

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features three pages of news, plus a full page from **Novella**.

Emergency med

NOVA Pharmaceuticals' emergency contraception Novella-1 is available now to order for dispensing by pharmacists to appropriately counselled customers - see **p4**.

Do you use MedAdvisor?

CLINICAL Pharmacy Master's student Yat Wu from the School of Pharmacy and Pharmacology at the University of Tasmania is conducting independent research into community pharmacists' experience with the MedAdvisor app.

The app is designed to enhance medication management, communication and pharmacy workflow.

The study seeks to identify the key barriers and enablers influencing pharmacists' engagement with digital health tools, with the broader objective of informing future strategies to enhance medication management and digital health integration within community pharmacy practice.

Community pharmacists who have used MedAdvisor are invited to complete a 10-15 minute survey - click **HERE** for more information.

You can help improve the CDC website

THE Australian Centre for Disease Control (CDC) is seeking the input of health professionals and experts to help guide the development of its website.

Providing public health information, data and advice, the website will also play a key role in communicating with the public during health emergencies.

Priceline hits back at reports



IN AN open letter to franchisees this week, Priceline Pharmacy's chief customer officer Richard Pearson has hit back at "inaccurate" media reports around Infinity's entry into administration last year.

Pearson confirmed that since being operated by administrators for a few weeks now, "the [Infinity] stores are running well with stock on the shelves, team members being paid and importantly, customers receiving a high level of service".

Receivers KPMG told **Pharmacy Daily** the receivers are continuing to stabilise operations of the stores and work through a sales process, as flagged when appointed in Dec last year (**PD** 18 Dec).

Pearson also provided franchisees with further details about the lead-up to the decision to appoint receivers and administrators for 56 Infinity pharmacies.

"Our decision to appoint receivers and administrators was not taken lightly," he wrote.

"As many of you know, API worked to support Infinity management for many years to try to put the business on a sustainable

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Get the latest medicines info

THE 2026 edition of the Australian Medicines Handbook (AMH) has been published and is now available in print and online, with essential updates for the quality use of medicines.

The latest edition includes information on new drugs available in Australia, as well as information on the use of more than 1,170 medicines.

AMH content team manager Jane Curtis said its core offering of the 1210-page book and digital platform, the Children's Dosing Companion (CDC) and Aged Care Companion, form a valuable reference for the quality use of medicines in Australia.

"The latest update is the 27th edition of the AMH and includes important information on new drugs such as edaravone for amyotrophic lateral sclerosis and updated information on conditions such as acute coronary syndromes and asthma management," Curtis stated.

She said both the AMH and CDC have updated new recommended vaccines for children, with pneumococcal 20-valent vaccine replacing other pneumococcal vaccines.

"On top of including new drugs and medicine uses, we update the terminology to reflect standard usage," Curtis said, providing the use of 'menopausal hormone therapy' instead of 'hormone replacement therapy' as an example.

Co-owned by the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA), Curtis pointed out the AMH's all-pharmacist editorial team are subject matter experts, constantly researching and reviewing the content in all its products to ensure users have the most accurate information at hand.

To learn more and order, visit the AMH website **HERE**.

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No autism links

TAKING paracetamol during pregnancy does not increase a child's risk of autism, ADHD, or intellectual disabilities, according to evidence reviewed by an international team of researchers.

Evidence from 43 previous studies, including pooled data re-analysed from 17 of them, found no link, according to research published in *The Lancet Obstetrics, Gynaecology, & Women's Health* journal.

The absence of a connection between paracetamol and autism spectrum disorder, ADHD, and intellectual disabilities held firm when the researchers selected only the most robust studies with at least five years of follow-up.

These finds back up a range of bodies from the pharmaceutical industry which came together in Sep to hit out against claims to the contrary made by President of the United States, Donald Trump (PD 23 Sep).

"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* at the time.

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

Warnings over andrographis anaphylaxis

AN UPDATED safety review of herbal medicine ingredient *Andrographis paniculata* is currently underway, amid ongoing reports of anaphylaxis and other severe allergic reactions.

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA), which initiated the review, told *Pharmacy Daily* that "further advice on any regulatory action will occur in early 2026".

More than 1,300 adverse events associated with andrographis are now listed on the TGA Database of Adverse Event Notifications (DAEN), including anaphylaxis, respiratory disorders and rashes, with one reported death due to anaphylaxis.

The herb is found in products with claims around relief of cold and flu symptoms, and boosting the immune system.

