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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features four pages of news, our Beauty & Wellness feature plus a full page from Fend.

Med cannabis sites flout ad rules

AUSTRALIANS are increasingly using medicinal cannabis to treat long-term health conditions such as chronic pain, anxiety and cancer - despite a lack of evidence for its effectiveness.

Some people go to their GP for a prescription, which they take to a pharmacy where the product is sold as an unapproved medicine.

However, many bypass their GP, buying it online from private medicinal cannabis clinics after a telehealth appointment with the clinic's doctor.

Research published this week in the *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry* revealed that around half of these clinics are in breach of strict TGA advertising rules that apply to prescription-only unapproved medicines.

The team analysed the websites of 54 private medicinal cannabis clinics in Australia, checking for any references to medicinal cannabis, health claims, shared information from other sources about medicinal cannabis, or patient testimonials.

These are considered forms of promotion and are prohibited under TGA advertising guidelines.

Around 47% of clinics were considered in 'high breach' of regulations, by breaching two or more guidelines.

There were also safety concerns.

"Websites often allowed people to assess their own eligibility for medical cannabis," the authors said.

"Self-assessment may mislead people into believing they would benefit from it, inadvertently



'coaching' them on which conditions might warrant a prescription.

"Self-assessment might also lead people to believe they require more medicinal cannabis than is medically necessary," they warned.

Citing Australian Institute of Health and Welfare data, the authors noted there was a 10-fold increase in the number of people receiving prescriptions from 1.8% of all medicinal cannabis users in 2019 to 22% in 2022-23, suggesting improved access and greater acceptability of medicinal medicine within the healthcare system.

But that still leaves around three-quarters of patients buying it from these other sources.

"Medicinal cannabis clinics have undoubtedly improved patient access," wrote the authors.

"However," they added, "we need more stringent monitoring and regulation of how these clinics market themselves.

"Even if clinics are operating within the law, they also need to operate ethically to protect public health by prioritising patients' wellbeing over profit."

Read the full paper [HERE](#). KB

Call for award nominations

PRECEDENT Productions is calling for nominations for its 2025 Australian Small Business Champion Awards.

The awards honour the outstanding achievements and contributions of the Australian small business community, with 2025 marking the 27th year of the program.

There are over 100 categories, including a pharmacy category, and it is free to enter.

Applications close 10 Feb, and winners will be announced at two glittering red-carpet gala events at The Star Sydney on 28 and 29 Mar 2025.

Camden Day and Night Pharmacy was recognised in the 2024 Australian Small Business Champion Awards, taking top gong in the Pharmacy category.

"Small businesses play a critical role in creating jobs and driving economic growth across a wide range of industries, often earning the title of the backbone of the national economy," said Steve Loe, Founder and MD of Precedent Productions.

"The Awards provide an invaluable opportunity for operators to have their work evaluated by an expert panel, gain industry recognition, and benchmark themselves against the best in their field," said Loe.

For more information about the awards, and to nominate a business, click [HERE](#).

Fends off insects

FEND Insect Repellent range offers DEET-free protection from mosquitoes and sandflies for customers.

It is hypoallergenic and can be used on infants from two months - for more information see [page five](#).

Let's make it here

BOOSTING Australia's long-term "health sovereignty" by investing in local medicine manufacturing is the subject of an op-ed by Royal Australasian College of Physicians President Jennifer Martin in today's *Sydney Morning Herald*.

"Australia could rely less on imports and have more control over medicine supply while providing jobs for communities," Martin argues, urging the federal government to step in.

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Meds behind ART birth defects

BIRTH defects linked with pregnancies achieved through assisted reproductive technology (ART) may be due to increased exposure to teratogenic medicines, an Australian study suggests.

Pregnancies resulting from in vitro fertilisation (IVF) and intracytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI) had the highest exposure to Category D and X medicines that can potentially harm the fetus during the first trimester, the researchers found.

The study used data from more than 57,000 pregnancies over a two-year period, including women who used ART and those who conceived naturally.

The study found that 4.9% of the ART pregnancies were exposed to Category D medication in the first trimester, compared to only 0.6% of naturally conceived pregnancies.

The trend persisted in later trimesters, with 3.4% of ART pregnancies exposed to Category D medications versus 0.6% of naturally conceived pregnancies.

Exposure to Category X medications (causing the most harm during pregnancy) was low across all groups and trimesters, at less than 0.5% of pregnancies.

“These differences in exposure are primarily linked to medications used as additional treatment following ART to prevent repeat miscarriages or failed implantation, rather than medications to treat underlying chronic conditions,” said



study lead Dr Anna Kemp-Casey from UniSA.

“For example, ART pregnancies, during the study period were more often exposed to progestogens like medroxyprogesterone acetate, which may have been used to treat threatened or recurrent miscarriages,” Dr Kemp said.

