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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features three pages of the latest news, plus a full page from Pharmacy Hive.

Dong-A ST inks Arrotex deal

ARROTEX Pharmaceuticals has entered into a licensing agreement with Korean pharmaceutical company Dong-A ST for exclusive rights to the commercialisation of an innovative treatment for focal-onset seizures in adults.

The arrangement includes regulatory milestones, sales milestones, and royalty considerations throughout the term of the agreement.

Key role for pharmacists in RSV vax uptake

PHARMACISTS have a key role to play in increasing the uptake of respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) vaccine among older Australians, according to new survey findings released during RSV Awareness Week (07-13 Jun).

To explore the awareness and attitudes towards RSV vaccination, the Immunisation Foundation of Australia surveyed over 1,000 adults eligible for the free vaccine (those aged 75 years or over and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 60 years or over).

Just three weeks into the new federally funded RSV vaccination program for older adults (PD 20 Apr), 60% of Australians eligible for free RSV vaccination have either already received the vaccine or intend to do so.

The survey found that RSV vaccination is already seen as an important part of the winter health routine, with 63% of respondents viewing vaccination against RSV as equally important as influenza.

Only 7% of respondents had decided against receiving RSV vaccination, half of whom stated they "don't support the use of vaccines" in general.

With 86% of eligible older Australians fully supporting the use of vaccines to protect against serious illness, the foundation noted that "health professionals can approach RSV conversations with confidence".

Among the one-third of respondents undecided about being vaccinated against RSV, the

number one reason was the need for more information (47%).

This was followed by concerns over side-effects or vaccine safety (24%) and not feeling the need for RSV protection because they do not mix with many people (11%).

"This is not a hesitant population - the barrier is information, not resistance," said Catherine Hughes, founder and executive director of the Immunisation Foundation of Australia.

"A third of older Australians say a recommendation from their doctor or pharmacist would be enough to motivate them to get vaccinated against RSV, but seven-in-ten have never had that conversation.

"The opportunity for health professionals right now is enormous," Hughes said.

With the new NIP RSV program allowing pharmacists to administer the RSV vaccine to older adults, it is expected that pharmacist-led conversations about RSV will increase.

Until now, only 5% of respondents reported discussing RSV protection with a pharmacist, compared with 26% with a doctor.

The RSV vaccine can be

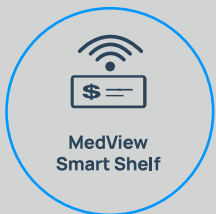


administered at the same time as the influenza vaccine, providing an opportunity to alert older patients to this when they come in for their flu shots.

"RSV vaccination is a new opportunity for older Australians, and it is encouraging to see so many people embracing it," Hughes concluded. KB

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QSPP transition

AS QCPP transitions to QSPP, Pharmacy Hive has the resources, tools and guidance you need as community pharmacy enters a new era in quality and safety.

Learn more on **page four**.

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*In vitro temperature comparison of cryogenic wart treatment devices 2016. (Funding: Oystershell Laboratories).
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Patients welcome OCP prescribing

WOMEN are broadly supportive of pharmacist prescribing and resupply of hormonal contraceptives, according to new research from Monash University.

The team conducted semi-structured interviews with 22 women who had previously accessed pharmacy services for emergency contraception or pregnancy termination medicines, to investigate acceptability of the resupply and prescribing of hormonal contraceptives by community pharmacists.

Participants pointed to benefits including convenience, lower costs, time efficiency, easier access and having a reliable alternative when unable to see a GP.

They also highlighted that community pharmacists are "highly approachable, kind and compassionate, and provide an informal setting that can be less intimidating when compared with GP clinics".

However, the value of GPs when initially prescribing contraceptives was acknowledged, especially when the GP had access to a patient's medical history.

While confidence in pharmacist prescribing of contraceptive methods was low, participants were more supportive if they knew that pharmacists had received additional training, especially for the initial prescription.