There are about 100 products listed on the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods (ARTG) containing andrographis.

It has been subject to several TGA safety reviews since 2008,

and in 2019, new labelling regulations were introduced.

Products containing the ingredient are required to carry a warning label stating: "Andrographis may cause allergic reactions in some people - if you have a severe reaction (such as anaphylaxis), stop use and seek immediate medical attention" (or words to that effect).

The TGA noted that little is currently known about the risk factors for andrographis allergy.

"We are evaluating this safety concern and are considering whether the current label warning for andrographis is sufficient to address this risk," it stated.

The TGA advises that health professionals should warn patients presenting with any type of allergic



reaction after taking a medicine containing andrographis to avoid products containing the ingredient in the future, as subsequent reactions may be more severe.

It also suggests that as a precaution, patients with a history of severe allergies to anything should avoid using medicines containing andrographis. *KB*

Women urged to stick with cheaper, proven form of folic acid

EXPERTS are urging women planning a pregnancy or in the early stages of one to take folic acid, which has been proven to help prevent neural tube defects such as spina bifida, rather than methylfolate.

A growing number of supplement companies have developed prenatal formulations that contain methylfolate instead of folic acid, marketing

it as being more bioavailable or easier to absorb, and therefore a better choice.

Supplements containing methylfolate are usually more expensive than folic acid.

However, obstetricians have pointed out that folic acid is the only form of folate shown in clinical trials to help prevent neural tube defects.

They also point out that

methylfolate is not as stable as folic acid - it is more susceptible to light and temperature, which may affect its potency.

"Folic acid is available OTC and is very cheap, and we know it works," obstetrician Associate Professor Alexis Shub told *Australian Doctor*.

"We strongly recommend people use that rather than any variants," she stated.



A FUTURE OF POSSIBILITY

Pharmacy Guild of Australia's **Trent Twomey** shares what lies ahead for the industry this year.

» CLICK HERE TO READ

Pharmacy Daily



Dispensary Corner

A PHARMACY manager in Victoria came up with a creative and rather quirky way to raise funds for a cause that is close to her heart.

Portland Amcal Pharmacy's Kylie Zordan said her team managed to raise more than \$3,000 for the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia (PCFA) throughout Dec and Jan, and it was all thanks to...boxer shorts.

The pharmacy got heads turning when it decorated its window with a colourful clothesline showing off the undergarments, and invited local businesses and individuals to purchase a pair for \$50 to have their name printed on them and displayed on the line.

"The response was incredible," Zordan said.

"It created attention in the community, and people were genuinely excited to support the cause."

The store manager's husband, Peter, was diagnosed with prostate cancer at age 56, despite showing no symptoms.

Zordan explained: "Prostate cancer is very prevalent in Peter's family, so he'd been getting tested every year since he was 45."

"Within one year, his PSA results tripled, which led to further testing and confirmed cancer," she added.

Zordan praised PCFA for the "enormous difference" it made through its online resources and information during her husband's recovery and ongoing wellbeing following robotic prostate surgery.

Mobile chat helps with quit smoking

FOR people who are trying to quit smoking, mobile chat messaging with a counsellor and a supportive chatbot app can help prevent relapse by as much as 30%, according to international research published today in *JAMA Internal Medicine*.

The study looked at almost 600 daily smokers who had already abstained for three to 30 days, and were receiving smoking cessation treatment through clinics in Hong Kong.

Half the participants were given chat-based support with a live counsellor and access to a supportive chatbot via a messaging app for three months, while the control group received eight text messages over three months containing generic smoking cessation advice.

All participants received usual smoking cessation treatment from the services.

After six months, people who received the counsellor and chatbot support were significantly more likely to be abstinent for longer, with 46% of the intervention group not smoking versus 36% of the control group.

The intervention group also had a lower relapse rate.

"This randomised clinical trial found that mobile chat messaging for smoking relapse prevention increased validated abstinence



by approximately 30%, offering a scalable approach to sustain abstinence among individuals who recently quit smoking," the researchers concluded.

The study is available **HERE**.

PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

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

Revive Tears - PBS-listed

Revive Tears lubricating eye drops provide long lasting and soothing relief against burning, irritation and discomfort due to dry eye.

The product moisturises, comforts and refreshes dry, tired and strained eyes.

Revive Tears helps lubricate, hydrate and protect dry eyes.

Suitable for use with contact lenses.

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