

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features three pages of news, plus a full page from *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. It is the first and only acne-fighting retinoid available over the counter.

See details on **page four**.

Active Ageing Week for over 50s

ACTIVE Ageing Week, held from 06-12 Oct, encourages adults aged 50 and over to live a healthy and active lifestyle.

Coordinated by the International Council on Active Aging, this global initiative shines a spotlight on the importance of staying physically, mentally and socially active as we grow older.

"Community pharmacists are well placed to help adults over 50 stay healthy and independent," said Chris Owen, Queensland Branch President of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia.

Pharmacists can support healthy ageing by providing advice on managing long-term conditions, giving vaccinations, reviewing medications, and guiding healthy lifestyle choices like nutrition and exercise.

Wellbeing award winner named

COMMUNITY pharmacist Maria Cooper (**pictured**) from South Australia has been announced the 2025 winner of the John Coppock Pharmacist Wellbeing Award.

Cooper was recognised for her work on a peer support program for early career pharmacists and developing a network in partnership with the registered charity Hand-N-Hand Peer Support.

The initiative enables pharmacists from different workplaces to engage in regular, confidential group sessions beyond the boundaries of their daily practice, providing a safe and structured space to debrief, share experiences, and develop practical coping strategies.

The sessions are designed to foster a sense of camaraderie and belonging in a profession where high-stress and isolation are common, with the program already having supported three active groups of early career pharmacists.

In addition to working as a community pharmacist, Cooper is a PhD candidate at the University of South Australia.

In announcing the award, the Pharmacists' Support Service (PSS) and Pharmaceutical Defence Limited (PDL) noted that the standard was very high again this year, but judges were unanimous in their decision.

"At a time when some pharmacists are feeling lonely and isolated, Maria is seeking to provide connection and support to the future of our profession," PSS President Curtis Ruhnau said.

Ruhnau highlighted three



Vita-D Mini Tablets

Supports bone health, muscle strength and calcium absorption. **NEW**

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further projects deserving of an honourable mention:

- How to make a Specialist in Poisons Information pharmacist happy? - Genevieve Adamo and team, NSW Poisons Information Centre.
- Rx: A Dose of Togetherness - Fatima Small and team, Blacktown and Mount Druitt Hospital Pharmacy Department.
- Embedding Leader Rounding to Enhance Staff Engagement and Wellbeing - Kelly Beswick and team, Statewide Hospital Pharmacy Tasmania. KB

Connection key to mental health

AS WORLD Mental Health Day is marked globally today, Australians for Mental Health is calling on governments to prioritise social connections, with this year's theme focusing on mental health responses in humanitarian emergencies.

"We know more regular and intense weather events are on the cards for Australians," said Australians for Mental Health Chief Executive Officer Chris Gambian.

"We unfortunately come face-to-face with natural disasters too often, but connected, resilient communities look out for one another, which can help them recover more quickly after a crisis."

The advocacy group is also urging the Federal Government to make wellbeing central to all policy decisions, ensuring mental health is supported across every portfolio.



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RELIEF FROM ACUTE PAIN & FEVER

Ahpra appoints cultural safety lead

THE Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra) has appointed Wakaya Distinguished Professor Yin Paradies to lead the evaluation and development of the National Scheme's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural safety priorities.

Professor Paradies, a renowned Aboriginal race scholar, will head the review of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Cultural Safety Strategy 2020-2025 and shape its next five-year plan, including setting strategic goals for cultural safety within the National Scheme Strategy.

As Australia's only Professor of Race Relations, his expertise in anti-racism and Indigenous health policy underscores Ahpra's commitment to eliminating racism in healthcare and embedding cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

"Cultural safety must be defined by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples themselves," Professor Paradies said.

"This evaluation and strategy development process will centre Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices to ensure regulatory mechanisms effectively address both individual and systemic racism in healthcare."

The final strategy is expected to be delivered in Feb 2026, with potential to share findings domestically and internationally to advance cultural safety and anti-racism in healthcare regulation.