"Although pharmacist-led resupply is seen as an acceptable service, evaluation studies need to be conducted post-implementation of the resupply and prescribing service to understand its full impact in Australian community pharmacy settings," the researchers concluded.

"Ongoing research is needed to explore its sustainability, feasibility and long-term impact on patient outcomes."

Read the study [HERE](#).

ELS "always new and exciting"

PHARMACISTS should consider signing up as an emergency locum for the opportunity to give back to rural and remote Australia and support fellow pharmacists, according to Raven's Recruitment, which has operated the Emergency Locum Service (ELS) since 2021.

An initiative of the Rural Pharmacy Workforce Program, the ELS aims to support pharmacies in rural and remote areas through direct access to pharmacist locums in urgent emergency situations.

As more established pharmacists may have family, study and work commitments, the early career cohort can be better placed to participate, explained Raven's Recruitment GM Heidi Dariz.

"But while most older pharmacy owners are aware of the service, many newer owners and early career pharmacists may not be," Dariz told *Pharmacy Daily*.

Pharmacist Toby Doan (pictured) started working as a locum this year, taking on both emergency and non-urgent assignments.

"After being a pharmacy owner/manager, I decided I need a fresh change to my career," Doan told *Pharmacy Daily*.

"And I am now a happy locum."

Doan has worked as an emergency locum in Streaky Bay in South Australia and Sapphire in Central Queensland.

"One of the unexpected rewards of locum work is the opportunity to experience parts of Australia that many people never visit," he said.

"Streaky Bay became one of the highlights of my locum journey - not just because of the work, but because it allowed me to discover a remarkable corner of the country while serving a remote community.

"Between pharmacy shifts, I spent most of my time exploring the beaches, swimming in crystal-clear water, running along the shoreline, and enjoying the breathtaking scenery," Doan enthused.

When he is not locuming, Doan splits his time between Sydney and Brisbane, where he catches up on paperwork, reading journals, continuing education and exercise. He said locuming - and in



particular emergency locuming - is a great way to gain a lot of experience fast.

"Being exposed to a lot of different pharmacy environments teaches you how to adapt quickly," Doan explained.

"Learning new programs, procedures, processes and systems - it's always new and exciting and every day is different.

"You also get the pleasure of meeting new people - staff and customers - every day and hear so many interesting life stories.

"But ELS is something more - it's about filling workforce gaps in remote communities, where there is a constant shortage of healthcare professionals like us, and it's also about experiencing Australia in a way few people do."

Learn more [HERE](#). *KB*

Sigma in Boots buyout speculation

SIGMA Healthcare has issued an ASX statement today saying it has "engaged in preliminary discussions" with The Boots Group over a potential buyout, adding "there is no certainty that any transaction will eventuate".

The ASX release was a response to recent media speculation around the sale process of the £7.5 billion (A\$14 billion) UK-based pharmacy giant.

The *Australian Financial Review* reported today that Sigma is one of several potential bidders for Boots, highlighting Sigma's plans for international expansion, including its recent acquisition of a 75% stake in British group Greenlight Healthcare (*PD* 05 May).

Also in the mix is the wealthy Canadian Weston family, which owns grocery chain Loblaws and pharmacy chain Shoppers Drug Mart.



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Pharmacy Daily





Dispensary Corner

IN BAD news for hot chip lovers, research has shown that the golden fingers of fatty, salty, carby goodness are linked with an increased risk of type 2 diabetes - though other forms of the cooked potato are not.

The research, published in *The BMJ*, also found that swapping potatoes for whole grains lowered diabetes risk, while replacing them with white rice had the opposite effect.

Based on over 200,000 people tracked over 40 years, the research found that every three weekly servings of potatoes overall were associated with a 5% increase in the rate of type 2 diabetes, while every three servings of chips were linked to a 20% increase.

