O'Dea, from the Flinders University Institute for Mental Health and Wellbeing highlighted the issue, noting that many teens wait over 100 days to receive treatment after a GP referral.

"The wait time is a period of significant vulnerability for young people if symptoms are acute," O'Dea observed.

The project will test digital interventions, such as smartphone apps and SMS chat, to offer immediate support without adding delays.

The project is funded by \$975,579 from the Medical Research Future Fund, and involves collaboration with mental health experts from various universities and organisations like SANE Australia and the Black Dog Institute.

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New Products

- **Selpercatinib (Retevmo)** is an orally available, small molecule inhibitor of the rearranged during transfection (RET) receptor tyrosine kinase. Chromosomal rearrangements involving in-frame fusions of RET with various partners can result in constitutively activated chimeric RET fusion proteins that can act as oncogenic drivers, promoting cell proliferation and survival in tumor cell lines. Point mutations in RET can also result in constitutively activated RET proteins that can promote cell growth and survival in tumor cell lines. *Retevmo has provisional approval for the treatment of adult patients with locally advanced or metastatic RET fusion positive non-small cell lung cancer.* Retevmo capsules contain selpercatinib 40 mg or 80 mg and are available in packs of 56.
- **Zilucoplan (tetrasodium) (Zilbrysq)** inhibits the effects of C5 through a dual mechanism of action. In generalised myasthenia gravis patients, binding of anti-acetylcholine receptor (AChR) auto-antibodies (mainly IgG1 and IgG3) to AChR results in uncontrolled and inappropriate activation of the classical complement pathway and subsequent injury to the neuromuscular endplate, leading to failure of neuromuscular transmission. Zilucoplan specifically binds to complement protein C5, thereby inhibiting its cleavage by the C5 convertase to C5a and C5b, which results in a downregulation of the assembly and cytolytic activity of the membrane attack complex (MAC). Additionally, by binding to the C5b moiety of C5, zilucoplan sterically hinders binding of C5b to C6, which prevents the subsequent assembly and activity of the MAC, should any C5b be formed. *Zilbrysq is indicated as an add-on to standard therapy for the treatment of generalised myasthenia gravis in adult patients who are AChR antibody positive.* Zilbrysq is contraindicated in patients with unresolved Neisseria meningitidis infection and in patients who are not currently vaccinated against Neisseria meningitidis, unless they receive appropriate prophylactic antibiotic treatment until 2 weeks after the first vaccination dose. Zilbrysq solution for injection contains zilucoplan 16.6 mg per 0.416 mL, 23 mg per 0.574 mL or 32.4 mg per 0.81 mL, and is available in packs of 7 or 28 prefilled syringes.

New Presentation

- **Tirzepatide (Mounjaro)** is now available as a multidose prefilled pen that delivers four 0.6 mL doses containing tirzepatide 2.5 mg, 5 mg, 7.5 mg, 10 mg, 12.5 mg or 15 mg.

New Indication

- **Tirzepatide (Mounjaro)** is now indicated as an adjunct to a reduced-calorie diet and increased physical activity for chronic weight management, including weight loss and weight maintenance, in adults with an initial body mass index of ≥ 30 kg/m² (obesity) or ≥ 27 kg/m² to < 30 kg/m² (overweight) in the presence of at least one weight-related comorbid condition (e.g. hypertension, dyslipidaemia, obstructive sleep apnoea, cardiovascular disease, prediabetes or type 2 diabetes mellitus).

New Contraindications

- **Dorzolamide (hydrochloride) and timolol (maleate) (Cosopt)** is now contraindicated in patients with sick sinus syndrome, severe renal impairment (CrCl < 30 mL/min) and hyperchloraemic acidosis.
- **Gemcitabine (hydrochloride) (DBL Gemcitabine Solution for Injection)** is now contraindicated in pregnancy and breastfeeding.
- **Glecaprevir and pibrentasvir (Maviret)** is now contraindicated for concomitant use with products containing more than 20 mcg of ethinylestradiol.
- **Trandolapril (Gopten)** is now contraindicated in liver cirrhosis with ascites.

This list is a summary of only some of the changes that have occurred over the last month. Before prescribing, always refer to the full product information.