The five most frequently used Category D and X medications across all pregnancies regardless of conception status were paroxetine, lamotrigine, valproic acid, carbamazepine and nicotine dependence treatments.

Researchers said the findings demonstrate that the vast majority of IVF babies are healthy, and do not suggest that ART pregnancies are unsafe.

However, they underscore the importance of personalised medical care for women undergoing ART treatment and close monitoring for women in early pregnancy.

Read the full paper [HERE](#). KB

‘Natural’ birth control link to abortion

THERE has been an increase in women seeking abortions in the UK who report using no contraception or ‘fertility awareness’ strategies, according to international research published this week.

The team compared self-reported contraceptive use for patients seeking an abortion in the UK in 2018 and in 2023.

Use of the pill, mini pill, implants, patches and vaginal rings has given way to more ‘natural’ methods, such as period tracking apps that highlight monthly peak fertility/ovulation, the findings indicate.

They say the reported use of ‘fertility awareness’ - tracking the menstrual cycle and avoiding sex during ovulation - increased from 0.4% to 2.5% from 2018 to 2023, while those using no contraception increased from 56% to 70%.

Reported use of hormonal contraception dropped from 19% to 11% and the use of long-acting reversible long-term contraception such as IUDs also

dropped over this time.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that women are increasingly turning to more ‘natural’ fertility awareness methods of contraception, largely driven by social media, the researchers said.

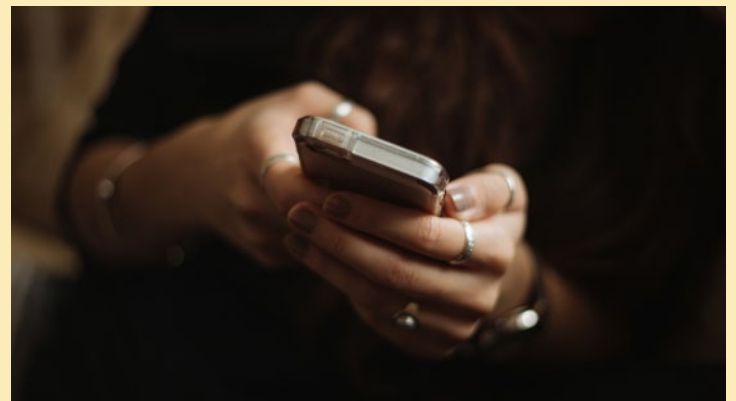
However, they noted it is an observational study, precluding firm conclusions to be drawn about cause and effect.

“While the rise in abortion rates is multifactorial, one aspect that needs scrutiny is any change in contraceptive use, and particularly this surge in the use of ehealth, including fertility apps, period tracker apps, and natural family planning apps,” they said.

“The possible relationship between these less effective methods of contraception and unplanned pregnancy requires further investigation.

“However, informing the public about the efficacy of such methods in order to facilitate informed contraceptive choices is needed,” they concluded.

Read the full paper [HERE](#).



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Editor's Choice: Runway Room rises up the beauty scene ranks

AUSTRALIAN makeup brand Runway Room has made waves in the beauty scene after launching in 2023 with a limited range at Direct Chemist Outlet (DCO) (PD 09 Oct 2023).

According to the brand, it has achieved record-breaking sales in-store as well as online in just over a year, rising up the ranks to become DCO's best-performing cosmetic line, also expanding into Myer last year.

Runway Beauty features the Highest Performing Cosmetic Line (Online - 2023 & 2024) and Highest Performing Like-for-Like Cosmetic Range (2023 & 2024), and as well as its best-selling primer, lip product, mascara, lip



gloss, and cosmetic brush.

The brand attributes its success to its sustainable packaging, skin-friendly formulas and affordability, and has a loyal customer base.

"Our mission has always been to provide premium Australian-made

makeup that is ethical, affordable, and effective," Founder and CEO Alex Fevola shared.

"The incredible response from customers at both DCO and Myer inspires us to keep innovating and delivering the very best."

Bondi Sands at the AO



AUSSIE sunscreen brand Bondi Sands is set to give away 600,000 samples of Bondi Sands Sport SPF 50 Wet Skin Sunscreen to tennis fans attending this year's Australian Open.

The initiative is part of a renewed partnership between Tennis Australia and Bondi Sands, which is stocked in pharmacies including Chemist Warehouse.

"As Bondi Sands has become a globally recognised brand and market leader in sun care, extending our partnership with Tennis Australia for the Australian Open has formed a major part of our strategy for the category," said the brand's Co-Founder and President, Shaun Wilson.

"Our team has been working hard to continue delivering sun protection to fans at the Australian Open, and 2024 will be bigger and better than ever," he said.