Ahpra CEO Justin Untersteiner reiterated the commitment to helping eliminate racism from the health system, and said Professor Paradies was an ideal choice to lead the development of the next strategy to put cultural safety at the centre of all health practitioners' work.

Most reported meds incidents

PHARMACEUTICAL

Defence Limited (PDL) has shared the most reported medicines in the 2024-2025 financial year, and the contributing factors for the incidents.

The top 10 medicines are:

1. Oxycodone (immediate and slow release, individually and in combination)
2. Semaglutide
3. Tapentadol
4. Methylphenidate
5. Prednisone/prednisolone
6. Tirzepatide
7. Oestrogen (oral and patches, individually and in combination but excludes oral contraceptives)
8. Lisdexamfetamine
9. Paracetamol and codeine combinations
10. Levothyroxine.

PDL noted that Schedule 8 medicines feature prominently in the top 10 list, potentially due to higher reporting rates for incidents involving an S8 medicine.

"However, PDL Professional Officers are concerned that the supply of S8 medicines might not be handled with consideration for the extra risks and responsibilities these medicines have for patients and pharmacists," the organisation stated.

Increased prescribing of S8 medicines, psychostimulant supply shortages, and smaller opioid quantities are major contributors.

Other factors include:

- multiple strengths and forms causing selection errors
- limited storage space for large S8 stock
- fraudulent prescriptions
- missed checks in real-time monitoring
- aggressive patient behaviour
- managing overuse or overprescribing
- prescribers lacking authority for psychostimulants.

The frequency of incident reports around semaglutide and tirzepatide highlights several challenges with prescriptions, including confusion caused by prescribing and dispensing software formats that leads to incorrect doses or



strengths being supplied.

Ongoing supply shortages force prioritisation of limited stock and create heightened patient expectations, while brands of semaglutide are not interchangeable and are approved for different indications, adding complexity.

For prednisone/prednisolone incidents, wrong or unclear directions transcribed in dispensing, paediatric dosage conversion errors and short-term therapy prescribed but continued as regular therapy in DAAs were recurring themes.

Dosage errors, active ingredient mix-ups, incorrect drug selection and giving medication to the wrong patient were also behind notable incidents.

PDL also reminded Queensland community pharmacists that their name must appear on the Queensland community pharmacy prescriber register in order to prescribe medicines.

"This is a regulatory requirement and must be completed prior to prescribing any Schedule 4 medicines," they explained. *KB*

Ego boss joins Hall of Fame

EGO Pharmaceuticals has announced that Chief Executive Officer and Director Dr Jane Oppenheim has been inducted into the Victorian Manufacturing Hall of Fame's prestigious Honour Roll for Service to Industry.

The recognition marks more than three decades driving innovation and growth within the Australian manufacturing sector.

Dr Oppenheim has been a pivotal force in shaping Ego Pharmaceuticals into a global innovator, from steering the scientific development of market-leading products to overseeing significant growth in manufacturing.

Under her leadership, growth in production has compounded by 12% over the last decade, including the development of a new global headquarters and distribution centre.

Dr Oppenheim (pictured) said she was "truly honoured by the recognition" and is passionate about "fostering an environment of innovation and sustainability that benefits not only our company but all of Australia".



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Dispensary Corner

AUSTRALIAN researchers have discovered a surprising breakthrough treatment when it comes to hair loss - and turns out, it is the same sweet ingredient used in ice-cream and fizzy drink.

Stevia - a natural, zero-calorie sugar substitute - may help revive hair growth on the head when its compounds (called steviosides) are mixed with the popular over-the-counter hair loss drug, minoxidil.

In tests on mice, scientists placed a microneedle patch infused with a mix of minoxidil and steviosides on the rodents' bald back every day for a month and found it triggered new hair growth across 67.5% of their back by the experiment's end, with no side effects or adverse events recorded.

In comparison, mice who had the standard minoxidil solution, without steviosides, sprayed onto their backs every day for the same period saw regrowth over just 25% of the bald area.

