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## Today's issue of PD

*Pharmacy Daily* today features two pages of the latest news, plus a full page from **Chemsave**.

## Chemsave savings

**PHARMACISTS** can save more than \$20,000 per year through major discounts on more than 7,000 products, as well as marketing and POS support, via a new member offer from Chemsave.

The group is also offering a low membership fee, and data insights - see **page three**.

## Fertility guidelines

**THERE** are new guidelines for healthcare professionals treating people affected by unexplained infertility, which enables them to better inform patients and increase the chances of pregnancy.

To learn more, **CLICK HERE**.

## Dementia stigma persists

**NEW** research for Dementia Action Week (16-20 Sep) highlights a decade of poor understanding of the illness, leading to ongoing stigma and widespread discrimination.

Released by Dementia Australia, the report revealed that 71% of people with a loved one living with the condition felt they were patronised, and 76% believed their family member was treated as though they were not smart.

The report is called *People in the community are the challenge and the solution: Towards a dementia-friendly future*.

Additionally, two-thirds of respondents identified 'people in the community' as the primary source of discrimination, while one in three reported that their loved one was excluded or avoided.

The report also notes that one in three Australians incorrectly believe dementia is a normal part of ageing, with no improvement in public understanding of the condition over the last decade.



Bobby Redman, Chair of Dementia Australia's Advisory Committee, expressed frustration at the lack of progress, calling for more respect and support for those with the condition.

Dementia Australia CEO, Prof Tanya Buchanan, added that stigma can deter individuals from seeking healthcare and reduce social engagement, worsening the impact of the dementia.

This Dementia Action Week, the peak organisation is calling for urgent action from communities and governments to raise awareness and foster more inclusive environments for those living with the condition. JG

## TGA's \$19k fine

**THE** TGA has fined NSW based Sun Herbal Pty Ltd \$18,780 for allegedly supplying a complementary medicine without a required warning.

The regulatory authority stated the medication contained *Artemisia frigidula*, which is unsafe for women who are pregnant or aiming to become pregnant.

However, the medicine's label failed to include the mandatory warning, and Sun Herbal did not have permission to sell it without this caution, explained the TGA.

Pharmacists should note the product has been recalled and is no longer allowed for sale.

Further, the TGA emphasised the importance of sponsors complying with the *Therapeutic Goods Act 1989*, and ensuring listed medicines meet all the established regulatory requirements.

To learn more, **CLICK HERE**.

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### Dispensary Corner

**IN AN** unusual study led by Dr Russell Chander at the Centre for Healthy Brain Ageing, researchers discovered that having mild cognitive impairment (MCI) can make you less of a social butterfly.

The study, involving over 300 Aussies aged 70-90, aimed to understand how ageing impacts our social skills.

Spoiler: it turns out dementia can make you worse at reading social cues than a GPS system on the wrong route.

The team used tests like the 'Reading the Mind in the Eyes' and 'Emotion Recognition' to measure social cognition.

The results were clear: while people with dementia struggled with empathy and reading facial expressions, those with MCI found it hard to interpret what others were thinking.

Think of the whole condition as having a faulty decoder ring for human emotions.

Dr Chander's team of scientists found that dementia made social skills plummet faster than a dropped smartphone.

The research could help us figure out how to keep folks with cognitive issues socially engaged and remain an active part of the community.



## FIP urges for team care

**THE** International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) has released new recommendations aimed at enhancing interprofessional collaborative practice (ICP) in healthcare, updating its 2010 policy statement.

The recommendations emphasise the importance of establishing regulatory systems, quality assurance measures, and defined scopes of practice to foster collaboration among professionals, including pharmacists.

The statement outlines 37 recommendations directed at govts, academia, and healthcare professionals to bolster ICP.

FIP stated that the changes reflect an evolved understanding of ICP, aligning with modern healthcare needs to improve patient outcomes.

"Effective ICP can enhance access to health services, reduce burnout, and lead to better health

outcomes," said Luis Lourenço, co-Chair of the policy committee, and FIP Professional Secretary.

The statement underscores that interprofessional collaboration strengthens the healthcare system.

FIP's updated policy highlights the growing integration of pharmacists into various healthcare settings, such as working alongside dietitians in managing diabetes and obesity, or with psychologists in mental healthcare.

According to Prof Jill Boone, policy committee co-Chair, the development of interprofessional education is crucial for equipping pharmacists to work effectively within these environments.

FIP also commits to advocating for pharmacists' access to accurate patient data, collaborating on training initiatives, and benchmarking ICP progress at the national level. *JG*

## Oxycodone use halves after TGA changes

**A UNIVERSITY** of Queensland (UQ) study has revealed that oxycodone use in Australia nearly halved following changes to prescribing practices and packaging in 2019.

Dr Rory Verhagen from UQ's Queensland Alliance for Environmental Health Sciences analysed 6,999 wastewater samples across more than 50 sites between 2017 and 2023 as part of the National Wastewater Drug Monitoring program.

"We tracked oxycodone usage over six years to see the impact of clinical and regulatory changes on this potent pain medication," said Dr Verhagen.

"Oxycodone use dropped significantly - by 45% - between 2019 and 2020, falling from 120

milligrams to 65 milligrams per day per 1,000 people."

The decline coincided with the TGA's 2019 measures to curb opioid misuse, including smaller pack sizes, added warnings, and updated prescribing guidelines.

Before the changes, oxycodone consumption had doubled in the preceding two years.

Published in *Addiction*, the research also examined other opioids, finding no clear trend for heroin use, while fentanyl mirrored oxycodone's decrease.

The study, part of the National Wastewater Drug Monitoring Program led by UQ and the University of South Australia, highlights ongoing efforts to monitor drug use across urban and rural areas.

## Patch for bird flu

**AUSTRALIAN** biotech firm Vaxxas has launched its largest Phase I clinical trial to-date, testing a needle-free vaccine patch against the avian influenza strain H7N9.

The trial, backed by a \$43 million contract from the US Government's Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority, aims to evaluate the safety and immune response of the innovative vaccine delivered via Vaxxas' high-density microarray patch (HD-MAP).

The study, involving 258 healthy participants aged 18 to 50, will compare the HD-MAP delivery against traditional needle and syringe methods.

The vaccine patch targets skin-resident immune cells, enhancing immune responses and potentially reducing dose requirements, stated Vaxxas.

The technology promises easier administration, room-temperature stability, and reduced costs, addressing logistical challenges of vaccine distribution, especially in pandemic scenarios.

Early trials have shown the potential for self-administration, broadening access in emergencies.

Avian flu, particularly H7N9, is considered a significant health threat due to severe illness in infected individuals as reported by the World Health Organisation recently.

The trial, conducted at the University of the Sunshine Coast and Doherty Clinical Trials, will provide crucial data for potential pandemic responses, with initial results expected in 2025.

# Do The Math(s)!

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