

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features four pages of industry news, plus a full page from Juno Labs.

Latex-free tape

BODY Plus is joining the Juno Labs stable of brands, with latex-free sports tapes available in a variety of sizes and colours.

See **page five** for more.

Send us your polle pics

WITH election campaigning drawing to a close, we'd love to hear about the local candidates and senators who have visited your pharmacy.

Send photos and an account of what took place to info@pharmacydaily.com.au.

Concerning rise in medical misinformation

MEDICAL misinformation and disinformation have increased over the past five years, leading to a decrease in patients taking medicines as prescribed and a rise in vaccine hesitancy.

A survey of 300 GPs, commissioned by Pfizer Australia, found that 97% are concerned about the growing influence of medical misinformation, having seen a shift in attitudes and behaviour among their patient community.

Among the findings were that 88% of GPs experienced an increase in patients requesting non-evidence-based treatments, 87% reported rising vaccine hesitancy and 79% reported an increase in patients not adhering to prescribed medication regimens due to misinformation and disinformation.

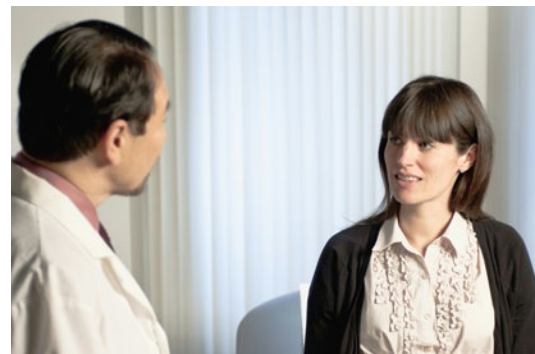
"We know that forgetfulness, cost, generally feeling better or being prescribed medicine for asymptomatic conditions can be reasons for patients not taking

medicines," Dr Krishan Thiru, Medical Director at Pfizer ANZ, told *Pharmacy Daily*.

He explained patients may not understand the importance of adherence to prescribed medicines, what they are taking it for or why it is important for their health.

"It's certainly very concerning and emphasises the importance of patient education from pharmacists dispensing medicine, as well as from those prescribing medicine," Dr Thiru said.

Commenting on the broader survey findings, Dr Thiru said, "These findings confirm what we have suspected - that medical misinformation is on the rise, and it is influencing how people think and act in relation to their health and



with their GP."

Pfizer is supporting further work with healthcare professionals to understand what they are hearing from patients and how patients' hesitation and concerns might be addressed.

To do this, Pfizer said it will partner with key stakeholders to discuss the survey findings and work together to identify solutions to support GPs and other healthcare professionals to address misinformation.

"Scientific knowledge saves lives," observed Dr Thiru. *KB*

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Protect asthma patients from flu

THE National Asthma Council Australia (NAC) and the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) are urging health professionals to talk to their asthma patients about why they need to get the flu vaccine without delay.

Predictions of a horror flu season for 2025 (**PD** 27 Mar) have made this even more critical, with between 60-70% of asthma attacks due to viral infections such as the common cold or influenza.

Clinical Associate Professor Debbie Rigby, Clinical Executive Lead at the NAC, said pharmacists play an important role in encouraging patients to get their influenza vaccine and make sure they are protected.

"Each year, 25-30% of influenza vaccines are delivered by community pharmacy, so when patients come in to fill their asthma medication script, it is the perfect time to speak to them about also getting their flu vaccine," A/Prof Rigby said.

She also pointed out that higher risk Australians, including children and adults with asthma, now have access to free influenza vaccinations under the National Immunisation Program (NIP).

PSA National President Associate Professor Fei Sim added it is important to stress that patients should act before the flu season peak.

Driving for mental health

HEAVY rain and challenging conditions did not dampen the spirits of the Life Pharmacy Group (LPG) and Independent Pharmacies of Australia (IPA) team that hit the road for the 10th annual Beyond Bitumen Rally, raising funds and awareness for Beyond Blue.

The entourage of 72 vehicles travelled almost 2,000 kilometres from Taree to Port Stephens via Grafton and Armidale over four days.

Led by IPA Group founder and Executive Director Michael Flannery, The Cavaliers raised more than \$34,000 for the charity this year, taking the fundraising honours for an individual participating car.

"We've been taking part in the Beyond Bitumen Rally for seven years now," said Founder and Executive Director of IPA Group, Michael Flannery (**pictured** right, with IPA's CTO Warwick Marx, left).

"It all started after a mate of mine shared his mental health battles and the role Beyond Blue played in supporting him during his darkest times," Flannery shared.

"It didn't take us long to find ourselves a car, and The Cavaliers was formed."

Men are three times more likely than women to take their lives in Australia, with remoteness a major contributing factor.

Growing up in regional Australia, The Cavaliers understand the importance of checking in on friends and seeking appropriate support if sad or anxious.

"Most of us grew up in the bush



and this rally is a great opportunity to hit the road with our mates, see parts of the country we may not have experienced previously, support communities along the way, and raise money for Beyond Blue," Flannery said.

"Our industry peers have always been very supportive and without them, we wouldn't have reached our fundraising target."