Eating similar amounts of baked, boiled, or mashed potatoes was not associated with a statistically significant increase in risk.

The study team noted that it was an observational study, and can't prove french fries caused diabetes, and there may have been factors not measured in the study that could have had an effect.

While emphasising the importance of preparation methods when including potatoes in the diet, the researchers noted that whole grains should remain a priority food for reducing diabetes risk.



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QSPP: From Documents to Demonstrated Outcomes

Preparing for Evidence-Based Accreditation under QSPP

As Australian community pharmacies prepare for the transition from the Quality Care Pharmacy Program (QCPP) to the new Quality and Safety Pharmacy Program (QSPP), one message is clear: accreditation is no longer simply about having the right documents on file. Instead, pharmacies will be expected to provide longitudinal (over time) evidence how their systems, processes and people contribute to safer care and better outcomes for patients.

While policies, procedures and records will remain important, QSPP introduces a stronger emphasis on evidence-based safety and quality management. Assessors will be looking not only for proof that a pharmacy has appropriate systems in place, but also for evidence that those systems are being used effectively and are driving continuous improvement.

For many pharmacies, this represents a significant shift in mindset. Under QCPP, accreditation often focused on documenting compliance with required standards. Under QSPP, the focus broadens to include how risks are identified and managed, how incidents and near misses are investigated, how consumer feedback is used, and how improvement initiatives are implemented and evaluated.

This means reporting will play a much larger role in day-to-day pharmacy operations. Pharmacies will need to maintain records that demonstrate ongoing monitoring of quality and safety activities. Examples may include actual and near miss incident reports, customer feedback reports and registers, risk assessments, staff competency records, training completion reports, quality improvement plans, and evidence of management audits and reviews.

It's important to understand that the emphasis is not on generating more paperwork for the sake of compliance. Rather, the objective is to create meaningful evidence that shows a pharmacy is actively managing quality and safety on an ongoing basis. A documented dispensing incident, for example, is only part of the story. Assessors will be interested in understanding what actions were taken, whether root causes were identified, what changes were implemented, and whether those changes reduced the likelihood of recurrence.

Customer engagement is another area likely to receive greater attention. Pharmacies will be encouraged to capture and analyse patient feedback, complaints and compliments, and demonstrate how this information contributes to service improvements. The ability to show a clear link between customer feedback and operational changes may become a valuable source of evidence during assessments.



Staff training and workforce capability will also feature prominently. Pharmacies will need to demonstrate not only that training has occurred, but that employees are competent to perform their roles and remain current with evolving professional requirements. Records of onboarding, continuing professional development, skills assessments and competency reviews are likely to become increasingly important for staff in all roles.

Perhaps the biggest change is the expectation that pharmacies can demonstrate continuous quality improvement. Rather than viewing accreditation as a point-in-time event that occurs every few years, QSPP encourages a culture of ongoing evaluation and enhancement. Pharmacies that routinely review their performance, track trends, address risks and implement improvements will be well positioned for success.

The good news is that many pharmacies already undertake much of this work. The challenge will be putting in place effective systems, resources and tools that ensure activities are consistently documented and that evidence is readily available when required. Those that embrace the new approach may find that QSPP delivers benefits beyond accreditation, including stronger governance, improved patient safety, enhanced team engagement and greater confidence in the quality of services they provide.

Ultimately, all this will not simply add to the administrative burden of running a pharmacy – it will make it easier to run a high quality pharmacy that provides best practice patient healthcare. And that, after all, is what all pharmacies should be aiming for.

As community pharmacy continues to expand its clinical role within Australia's healthcare system, QSPP's evidence-based approach offers an opportunity to showcase the professionalism, quality and safety that pharmacists deliver every day.

QSPP - Resources, tools, and guidance for your transition

Pharmacy Hive was created by pharmacists for pharmacy and has been supporting pharmacies with QCPP resources, tools, and guidance for over 5 years.

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