

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features three pages of news, plus full pages from:

- Dispense Assist
- Nova Pharmaceuticals

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Nova Pharmaceuticals is offering pharmacists a special deal - see **page five** for more.

"Paracetamol safe in pregnancy"

PHARMACY peak bodies have joined the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) and other medical experts in confirming that paracetamol is safe to take in pregnancy, off the back of US President Trump's claims this week.

Trump linked the painkiller to autism, with the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) set to issue warnings about the potential risks of taking it during pregnancy.

"In Australia, the TGA has reiterated that paracetamol remains Pregnancy Category A in Australia, meaning it is considered safe for use in pregnancy," a Pharmacy Guild of Australia spokesperson told *Pharmacy Daily*.

"All healthcare professionals, including community pharmacists, should stay abreast of the latest information, guidance and advice from the TGA," they added.

While some studies have reported a small association between autism and paracetamol, others have not, and there is no proof of causation.



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However, there is evidence that high fever in pregnancy is linked to adverse pregnancy outcomes, including neurodevelopmental disorders, such as autism.

AdPha Vice President Dr Kate O'Hara also referred to the TGA's position that paracetamol remains a Pregnancy Category A medicine and is considered safe to use during pregnancy.

"AdPha members support all healthcare practitioners working to the highest standards of evidence," she said.

PSA National President Assoc Prof Fei Sim said pharmacists, as medicine experts, "have a crucial role in addressing misinformation and disinformation".

"We appreciate that pharmacists will likely be approached by the public for advice regarding the safety of paracetamol during pregnancy, [providing] an opportunity for pharmacists to engage in evidence-based counselling with our patients." *KB*

Free intranasal flu vax for SA kids

THE South Australian Government has announced that children aged two to five years will be able to receive a free intranasal flu vaccine from next year, joining NSW and Queensland.

"This is a vaccination game-changer for parents and young children," said SA Minister for Health and Wellbeing, Chris Picton.

"Providing a needle-free option will hopefully encourage more parents to get their kids vaccinated and protected from the flu."

Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) President Associate Professor Fei Sim last week called for a nationwide rollout of the needle-free vaccine, noting that vaccination coverage among young children is "unacceptably low" (*PD* 17 Sep).



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Celebrating World Pharmacy Week

WORLD Pharmacists Day, celebrated this week on Thu 25 Sep, marks the anniversary of the inception of the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) in 1912, with this year's theme being 'Think Health, Think Pharmacist'.

In 2020, FIP also created World Pharmacy Week and extended the celebrations to the entire profession.

FIP is encouraging pharmacists around the world to join the campaign, and has provided posters, social media graphics and other materials to communicate and celebrate World Pharmacists Day and World Pharmacy Week.

See [HERE](#) for details.



New guide to support kids with chronic pain

KIDS in Pain, an initiative of Chronic Pain Australia, has released a helpful new guide for community pharmacists to support children with chronic pain, estimated to affect one in five aged six to 18 years.

The resource - *A Pharmacist's Guide to Supporting Kids in Pain* - provides tangible advice and recommendations for community pharmacists, who are often the first port of call when it comes to pain management.

It offers practical tools and language strategies to help pharmacists:

- recognise and respond to childhood pain with empathy and clinical insight;
- educate families on pain neuroscience using child-friendly analogies;
- support daily life strategies including pacing, sleep and appointment preparation; and
- navigate complex presentations including neurodivergence, dysautonomia, and cultural barriers.

"Community pharmacists are



uniquely positioned to validate families' concerns, provide safe medicine advice, and connect children to care," said Nicolette Ellis, pharmacist and Chair of Chronic Pain Australia.

"Pain in children is real, complex, and often invisible," she continued.

"Pharmacists can be powerful advocates - especially in rural and underserved communities - by offering both clinical advice and compassionate care."

Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President Professor Trent Twomey explained the guide outlines how community pharmacists can use their skills to support children experiencing pain.

"Simple steps like adapting our language, listening, guiding, and signposting families to additional resources and care will make a huge difference to those living with

pain," Twomey said.

The guide was released in tandem with a new report, the *2025 Kids in Pain Report*, based on a national survey showing the profound impact of chronic pain on education, friendships and mental health, as well as family life.

"This initiative is so important to raise awareness and get children the help they need as early as possible," Ellis concluded.

The guide is available [HERE](#). **KB**

Board updates pharmacist guidance on medicinal cannabis

THE Pharmacy Board of Australia has today published guidance reminding pharmacists of their duty of care when supplying prescribed medicinal cannabis products, updating guidance issued earlier this year (**PD** 09 Jul).

It addresses the concerns of National Boards and the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra) that "profits may be being prioritised over patient safety", and pharmacists are reminded that they should be as "careful

and diligent...as they would when supplying other drugs of dependence".

