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Today's issue of PD

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Rethink dispensary

WILLACH Consis.C provides the latest in robotic automation for a more efficient dispensary set-up, freeing up space and time within your pharmacy.

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Diabetes care at NMS 2025

THE National Medicines Symposium (NMS) 2025 will spotlight one of Australia's most pressing health challenges - diabetes.

This year's program brings together leading clinicians, researchers, policymakers, and people with lived experience to explore how quality use of medicines, non-pharmacological care, and emerging technologies can transform outcomes for people living with diabetes.

The free, virtual event will be held on 22 Oct - for more information, click [HERE](#).

Plan to reverse low vax rates



PUBLIC health experts are calling for coordinated action to reverse Australia's "extremely concerning" declining rates of childhood vaccination, providing practical strategies to improve uptake.

Rates have declined each year since the start of COVID, remaining below the national target of 95% across all three standard age milestones.

According to new research, barriers include out-of-pocket costs, limited appointment availability, lack of opportunities to discuss vaccination with providers and eroding trust.

Given the multi-faceted nature of the challenges, the researchers outlined a coordinated, multi-sector action response.

This includes:

- improving access to vaccination by reducing out-of-pocket costs and increasing outlets and hours;
- supporting provider education and advocacy by increasing funding for vaccine conversations and embedding communication training in healthcare providers' professional development;
- supporting parent and caregiver knowledge and confidence through messaging from trusted advocates

and automated reminders; and

- facilitating access to data to enable better sharing.

"These strategies are grounded in evidence and shaped by the voice of community members, healthcare professionals and policymakers, giving us confidence in their relevance and effectiveness," emphasised lead author Dr Kasia Bolsewicz of the National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance.

"Prioritising catch-up vaccinations for children who are overdue for their recommended doses is essential to protect them from potentially life-threatening, vaccine-preventable diseases," she added.

Adjunct Professor Terry Slevin, CEO, Public Health Association of Australia, said that reversing the decline in childhood vaccination coverage is a public health priority.

"The power and reach of social media, the challenges raised by COVID-19 and misinformation around immunisation coming out of the USA mean it has never been more important to boost access to and confidence in vaccines," Professor Slevin said.

Read the research [HERE](#). KB

Updated prescribing framework released

THE Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra) and National Boards have updated the National Prescribing Competencies Framework, one of the guiding documents used for the education and regulation of prescribers.

The framework outlines the skills and knowledge required of prescribers, best practice around the use of medicines, and the professional obligations of involved parties, with the update focusing on patient-centred care and taking into account the rapidly evolving healthcare system.

It also guides education and training programs, policy development and regulatory responses, and emphasises the need for quality and safe use of medicines.

"This framework is part of the foundational building blocks that educators, regulators, practitioners and even the public can use to understand what's expected in safe and effective prescribing," said Ahpra Chief Executive Officer, Justin Untersteiner.

"The principles in this framework guide what is expected of any prescriber, so it's important that it keeps pace with the evolving healthcare landscape."

In light of new guidelines around medicinal cannabis (*PD* 23 Sep), the framework includes a new competency around the prescribing of unapproved therapeutic goods, as well as compounded products and medicines for unregistered indications.

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Dispensary Corner

YET another trend has been outed as having potentially dire health consequences.

Eating ramen dishes - a Japanese-style noodle soup that is all the rage on TikTok - more than once a week can increase risk of an early death, scientists have discovered.

A study published in the *Journal of Nutrition, Health and Ageing* found that people who ate ramen more than three times a week and drank alcohol had a three times higher risk of death when compared to people who ate ramen less frequently.

You wouldn't think that the traditional Japanese dish, which combines pork-based broth with slices of meat, seaweed and vegetables, is unhealthy at face value, but according to researchers, the excess salt in the broth is the culprit.

"Frequent intake of ramen noodles might be associated with mortality risk in men, aged less than 70 years and those who consumed over 50 percent of the noodle soup and alcohol," the scientists wrote.

"Ramen noodles and their soup contain high salt content; therefore, frequent intake can lead to high amounts of sodium, which may increase the risk of salt-related diseases, such as stroke and gastric cancer."



ACS guidelines updated

THE National Heart Foundation of Australia and the Cardiac Society of Australia and New Zealand have released the *Australian Clinical Guideline for Diagnosing and Managing Acute Coronary Syndromes 2025*.

Last revised in 2016, the guideline provides recommendations based on contemporary evidence to support healthcare professionals, including pharmacists, in delivering the best possible care to people with acute coronary syndromes (ACS).

"It's exciting to have the first new guidelines in nine years - so much has changed in that time and there is a lot of new stuff," said Professor Jason Kovacic, Director of the Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute.

"In particular, there is a lot more about in-hospital care and post-hospital discharge care - recovery, secondary prevention, the use of PCSK9 inhibitors, vaccination, rehab and mental health care."

One of the key therapeutic changes in the updated guidelines is that lipid lowering has become more aggressive.

"The PCSK9 inhibitors - which in Australia are inclisiran, evolocumab and alirocumab - have been quick to be taken up, despite the fact that at the moment the eligibility criteria for getting them on the PBS is still relatively restrictive," Prof Kovacic told **Pharmacy Daily**.

"I have a few people who can afford them that are paying out-of-pocket - they're quite expensive, but they're very effective, and they really take lowering of LDL to much lower levels than we were previously able to achieve."

Also in the guidelines is the relatively new triglyceride-lowering drug icosapent ethyl, which is indicated for people taking statins at high cardiovascular risk with



triglycerides 1.7 mmol/L or greater.

"The management of lipids is evolving rapidly - I suspect even within the next few years there will be changes in practice, and keeping up to date with that is really important," Prof Kovacic noted.

For pharmacists, being aware of the key aspects in terms of recovery and secondary prevention is key, Prof Kovacic said, noting they have a role to play in providing effective medicines education during hospital admission and at the time of discharge as patients undergo transition of care.

Then there is medication adherence at the community pharmacy stage of the patient's journey.

In terms of secondary prevention, fish oil and co-enzyme Q10 were not included in the guidelines, despite being widely used, and Prof Kovacic pointed out that studies have clearly shown vitamins, herbal supplements and antioxidants do not help in terms of outcomes and "have not been shown to be efficacious".

On the other hand, lifestyle factors including a healthy diet, weight loss, exercise, stopping smoking, limiting alcohol and caring for mental health get a strong recommendation in the guidelines.

"At 137 pages, these guidelines are vast and there is something of relevance to all healthcare professionals," he enthused.

Access the guidelines **HERE**. KB

TGA weight-loss product crackdown

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has warned against importing unregistered GLP-1 products being promoted for weight loss.

"The products are often marketed as 'GLP-1 peptide' oral drops or liquids and may be falsely labelled as approved by international regulators or advertised with misleading quality marks or claims with the aim of deliberately deceiving consumers," the regulator explained.

"We are also aware of reports of advertising containing fake health professional and celebrity endorsements for these products," they added.

The TGA has asked health professionals to advise patients of the risks associated with unregistered GLP-1 products, and to report adverse events involving medicines, including unapproved medicines.

This can help the TGA in identifying previously unknown side effects and other safety issues.

The TGA has also issued 10 infringement notices, totalling \$198,000, to Midnight Health for the alleged unlawful advertising of prescription-only weight-loss medicines, which the company has paid.

The company operated telehealth platforms such as Youly, Stagger and hub. health, where it advertised prescription-only weight-loss medicines, including tirzepatide and semaglutide, to the public between Jun 2024 and Jan 2025.

Learn more **HERE**.

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