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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features three pages of news, plus a full page from Fefol.

Better absorption

FEFOL iron and folic acid delayed release capsules with iron sulphate are ideal for treating iron deficiency.

They offer better absorption than ferric iron and the delayed release helps reduce constipation - see more on p4.

Long COVID med on the horizon

AUSTRALIAN researchers have demonstrated that a new drug compound can prevent long COVID symptoms in mice, which could lead to a future treatment for the condition.

The PLpro inhibitor also treats acute COVID better than Paxlovid, the current leading treatment, noted the team from the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute in Melbourne.

The next stage is to develop a version of the drug that can be used in humans.

More ADHD drug shortages

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has advised there is a shortage of Ritalin and Artige immediate-release tablets, with a shortage of Ritalin LA capsules anticipated.

This is in addition to current shortages of Concerta and Methylphenidate-Teva XR products, which are expected to last until the end of the year.

The Ritalin LA capsule shortage is predicted from 21 Apr 2025 for the 30 mg strength, and from May, June and July 2025 for the other strengths.

These medicines are used to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

"We acknowledge the concerns and difficulties caused by such shortages, especially due to the specific requirements for prescribing and dispensing methylphenidate hydrochloride," the TGA stated.

"We hope this notification will give patients and prescribers the opportunity to plan ahead.

"We urge patients who are affected by these shortages to speak with their pharmacist about their supply of medicine.

"We also suggest patients consult



with their prescribers early about their treatment plan, as they may need a new prescription."

The TGA noted that another methylphenidate medicine remains available, and it has also approved overseas-registered Concerta tablets for supply.

Pharmacists can order these alternative products and supply them to patients using existing prescriptions for Concerta.

However, overseas-registered section 19A Concerta tablets are not PBS-subsidised, the TGA pointed out.

Other medicines approved to treat ADHD are also available, and pharmacists should advise patients to contact their doctor if their prescribed medicine is unavailable and substitutable alternatives are either inappropriate or unavailable.

More information is [HERE](#). KB

Aussie OTC meds among cheapest

RESEARCH comparing the cost of over-the-counter (OTC) medicines in various OECD countries has placed Australia among the cheapest.

International insurer William Russell looked at 10 popular expat locations and checked the prices of 10 common OTC medications, including paracetamol, aspirin, laxatives and nasal spray, at the most prominent online chemists and pharmacies.

France was the cheapest, with an average price per item of A\$5.57, with Norway the most expensive at \$17.22.

The average price in Australia was \$7.96, which was fourth cheapest overall.

The high cost in Norway was attributed to price, safety and quality regulation, as well as high wages, cost of living and lack of retail competition.

Switzerland was almost as high, at \$16.37, for similar reasons.

Portugal had the third highest average cost at \$13.74, likely because of its reliance on imported medicines.

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Dismay as Qld pill tests are dropped

THE Queensland Government has decided not to renew funding for two pill testing sites, forcing them to close.

This is despite new evidence that nitazenes, lethal synthetic opioids, are spreading in Australia, and have been detected in wastewater and counterfeit pharmaceuticals - Queensland pill testing service CheQpoint discovered nitazene in two samples of oxycodone purchased online.

Advocates point out that the pill testing service is not only utilised by recreational drug users, but also by people buying cheap prescription medicines online from overseas who are concerned about safety.

The Australian Medical Association (AMA) and Royal Australian College of GPs (RACGP) have called on the Queensland Government to reverse course and back the state's drug testing sites.

"Drug testing services like CheQpoint save lives, and I call on the Government to support and fund these vital detection services," said RACGP President, Dr Michael Wright.

The service was introduced a year ago by the Palaszczuk Government, but the current government says it sends the wrong message.

"What testing does is send a message that there is a component of drugs that is safe to do, and there is not," said Premier David Crisafulli.

Diabetes underestimated

NEW research suggests that the number of Australians living with diabetes may be up to 35% higher than previously estimated, raising critical questions about the size of one of Australia's most serious chronic health conditions.

The University of Sydney researchers analysed administrative data from Medicare, hospital records and pharmaceutical claims, with results suggesting there could be more than two million Australians living with diabetes, many of whom are currently missing from the official diabetes register.