Most medicinal cannabis products prescribed in Australia are unapproved and have not been assessed by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) for safety, quality, performance or effectiveness.

The Board warned pharmacists they "are on notice", pointing out that most medicinal cannabis is a Schedule 8 medicine and "safe practice must apply".

"Most pharmacists are diligent

and do the right thing when it comes to dispensing medicines," Pharmacy Board of Australia Chair, Dr Cameron Phillips said.

"With the exponential increase in the number of scripts being written for medicinal cannabis, the Board thought it was timely to remind all pharmacists of their obligations when supplying such products."

Regulators are working together to understand prescribing and dispensing patterns, to help them stay ahead of emerging trends.

Read the guidance [HERE](#). **KB**

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Dispensary Corner

US PRESIDENT Donald Trump took to the White House podium this morning to offer his admittedly non-expert medical advice to the American public.

The leader warned pregnant women not to take paracetamol, sold under the name Tylenol in the US, due to an unproven link between the painkillers and autism.

"Taking Tylenol is not good," Trump said.

Instead, he said expectant mothers should simply "tough it out" if they get a fever.

The president also urged parents to spread out vaccines for their children over a period of years, rather than getting all their shots in one go.

"You take it in smaller doses, and you spread it out over a period of years," he advised.

"They pump so much stuff into those beautiful little babies, it's a disgrace...it looks like they're pumping it into a horse."

Trump admitted that his statements were based on his own feelings, rather than recommendations from the US Food and Drug Administration.

"I'm making these statements from me," he said.

"I'm not making them from these doctors.

"They talk about different results, different studies, I talk about a lot of common sense."



Older Aussies collect 31 PBS scripts a year

This article was written by: Hui Wen Quek, PhD candidate, Discipline of Pharmacy, University of Western Australia (UWA); Amy T Page, Associate Professor, School of Health and Clinical Sciences, Pharmacy, UWA; Christopher Etherton-Beer, Professor in Geriatric Medicine, UWA; and Kenneth Lee, Senior Lecturer, Pharmacy, School of Health and Clinical Sciences, UWA.

AUSTRALIANS are living longer than ever before, and while this is broadly good news, ageing well comes with a range of challenges.

As people grow older, they're more likely to develop multiple chronic conditions, including heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, and cognitive problems such as dementia.

These conditions often mean people need to take more medications - around one in three Australians aged over 70 take five or more different medications.

While these can be important, and even lifesaving, managing multiple medications can become a major challenge in itself.

We wanted to understand more about how older Australians use medications.

In a new study, we looked at ten years of national data from the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS), which subsidises medications for eligible Australians.

Using a 10% sample of Australians between 2013-23, we examined how often people aged 65 and over visited prescribers and pharmacies for the dispensing of their PBS medicines.

Prescribers included GPs and other medical specialists, for example.

We found older Australians visited their prescribers an average of five times a year and made 16 pharmacy visits annually

for the supply of their PBS medications.

In 2023, people over 65 had an average of 31 PBS-subsidised medicines dispensed throughout the year (this figure may include repeats of the same medicine).

We also found the number of older Australians using five or more regular PBS medications increased by 32% (from 1.03 million to 1.35 million) from 2013 to 2023, likely driven by population ageing.

It's important to note our study only captured PBS-subsidised medications that were dispensed.

Prescriptions that weren't filled or those not subsidised by the PBS (such as over-the-counter medications and supplements) weren't included, meaning the true number of medications older people are using is likely even higher.

While medications are essential for managing health, they can also pose risks.

Taking more medications often means a higher likelihood of errors, side effects, drug interactions and hospitalisations.

What's more, as we age, physiological changes such as reduced kidney and liver function can increase the risk of medication-related harms.

Depending on the individual, it could come to a point where the risk of harm eventually outweighs the benefits of the medication.

Sometimes, when it comes to medications, less can be more.

As well as the physical health risks, managing multiple medications can be complex and demanding for older adults and their families.

More medications mean more doctors' visits, more trips to the



pharmacy, and prescription costs can also quickly add up.

All this can influence what daily life looks like for older people.

It's important for older people taking multiple medications to talk to their doctor or pharmacist about whether their current medication regimen is still right for them, and how to manage their medication safely and effectively.

Many Australians, particularly older adults, could be eligible to be referred by their GP for a government-funded medication review.

These medication reviews are conducted by a credentialed pharmacist and designed to help people get the most benefit from their medications while minimising any potential harms.

However this service remains under-utilised, which motivated a recent campaign to improve awareness and uptake.

Older Australians tell us they want to enjoy happier, healthier and more fulfilling lives.

With the right support, there's a real opportunity to reduce the burden of taking multiple medications, and help older Australians not just live longer, but live well.

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