

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features two pages of news.

Smoking rates drop, e-cigs level off

HEALTH peak bodies have today welcomed data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) showing that daily smoking rates have fallen over the past 20 years, with e-cigarette use stabilising.

The Public Health Association of Australia has applauded efforts which have seen daily smoking rates drop to 5.6% of the population in 2025, down from 8.3% in 2022-23, saying "that's worth celebrating".

Meanwhile, daily e-cigarette use remained relatively stable at 3.6% in 2025, compared with 3.5% in 2022-2023, with fewer people using e-cigarettes weekly or monthly, contributing to an overall decline in the proportion of people using e-cigarettes.

The report also noted that illicit tobacco use had doubled, with 34% of smokers using it in 2025, up from 16.7% in 2022-23.

While noting that maintaining policies that continue to reduce smoking while cracking down on the illicit market is a challenge, Cancer Council Australia CEO Jacinta Reddan warned against weakening tobacco control settings.

"Cutting tobacco tax won't stop criminal operators selling illicit products - it will simply make all cigarettes cheaper, increase consumption and boost tobacco company profits," she said.

Read the AIHW report [HERE](#).

Monash, TGA ink quality meds MoU

MONASH University has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Australia's Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA), bringing Monash into the TGA's Academic Outreach Program.

The partnership aims to strengthen collaboration in pharmaceutical regulatory science, therapeutics development, research, education and knowledge exchange, with a key focus on improving medicine quality and safety, particularly in low- and middle-income countries.

Signed by TGA head Professor Anthony Lawler and Professor Chris Porter, director of the Monash Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences, the agreement aims to support the delivery of safe, effective and high-quality medicines in Australia and globally.

Professor Porter said the partnership further aligns academic research with regulatory practice.

"By combining Monash's research expertise with the TGA's regulatory leadership, we can advance innovation while also creating meaningful opportunities for student engagement and exposure to real-world regulatory challenges," Professor Porter said.

Through the Monash Quality of Medicines Initiative (QoMI) and the TGA's Indo-Pacific Regulatory Strengthening Program, the first joint research project will evaluate and develop methods for detecting toxic contaminants in oral liquid medicines such as cough and cold syrups.

The work is driven by ongoing concerns about contamination with ethylene glycol and diethylene glycol, industrial solvents that have caused thousands of child deaths globally.

Since 2022, more than 400 children have died in countries including Uzbekistan, The Gambia,



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Indonesia and India due to falsified ingredients entering medicine supply chains.

The collaboration will assess practical, lower-cost testing methods suitable for resource-limited settings and support a PhD project focused on developing a rapid, affordable screening test for contaminated medicines.

Associate Professor Pete Lambert, Director of the QoMI, said reliable detection tools are essential as medicine supply chains become increasingly complex and globalised.

"Advanced analytical technologies are not always accessible in many settings, particularly in low- and middle-income countries, so our focus is on optimising lower-cost, practical detection methods suited to these environments, while also exploring new approaches for rapid and scalable screening," he said. **KB**

MS drugs to remain on PBS

PEOPLE with multiple sclerosis (MS) will be able to continue obtaining Ocrevus (ocrelizumab) and Kesimpta (ofatumumab) through the PBS, after a period of significant uncertainty around future access (**PD** 02 Jul).

After meeting last week to discuss pricing, the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) advised Health Minister Mark Butler of the clinical benefits of keeping the drugs on the PBS.

MS Australia welcomed the announcement, and said it was "an incredibly important and deeply reassuring outcome" for people with MS.

"Continued PBS access means people can keep working with their neurologists to choose the treatment that is right for them, without the fear that effective options will be placed out of reach," said MS Australia director Sharlene Brown, who lives with MS and has been successfully treated with Ocrevus for more than seven years.



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Dispensary Corner

IN THE latest attempt to make the US military mightier, troops aged 30 and older will undergo annual testing for testosterone deficiency, with hormone replacement therapy offered to those who have low levels.

In a video posted on the Department of War's YouTube channel, Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth said he was authorising the screening program for troops to ensure "you have the right testosterone levels to operate at your absolute best".

"We owe our warriors the absolute best medical care in the world, and this program delivers on that obligation," Hegseth said in the video.

"Taking care of your long-term health means ensuring you remain strong, resilient and capable - not just for your next deployment, but for the rest of your life, so you can thrive long after you take off the uniform," he added.

Men under 30 can also be tested if they wish, although the Pentagon provided no comment on whether women would also be tested.

The announcement came after US Health Secretary Robert F Kennedy Jr pushed for the removal of barriers for medical professionals to prescribe testosterone as a solution to a national "fertility crisis".



PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

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MICROSHIELD®: Supporting everyday hand hygiene at home

As the winter season approaches, increased exposure to common germs can place added pressure on our general wellbeing. Practising good hand hygiene remains an important part of helping to reduce the spread of germs in everyday settings.

MICROSHIELD® products, widely used in the hospital environment, are now available to support everyday hygiene routines at home.

MICROSHIELD ANGEL BLUE® Antimicrobial Hand Gel contains 70% alcohol and is formulated to kill 99.99% of common germs without the need for water. Designed for regular use, it includes moisturising ingredients to help keep hands feeling soft and comfortable. Its non-sticky formulation, refreshing fragrance, and aloe vera content provide added skin comfort while helping keep hands clean and cared for.

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

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