

## Today's issue of PD

**Pharmacy Daily** today features two pages of news, plus a full page from Galderma's Differin.

## Retinoid action

**DIFFERIN** Acne Treatment contains the potent retinoid Adapalene to treat and prevent acne and restore the skin's natural texture and tone. Available over the counter - learn more on **page three**.

## Arrotex wins big

**THE** 2025 Pharmaceutical Research Innovation and Marketing Excellence (PRIME) Awards were held last week, with Arrotex taking out the Pharmacists Choice of Pharma Company of the Year award. Arrotex also won Excellence in Patient or Customer Support for its SupportEd Osteoporosis Patient Program, in partnership with PharmaPrograms, and Best In-Field Customer Solution - Team for Rebuilding Osteoporosis Care in the NT.

# Pharmacists key to maternal vax uptake

**LEADING** health experts marked Whooping Cough Day on 08 Nov by calling for national maternal immunisation targets to lift vaccination rates in pregnancy and strengthen coordination across the health system.

With maternal vaccination rates for influenza and pertussis falling in Australia since 2021, vaccine-preventable infections are rising. Pertussis notifications jumped to almost 57,000 in 2024, more than seven times the five-year average, and included two infant deaths. Recent data shows fewer than half of pregnant women receive both the flu and pertussis vaccines, with coverage varying depending on jurisdiction and health setting - coverage remains lowest among younger mothers, First Nations women, and those from lower socioeconomic groups. On the other hand, promising levels of uptake of the maternal RSV vaccine on the National Immunisation Program in early 2025 suggest there is an opportunity to enhance uptake of other maternal vaccinations. In a new *Maternal Immunisation*



in Australia whitepaper, developed by Biointelligence (on behalf of Pfizer Australia) and the Immunisation Foundation of Australia, experts have highlighted the success of childhood immunisation targets but point out there is no equivalent for maternal vaccination.

Experts said targets will "provide a unifying focus for governments, health services and practitioners", and "create the impetus to lift maternal vaccine uptake nationally and drive accountability amongst all stakeholders to deliver better outcomes for mothers and babies".

One of the challenges impeding better uptake of maternal immunisation in Australia, as outlined in the whitepaper, is the fragmentation of maternal vaccination delivery, which is spread across general practice, obstetrics, midwifery, pharmacy and public health.

The whitepaper is calling for investment in system integration and workforce support, ensuring vaccination providers - including pharmacists - have the training, time and resources to discuss vaccination with pregnant women confidently and deliver it consistently.

"Pharmacists are uniquely placed to help make maternal vaccination easier and more accessible for women," said Anna Theophilos,

Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) Vaccination Ambassador.

"With pharmacies now an established part of Australia's immunisation network, there's a real opportunity to strengthen access and consistency across the country," she continued.

"National maternal immunisation targets would help bring all parts of the system together from general practice to community pharmacy to protect more mothers and babies."

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### Dispensary Corner

**IF YOU** had to guess which common beverage could play a key role in protecting against atrial fibrillation (AF), you probably wouldn't pick coffee.

And yet...research from the University of Adelaide and University of California, San Francisco (ACSF), has found that AF patients who drank at least one cup of coffee per day had a 39% reduction in the risk of AF episodes compared to those who avoided caffeine.

The study involved 200 AF patients from Australia and North America, with half the group required to consume at least one cup of coffee or espresso shot each day, while the other half had to abstain from coffee and caffeinated products altogether.

Patients were then monitored regularly over six months, with any episodes of AF verified.

"[The finding] is surprising as it goes against the common assumption by doctors and patients that coffee worsens heart rhythm disorders such as AF," said first author Professor Christopher X Wong from the University of Adelaide.

"Doctors have always recommended patients with problematic AF minimise their coffee intake, but this trial suggests that coffee is not only safe but likely to be protective."

The finding could be due to increased physical activity - which improves AF - as a result of consuming caffeine, its diuretic effect, which reduces blood pressure, or its anti-inflammatory properties.

## PSA leads on QUM agenda

**THE** Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) released its 2025 Strategic Projects Impact Report last week, highlighting its key role in progressing the safe use of medicines and demonstrating collaborative, evidence-based initiatives.

The PSA's projects team has delivered more than 40 initiatives this year in collaboration with over 30 partners, cementing PSA's role as the national peak body driving the Quality Use of Medicines (QUM) agenda.

Pharmacists have been well supported through changes, with key education projects around palliative care, mental health first aid training and vaping reform.

National PSA President, Associate Professor Fei Sim, said translating policy into practice and equipping pharmacists to lead innovation has resulted in a future where pharmacists are fully enabled to provide person-centred care across all areas of practice.

"The Impact Report demonstrates PSA's unwavering commitment to excellence, collaboration, and measurable national impact in improving the quality use of medicines," she said.

"Pharmacists play a vital role in supporting symptom management,



medicines optimisation, and continuity of care at the end of life, yet their expertise has not been systematically embedded across community and primary care settings.

"In addition to driving innovation through projects and pilots, we are committed to supporting the pharmacy workforce with education, training, and practice support regardless of policy decisions.