Dr Lifeng Kang, a pharmacist at the University of Sydney who led the research, explained: "Using stevioside to enhance minoxidil delivery represents a promising step toward more effective and natural treatments for hair loss, potentially benefiting millions worldwide."

While the researchers are not yet sure as to why stevia extracts seem to encourage hair growth, they believe it could be due to helping the body absorb more of the minoxidil, thereby boosting the effectiveness of the medication.

Hospital EMRs to be nationally harmonised

A NEW \$9.5 million national initiative is set to harmonise hospital electronic medical records (EMRs) across the country, bringing hospital data into line with international standards so it can be securely used for large-scale research.

The Australian Health Data Evidence Network (AHDEN) will help generate insights into best practice healthcare while keeping patient information private and secure at their original source.

"Hospital records contain information on diagnoses, treatments, outcomes and patient demographics," explained project lead Professor Nicole Pratt from the University of South Australia.

"By harmonising this information, we can uncover patterns in disease, measure the effectiveness of

treatments and procedures, and produce the evidence that is needed to improve clinical guidelines, leading to better patient care."

At present, the states operate very different systems, making generating insights into best practice healthcare difficult.

This was driven home during the COVID pandemic, where international comparisons highlighted the shortcomings of the fragmented Australian systems, Professor Pratt said.

"This made it difficult to get an accurate picture of how the virus was spreading across the country and the effectiveness of treatments and vaccines, especially in vulnerable people."

"Once the AHDEN initiative is implemented, we will be able to

identify and respond to future pandemics and major health threats much faster."

The three-year initiative will use an international gold standard that will also help Australian researchers collaborate on global studies, benchmark health outcomes against other countries, and generate trustworthy evidence to guide healthcare policy.

Professor Pratt hailed the initiative as a turning point for Australian healthcare research.

"This is a major step forward in unlocking the value of electronic health records," she said.

"With secure and reliable analytics, we can generate evidence that leads to safer care, better outcomes and smarter decision making for all Australians." KB

PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

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

Introducing Maxofen - double-action pain relief that delivers

Maxofen combines paracetamol 500mg and ibuprofen 200mg in one dual-action tablet for effective pain and inflammation relief. Ideal for headaches, muscle aches, dental pain and fever.

- **Double-action formula:** Two proven ingredients for powerful relief
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Always read the label and follow directions. Incorrect use may be harmful.

Differin treats acne

with a potent retinoid: Adapalene.

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

Adapalene works in three ways:^{2,3}

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

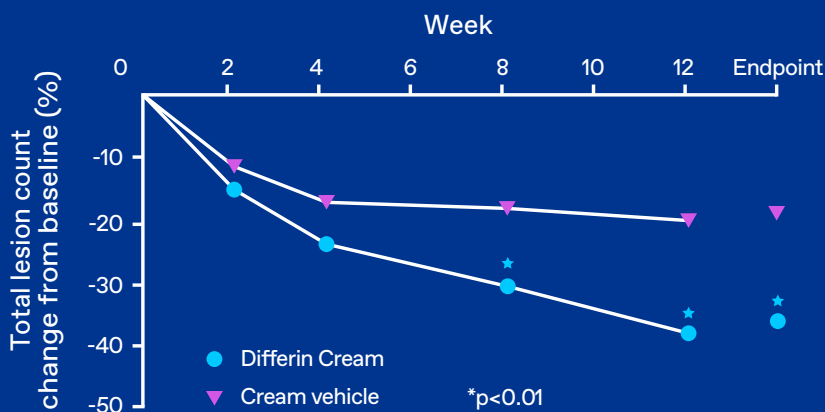
3 Restores

your skin's natural texture and tone

Acne visibly improves after just 2 weeks.⁴



Improvement in total lesion count with Differin Cream vs vehicle observed from 2 weeks.^{4,5}



Differin Cream is clinically proven to:

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

In a meta-analysis of 5 pivotal studies⁵, 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%) cream⁵

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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