Individuals diagnosed with diabetes voluntarily register to the National Diabetes Services Scheme (NDSS) through their healthcare professional, affording them access to subsidised services and products for the management of diabetes such as insulin pump consumables, syringes and needles, and blood glucose testing strips.

Lead author Emma Cox said the research highlights a much larger and more diverse population living with diabetes, particularly older Australians, people in remote areas, and culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

"This isn't just a data issue, it's a public health issue," Cox said.

"A significant number of Australians are missing from national statistics.

"That makes it harder to plan services, allocate funding, and



deliver prevention strategies where they're most needed."

The study also found that many people who are living with type 2 diabetes are managing the condition through lifestyle changes or medications like metformin, and may be less likely to register with the NDSS.

"If people aren't visible in the data, they're also invisible to policy and funding decisions," said Professor Grant Brinkworth, Director of Research at Diabetes Australia.

The research reinforces the importance of improved screening, earlier diagnosis, and greater health system integration to ensure every person affected by diabetes is counted, supported and resourced.

Diabetes Australia said it is committed to working with the Australian Government and health sector to ensure barriers to registration are removed, with appropriate investment in the NDSS to enable timely registration and accurate reporting.

The full paper is [HERE](#). KB

Yoga helps knee OA

YOGA may help reduce pain and improve physical function in people with knee osteoarthritis, according to an Australian study published today.

The team compared outcomes from two groups of almost 60 people, with one doing an evidence-based strength training program and the other a yoga program, and found both were similarly effective.

The 24-week programs comprised 12 weeks taking place in-person and at home, with the final 12 weeks at home only.

At the end of the study, the yoga group had modestly better improvement in some aspects of pain, physical function, stiffness and walking speed compared to the strengthening group, but looking at knee pain specifically, there was no difference between the two groups.

People in the yoga group were slightly more likely to stick with the program, especially the final 12 weeks in the home.

"Exercise therapy is recommended by all international guidelines as a first-line treatment for knee OA to improve pain and function," wrote the authors.

"Overall, these findings suggest that integrating yoga as an alternative or complementary exercise option in clinical practice may help in managing knee OA," they concluded.

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Dispensary Corner

THE age-old question of whether it's better to shower in the morning or the night has apparently just been solved.

In fact, skipping a before-bedtime shower in favour of one when you wake up is actually pretty bad for you, according to medical experts in the UK.

Giuseppe Aragona, medical advisor at Prescription Doctor, said that avoiding night showers results in your bed sheets becoming infested by bacteria picked up throughout the day.

"During the day, your body and your hair can collect airborne allergens and irritants, dirt and grime, especially in the summer months from pollen, chemicals and sweat," he told *Glamour UK*.

"So if you go to bed without showering, these will then transfer to your bed and sheets and may not only promote dirty bedding and nighttime allergies but could also cause itchy, irritated and dry skin as well as facial skin issues such as acne due to dirty sheets and pillow cases from day time oil and dirt."

Not only do evening showers wash away pollutants and hydrate dry skin, they also help improve sleep quality.

Dr Jason Singh, a primary care physician in Virginia, explained in a TikTok video that a warm shower triggers the release of melatonin, a hormone that tells the body it's time to sleep.

Taking a warm shower and then drying off also mimics the body's natural cooling down process in the hours before bed, which promotes sleep.

PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

Suppliers wanting to promote products in this feature should email newproducts@pharmacydaily.com.au

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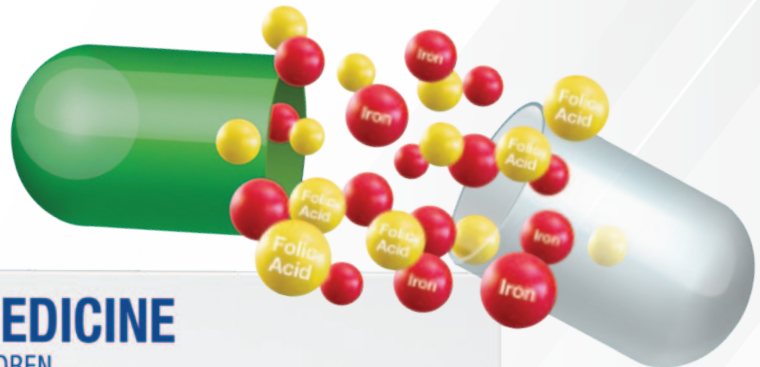
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