From 14-28 Jan, Bondi Sands will have misting stations and sunscreen sampling across the Australian Open precinct at Melbourne Park.

Glitz minus the guilt

PERFECT for consumers who are looking for safe and eco-conscious glamour, EcoGlitz - Australia's first truly plastic-free glitter - has burst onto the scene.

Handcrafted from quartz crystals in a certified-organic, plant-based gel, EcoGlitz stays put until the user is ready to wash it off with water.

Safe for skin, hair and eyes, the organic, vegan glitter is available in 20 colours and retails for \$39.

EcoGlitz is currently stocked in around 30 shops in AU and NZ, and is also interested in stocking in pharmacies - find out more **HERE**.



Makeup that is actually good for your skin



EMBODY Beauty Cosmetics, an Australian-made beauty brand, is showcasing its Serum Foundation.

The product combines a lightweight formulation with skin-caring ingredients including hyaluronic acid and pomegranate seed extract, creating a 'skin-like' finish and natural glow.

The serum (RRP\$59) is vegan

and cruelty-free, and comes in five different shades.

"Our Serum Foundation is more than just a beauty product - it's a statement," enthused Barbara Cafagna, Founder of Embody Beauty Cosmetics.

"It encourages women to embrace who they are, no filters required," she added.

In September 2022, Cafagna launched Embody Beauty Cosmetics, which was 10 years in the making and inspired by the 'clean' beauty movement.

The Serum Foundation is now available online here as well as at selected retailers, with Cafagna also hoping to bring her brand to pharmacy shelves.

For stockist enquiries, email hello@embodybeautyco.com.

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Dispensary Corner

IN NEWS that will surprise no one, more than half of travellers are not keen on the idea of weighing in before they catch a flight, even if it could help the environment, a study has found.

The survey of 1,000 US air travellers sought their views on weight-based airfare pricing, as a way to help airlines cut back on emissions.

It's not clear exactly how this would work - presumably saving a few bucks incentivises passengers to lose weight before paying for their flight?

Nearly 60% of participants expressed concerns about weight-based policies due to potential fairness issues and the risk of discrimination.

Travellers more open to the idea tended to be younger, have higher incomes or were frequent flyers, while older, lower-income travellers were less keen.

"We wanted to explore how air travel could be made more sustainable, especially considering the weight we carry - both personal weight and baggage that often travels back and forth," said one of the researchers, Hospitality Professor Markus Schuckert.

"We wondered if reducing weight overall could contribute to more eco-friendly air travel and began questioning whether passengers might accept pricing that reflects this," Professor Schuckert said.

"Some airlines have tried or considered weight-based policies, but the main roadblock remains ethical concerns, which make it difficult to even discuss."

GPs urge govt action on ADHD role

THE Royal Australian College of GPs is urging the New South Wales Government to prioritise reforms to improve access to support and treatment for people with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) from GPs after the mass resignation of psychiatrists.

Around 200 psychiatrists in NSW's public health system have submitted their resignations amid an ongoing pay dispute with the state government, and plan to leave their positions next week.

RACGP NSW Chair Dr Rebekah Hoffman said: "GPs should be able to initiate and prescribe medications for people living with ADHD, and manage their care."

"Allowing GPs to give more support to people living with ADHD will improve health and wellbeing for patients, cut wait times and costs, and ease pressure on the health system."

Dr Hoffman observed that psychiatrists have raised safety concerns due to the state's understaffed workforce, and allowing GPs a greater role in ADHD care will not only help their patients but also ease pressure on their psychiatrist colleagues.

"The RACGP is calling for a nationally consistent approach for ADHD prescribing that helps adults and children with ADHD access appropriate and early support from their GP, including reducing regulatory barriers for prescribing stimulant medications."

"In NSW, GPs have to apply for approval in order to be able to prescribe stimulant medications, and they can only do it if they're working in rural or remote communities, or if they're practising predominantly in paediatrics," Dr Hoffman said.

In its response to the National





ADHD Inquiry last year, the federal government gave in-principle support for adults and children with ADHD to access appropriate and early support from their GP and reduced regulatory barriers for prescribing stimulant medications (**PD 16 Dec 2024**).

"Enabling GPs across Australia to better support people living with ADHD will increase access to assessment and treatment, improve the health and wellbeing of patients, as well as reduce wait times and costs, and ease

pressure elsewhere in the health system," RACGP President, Dr Michael Wright, said in a statement welcoming the government response to the inquiry.

"With new ADHD clinical guidelines from the Australasian ADHD Professionals Association, GPs have a comprehensive, evidence-based resource to assist diagnosis and management of ADHD - we can help improve access and reduce costs for patients and ease our stretched health system," he added. *KB*

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