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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features two pages of news, plus a full page from Nova Pharmaceuticals' Restin.

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APP2026 top picks

APP Chairman Kos Sclavos has unveiled his top 20 session highlights for APP2026, showcasing "one of the most comprehensive and forward-looking programs in the conference's history".

Sclavos's program highlights include international insights from European and Irish pharmacy leaders on innovation, remuneration models and expanded scope of practice.

He has also nominated future-focused presentations covering full scope implementation, AI-enabled safety tools, and the integration of expanded services into everyday workflows.

Core industry updates, human-focused sessions centred on wellbeing and building resilience, and inspiring keynote speakers round out the selection.

See the full list [HERE](#).

As tier 2 pricing draws to a close, delegates are urged to register now to save up to \$140 on full registration.

Click [HERE](#) to register.

A new look for Blooms The Chemist

BLOOMS The Chemist has launched the banner's new retail brand concept, with its Figtree (NSW) pharmacy unveiled as the first in its network to undergo a refreshed store design as part of the strategy.

Blooms The Chemist said it is focused on creating "a welcoming and comfortable environment that is dedicated to a customer-first experience", and noted that staff have already received positive feedback from customers.

"The refreshed store format makes health and wellness accessible for locals by creating an inviting and easy-to-shop environment, and also supports our pharmacists by improving productivity and practicality," explained head of network development, Narelle Duncan.

She said the new brand concept was first presented to pharmacy owners at the 2024 Blooms The Chemist Annual Owners Conference.



"The concept was met with great enthusiasm across the Blooms The Chemist member network, so to see this design come to fruition, leading the way with a distinct, modern visual identity that strengthens brand recognition and customer experience, is particularly rewarding," Duncan enthused.

"The new design will help unify the stores within the Blooms network and create consistency

across the brand," she said.

A collaboration with long-term partner Chemfit and retail design expert Mathew Dalby of StudioFab, the revamped look and design of the Blooms The Chemist brand will be offered to its 130-plus member stores over the next two years.

Blooms The Chemist Miranda (NSW), is another completed full concept store, with its pharmacy in Bakewell (NT) soon to come. *KB*

Pharmacy students sail to new streams at NAPSA Congress

THE National Australian Pharmacy Students' Association (NAPSA) Congress 2026 has been declared an "outstanding success", with over 330 attendees enjoying a week of learning and networking.

Hosted by the University of Sydney from 11-17 January, the event welcomed pharmacy students, interns and industry leaders from Australia, New Zealand and overseas.

Centred on the theme 'Sailing to New Streams', the program reflected the evolving role of pharmacists and the importance of adaptability, resilience and

leadership within the profession.

The week-long event featured keynote addresses from leading voices in healthcare, interactive workshops, policy discussions, and extensive networking opportunities for students at all stages of their pharmacy journey.

NAPSA National President Sebastian Harper said the success of Congress 2026 was a testament to the passion and commitment of Australia's pharmacy students.

"NAPSA Congress 2026 showcased the strength, diversity and future potential of the pharmacy profession," Harper said. "It was inspiring to see students

from across the country come together to learn, connect and help shape its future."

At the Gala Ball, NAPSA announced the appointment of five honorary life members in recognition of their outstanding contributions to the Association, pharmacy education, student advocacy and the profession:

- Catherine Bronger
- Erin Cooper
- Adam Livori
- Ayomide Ogundipe
- Georgina Twomey.

NAPSA Congress 2027 will be held in Perth, hosted by the WA Pharmacy Students' Association.

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Dispensary Corner

FOREST elephants in western Africa are treating farms as pharmacies, according to new scientific research.

The wild animals have been frustrating farmers across Gabon due to a strange pattern of behaviour, whereby they come at night to chow down on stalks and leaves, while leaving ripe fruit uneaten but damaged.

This is rather baffling, given that the bananas and papaya that grow across the region offer high energy, while leaves contain far fewer calories.

Researchers now believe that the elephants are intentionally seeking out plant parts that support recovery.

Banana and papaya leaves contain chemicals known to fight parasites that can weaken digestion and energy use.

The researchers followed elephant trails after nighttime farm visits, collecting fresh dung samples and inspecting nearby plants for feeding choices.

A laboratory analysis found that higher parasite levels matched higher use of banana and papaya plants.

"I have no doubt elephants possess complex medicinal repertoires, and studies like this are an important step toward uncovering them," said Elodie Freymann, a postdoctoral researcher at Brown University.

Similar behaviour has been observed in Asia, with elephant caretakers reporting that they release the animals into the wild for a few weeks when they are ill, so they can go and find what they need to recover.

Tattoo inks affect immune system

TATTOOS are more than skin deep, with inks accumulating in large quantities in the lymph nodes within a few hours of needling, according to a new international study.

The researchers from Universita della Svizzera italiana in Switzerland found that after a tattoo is applied, the ink rapidly migrates through the lymphatic system, with macrophages in lymph nodes capturing pigments and triggering a two-stage inflammatory response: an acute phase lasting about two days and a chronic phase that can persist for years.

This prolonged inflammation can weaken the immune system and raise vulnerability to infections and tumours, the team said.

Using animal models, the team also found that tattooed mice exhibited significantly lower antibody levels after vaccination, with similar effects observed in human immune cells previously exposed to inks.

"This work represents the most

extensive study to date regarding the effect of tattoo ink on the immune response and raises serious health concerns associated with the tattooing practice," the authors wrote in *PNAS*.

"Our work underscores the need for further research to inform public health policies and regulatory frameworks regarding the safety of tattoo inks," they concluded.

MEANWHILE, research led by UNSW Sydney published today has revealed that tattoo inks used in Australia failed current European Union (EU) safety regulations for tattoo inks.

Using advanced analytical techniques, the researchers detected multiple regulated toxic substances across 15 samples from major, established international brands.

This included eight metals restricted under EU law - antimony, arsenic, cadmium, chromium, copper, lead, selenium and tin - which were found in amounts that



exceeded the EU regulatory limits in at least one ink.

"We are not saying people should not get tattoos," lead author Dr Jake Violi said.

"We are saying the chemical content of inks matters - and there is very little routine checking of what is actually sold in Australia."

Researchers called for further studies to confirm the specific chemical forms of the inks and to examine how they behave once injected into the skin.

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

Positive thinking boosts vaccine immune response, study finds

POSITIVE thinking might help the brain support the immune system in a non-invasive way, according to a study published today in *Nature Medicine*.

Israeli researchers set out to investigate how thoughts and feelings can directly affect our physical well-being.

"Although clinical benefits of positive expectations from medical treatment (as in the case of placebo responses) have been extensively documented, the underlying neural mechanism of such a mind-body link has only begun to be elucidated," the researchers wrote.

The team trained 85 people to activate a part of the brain linked to reward and positive expectations, which animal studies had shown can affect immunity, by recalling positive memories.

Participants were given real-time feedback using functional MRI, so they could learn which strategies best stimulated the brain's reward network.

After four training sessions, the people were given a vaccine against hepatitis B, and had their blood monitored for four weeks after the injection.

It was found that the people

who had learned to better activate their brain with positive thinking had larger increases in protective antibodies in their blood, although the efficacy of the vaccine was not measured.

The authors suggested that the approach "may be used to investigate new ways to boost immune processes, with potential relevance for fields such as cancer immunotherapy and chronic inflammation".

"Thus, we may harness the natural capacities of our mind and brain to heal our bodies in times of need," they concluded.

The paper is available [HERE](#).

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*Primary insomnia is insomnia without an underlying medical cause or any other clear cause.