"This ensures pharmacists and pharmacy support staff have the confidence to meet regulatory requirements, ensuring clarity, consistency, and alignment with the needs of both consumers and our health system."

The report is available [HERE](#).

## Qld hits 5,000 consultations milestone

**QUEENSLAND** community pharmacy has achieved a major milestone, with 5,000 patient consultations delivered through the state's full scope program.

Chris Owen, President of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, Qld, said it is exciting to see the program continue to grow.

"The ability of community pharmacists to practice at this

fuller scope began as a North Queensland pilot and has now expanded across the state, offering Queenslanders greater access to comprehensive health care services," Owen said.

"Community pharmacists are providing timely care where patients live, work and play, making a real difference to health outcomes across the state."

## Pharmacy Board responds

**THE** Pharmacy Board of Australia is planning further engagement with the Australian Medical Association (AMA) and the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) around its proposal for pharmacy prescribing.

The doctor's groups last week accused the Board of suppressing debate on the issue (*PD* 07 Nov), but a spokesperson for the board has told *Pharmacy Daily* that further opportunities for consultation and engagement are planned, including an open public consultation scheduled to commence late this year and continue into early 2026.

"The Board is committed to a transparent and inclusive consultation that recognises the important voice of the medical profession and our shared interest in the safety and quality of prescribing in Australia," they said.

"We acknowledge the long-standing concerns from the medical profession around potential fragmentation of care, conflicts of interest and clinical governance.

"These issues will be a key focus of the consultation and the Board's consideration in preparing a draft registration standard and guidelines for the consideration of Health Ministers," they stated.

The Board also noted Ahpra's recent update of the National Prescribing Competencies Framework, one of the guiding documents used for the education and regulation of prescribers and promotes best practice.

# Differin treats acne

with a potent retinoid: Adapalene.

Differin is the first (and only)<sup>1</sup> acne fighting retinoid available over the counter.

Adapalene works in three ways:<sup>2,3</sup>

## 1 Treats

acne deep in the pores at the source, to reduce redness and underlying inflammation

## 2 Prevents

new acne from forming by increasing cell turnover

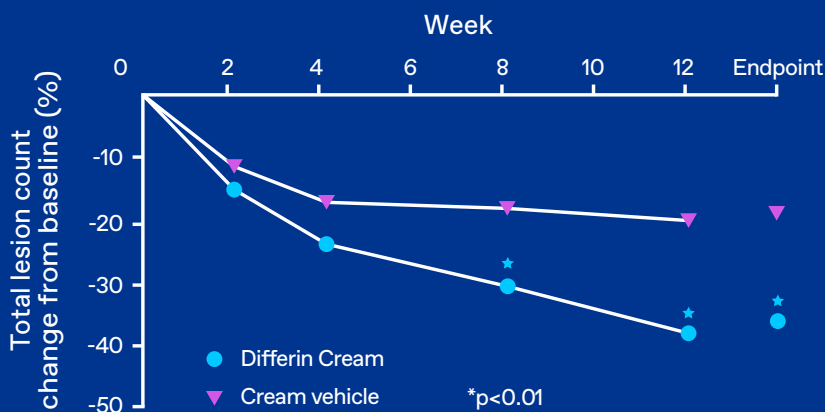
## 3 Restores

your skin's natural texture and tone

Acne visibly improves after just 2 weeks.<sup>4</sup>



Improvement in total lesion count with Differin Cream vs vehicle observed from 2 weeks.<sup>4,5</sup>



Differin Cream is clinically proven to:

- Reduce visible signs of acne within 2 weeks
- Shows significant reduction within 12 weeks ( $p < 0.01$ )<sup>4</sup>

In a meta-analysis of 5 pivotal studies<sup>5</sup>, adapalene 0.1% gel was shown to be:

- As effective as tretinoin (0.025%) cream in reducing total lesion count at 12 weeks
- Superior in local tolerability compared to tretinoin (0.025%) cream<sup>5</sup>

Who can be recommended Differin?

- Differin is indicated for the treatment of mild to moderate comedonal and papulopustular acne (blackheads, whiteheads & pimples) of the face, chest or back
- Can be recommended from 12 years to adult
- Breastfeeding – can be used however should not be applied to the chest
- Pregnancy – don't use

**ASK YOUR PHARMACIST ABOUT THIS PRODUCT. ALWAYS FOLLOW THE DIRECTIONS FOR USE.**

Apply a thin film to the affected areas once a day before bedtime and after washing. Avoid the eyes, lips and mucous membranes. The affected areas should be dry before application.

1. ARTG listing as at 15th October 2023. 2. Differin® Gel & Cream Consumer Medicines Information 2020. 3. Gollnick H et al. J Am Acad Dermatol 2003; 49(1 Suppl): S1+ S37). 4. Lucky A et al. Cutis 2001; 68 (4 Suppl): 34–40). 5. Cunliffe WJ et al. A comparison of the efficacy and tolerability of adapalene 0.1% gel versus tretinoin 0.025% gel in patients with acne vulgaris: a meta-analysis of five randomized controlled trials. Br J Dermatol. 1998 Oct; 139 Suppl 52:48–56. Galderma Australia Pty Ltd. 1 Denison St, North Sydney, Australia 206. AU-DIC-2500001

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