

## Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features two pages of industry news, plus a full page from Dispense Assist.

## Dispensary help

**DISPENSE** Assist is a low-cost staffing solution with dispensary technicians available 24/7, at rates from as low as \$7.42 per hour, for services that include compounding, DAAs and any other required tasks - see **p3**.

## Isotretinoin PI/CMI warnings upgraded

**THE** Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has advised that the product information (PI) and consumer medicine information (CMI) leaflets for acne medication isotretinoin (Roaccutane and generics) contain updated safety information with regards to mental health and sexual disorders.

The update includes: new advice to conduct a mental health assessment for all patients before starting isotretinoin; how to manage mood-related changes; and new warnings and advice about sexual health-related side effects.

Health professionals are advised to look out for potential psychiatric and sexual disorders with isotretinoin, especially in adolescents, and prescribers should assess patients' mental health and their family history of

## APC welcomes new leadership

**THE** Australian Pharmacy Council (APC) has welcomed the appointment of Professor Rhonda Clifford as the incoming Chair of the APC Accreditation Committee.

Prof Clifford (**pictured**) will assume the role of Accreditation Committee Chair from Apr 2025, replacing Professor Nick Shaw, who has concluded three terms as Chair.

Prof Clifford joined the Accreditation Committee in 2016, the APC Board in 2017 and has served as Deputy Chair of the Accreditation Committee since 2019.

"We are thrilled to welcome



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someone of such high regard and experience as Rhonda," said APC CEO Bronwyn Clark.

"Rhonda has been a valued member of APC for many years and is known for her calm and collaborative leadership.

"As a highly respected academic leader, she brings a wealth of perspectives from her role at UWA across allied health.

"Although Nick's departure leaves big shoes to fill, we are confident that we are in excellent hands with Rhonda," Clark said.

Clark gave thanks for the work Prof Shaw has undertaken with APC over a long period of time.

"Nick has been part of the APC family for nearly 20 years - both as an APC Board Director and more recently as Chair of the APC Accreditation Committee," she said.

"I have been so privileged to have worked under his guidance for much of this time.

"He is the consummate professional, leader and gentleman, and his legacy in advancing quality in pharmacy education will continue.

"I will miss him and wish him all the best in his impending retirement," Clark concluded. *KB*

## PSA leading in QUM and meds safety

**THE** Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) has secured involvement in six key health professional projects and one consumer-focused initiative under the Australian Government's recently announced Quality Use of Diagnostics, Therapeutics and Pathology (QUDPT) grants.

These projects further build on PSA's ongoing leadership in QUM initiatives, providing best-practice guidance to pharmacists, healthcare professionals and consumers to improve safe and effective medicine use in Australia.

In this grant round, the PSA is involved in projects spanning some of the nation's most pressing health issues, including palliative care, polypharmacy and osteoporosis (*PD* 03 Apr).

The projects will ensure that consumers and health professionals have access to the latest evidence-based guidance on the safe and effective use of medicines.



## Join the brand that cares about Education and Support

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Wendy McKay, Network Partner, TerryWhite Chemmart Drouin

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## Dispensary Corner

**JAPANESE** scientists have come to the alarming conclusion that a lack of sex or sexual interest has a direct correlation in a higher risk of death, cancer and other long-term illnesses.

Published in medical journal *PLOS One*, the Yamagata University study looked at health data from 7,500 men and 11,000 women aged over 40 and found a lack of sex doubled a man's risk of an early death.

The results came even after factoring in underlying health conditions and vices such as alcohol, smoking, obesity and a lack of exercise.

Data from a separate study also found celibate men had an increased risk of cancer and other long-term illnesses but were less likely to suffer from a heart attack.

More specifically, men not having sex were found to be up to 72% more likely to die from cancer, but in a curious twist were not found to be at an increased risk of developing it.

It was revealed that women were more than twice as likely to have a lower libido, but were not at risk of an early death.

The study also found men reporting a lack of a sexual interest were more likely to drink more, laugh less, have diabetes, lower levels of education and suffer from some kind of psychological distress.

It is worth noting that the study's findings are observational, so it cannot prove that lower libido harms men's health directly, and further research is needed.

## World Health Day family focus

**WORLD** Health Day yesterday kicked off a year-long campaign on maternal and child health, with the Pharmacy Guild of Australia recognising the role of community pharmacists in supporting families to get the healthcare they need.

Titled 'Healthy beginnings, hopeful futures', the World Health Organization's campaign will urge governments and the health community to ramp up efforts to end preventable maternal and newborn deaths, and prioritise women's longer-term health and wellbeing.

With more and more women presenting to emergency departments after being unable to see a GP, the potential for community pharmacies to provide immediate and preventative care is growing, said the Guild.

"Maternal and child health can be unpredictable, but whether you're experiencing your first pregnancy or raising your third child, knowing you've got professional care on-call can make all the difference," Guild President Trent Twomey said.

"Common issues like uncomplicated UTIs and swimmer's ear are now just a pharmacy



trip away from treatment, saving time and money for busy families," he added.

And with pharmacists' increased role in oral contraceptive supply, Family Planning Alliance Australia CEO Daile Kelleher emphasised the importance of making reproductive healthcare more accessible.

"Across the world, women, girls and other priority populations experience restricted or no access to information and services about their reproductive health and rights," Kelleher said.

"Family Planning Alliance Australia welcomes any movement to provide healthcare to people closer to their homes and community, and offer real choice in their treatments." *KB*

More on World Health Day [HERE](#).

## Guild Victoria calls for free flu shots

**WITH** around double the number of flu cases already recorded in Victoria compared to the same time last year, the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, Victoria Branch, is urging the State Government to fund a free flu vaccination program in community pharmacies for this and future flu seasons.

"Free flu vaccines will eliminate the cost barrier for patients and ensure all Victorians have access to affordable vaccines

during the cost-of-living crisis," said Victorian Branch President, George Tambassis.

"Flu vaccinations are an important preventative health measure to protect people against contracting the flu, which often leads to hospitalisation placing further pressure on already overstretched emergency departments," he said, adding it would represent "a significant investment in the health of all Victorians".

## Diabetes meds reduce dementia

**TWO** new studies published today in *JAMA Neurology* have confirmed previous observations that glucagon-like peptide-1 receptor agonists (GLP-1RAs) and sodium-glucose cotransporter-2 inhibitors (SGLT2is) reduce the risk of Alzheimer's and related dementias in people with type 2 diabetes.

One study used electronic health record data from almost 100,000 people to compare GLP-1RAs, which include semaglutide and dulaglutide, SGLT2is, such as dapagliflozin and empagliflozin, and other glucose-lowering drugs.

GLP-1RAs and SGLT2is both reduced the risk of dementias relative to other glucose-lowering drugs over a follow-up period of up to four years.

The other study was a systematic review and meta-analysis of 26 randomised clinical trials including around 165,000 patients.

It found that GLP-1RAs were associated with a statistically significant reduction in dementia or cognitive impairment, but not SGLT2is.

While the mechanism for dementia prevention is not known at this stage, both classes of drugs have been demonstrated to reduce the inflammation (a key driver of Alzheimer's disease) and reduce vascular risk (a key driver of vascular dementia) more than would be expected by the sugar control alone.

Experts recommended caution in interpreting the study results, pending ongoing randomised trials in this area.

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