Flannery thanked major sponsors Life Pharmacy Group, Chemists Own of the DBG Health Group, and the Independent Pharmacies of Australia Group.

"As a team, we're very proud to have raised more than \$200,000 for the rally over the past seven years, and we're thankful for the support we've received from our colleagues, friends, and families along the way," Flannery concluded.

Since its inception, the Beyond Bitumen Rally has raised more than \$3.5 million for the charity. **KB**

Advocating for rural healthcare

RECOGNISED as Australian Pharmacist of the Year 2010 and with numerous other awards and accolades, Karalyn Huxhagen is a highly experienced community and consultant pharmacist dedicated to rural and regional healthcare.

In the latest episode of Raven's Recruitment's *Your Pharmacy Career Podcast*, Huxhagen shares her exceptional career journey, insights and experiences, which extend beyond community pharmacy to include writing and academic roles.

She discusses real-world experiences and challenges in rural pharmacy and her advocacy efforts to improve First Nations healthcare.

Having experienced burnout herself, Huxhagen gained credentials in mental health first aid and talks about the critical role pharmacists play in mental health support.

She also provides practical advice for pharmacists seeking leadership roles.

"Karalyn's extensive experience and passionate advocacy for regional healthcare are incredibly inspiring," said Heidi Dariz, GM of Raven's Recruitment.

"Her insights are invaluable for pharmacists looking to make a meaningful impact in their communities," she added.

Listen to the podcast **HERE**.

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IPA hires new CCO

INDEPENDENT Pharmacies Australia (IPA) has hired Jonathan Layton as its Chief Commercial Officer to spearhead its latest growth objectives.

Layton (**pictured**) brings 25 years of executive leadership experience across businesses in Australia and Canada.

He moves from his previous role as Executive Director of Chemmart Pharmacy - now Terry White Chemmart - where he played a major role in the brand's expansion, doubling the number of stores and boosting profitability.



Med cannabis and driving safety

AN AUSTRALIAN study on long-term medicinal cannabis users has found that consumption does not affect performance across a range of cognitive tests involved with driving.

However, medicinal cannabis did lead to poorer performance on a test of visuomotor attention - the coordination between vision and movement - highlighting the potential sensitivity of this task to its consumption.

The findings, published today, support the potential role of tolerance in mitigating effects in medical cannabis patients.

The study included 41 patients using cannabis oil and 37 using vaporised flowers.

The authors were keen to investigate how medicinal cannabis may acutely influence the ability to undertake complex and safety-sensitive tasks, such as driving.

Their performance on a battery of tests measuring information processing speed, divided and sustained attention, inhibitory

control and mental flexibility was compared when no cannabis was taken and 90 minutes after taking medicinal cannabis.

"Scant research has examined the effects of THC on cognitive function among medicinal cannabis populations, who are likely to display a tolerance to the psychoactive effects of THC through frequent and ongoing use," wrote the authors.

"The present study suggests that medicinal cannabis patients with long-term and frequent usage patterns can present with tolerance to the effects of cannabis flower and oil consumption in some areas of cognitive function (namely inhibitory control, divided and sustained attention)."

"The question of whether the reduction to [visuomotor attention] performance translates into functional reductions in driving capacity needs to be addressed in future work," they suggested.

Read the paper **HERE**. KB

New OP guideline

NEW Australian guidelines on osteoporosis (OP) stop short of recommending widespread screening for the condition, saying there is a lack of supporting evidence.

The guidelines also state that calcium and vitamin D supplements are more effective for people with a deficiency, and they should not be considered for routine use in healthy, non-institutionalised people or as first-line treatment for people with OP.

The importance of recognising patients with 'imminent' or 'very high' fracture risk is also highlighted, as this group may require early pharmacotherapy to activate bone formation.

The use of a fracture risk assessment tool such as FRAX for early recognition of poor bone health is encouraged.

See the guideline **HERE**.

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Dive into our latest podcast episode featuring **Karalyn Huxhagen** - A Career of Care; on Pharmacy, Education, and Rural Health Innovation.

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Dispensary Corner

MOST of us wouldn't turn to a glass of bubbly to ease heart health worries, but apparently you wouldn't be amiss if you did.

New research out of Canada has arrived at the surprising discovery that drinking champagne and white wine may drive down the risk of a sudden cardiac arrest.

The study, published in the *Canadian Journal of Cardiology*, found that higher consumption of champagne or white wine, more fruit, maintaining a positive mood, healthy weight management and keeping blood pressure under control all have a positive effect on the heart.

The findings also cast doubt over the belief that red wine is better for you than white.

"One of the study's most intriguing findings is the cardio-protective effect associated with champagne and white wine consumption, questioning long-held assumptions about the specificity of red wine's cardio-protective properties," explained Nicholas Grubic from the University of Toronto.

"Research on the underlying mechanisms remains unclear, but these findings reinforce the idea that the benefits of moderate alcohol consumption may be more complex than previously assumed."

Don't indulge in the bubbly just yet though, as the fresh findings conflict with current health advice from the Australian Heart Foundation, which states: "There is no safe amount of alcohol for heart health".

PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

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

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