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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features two pages of news.

Virtual care standard on way

AS VIRTUAL care is increasingly used to access health services, the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care has been tasked with developing national safety and quality standards for service, supported by the Federal Department of Health.

Virtual care is any interaction between a patient and clinician (or clinicians) that occurs remotely with the use of information technologies, with telehealth the most widely used example.

The virtual care standards will establish clear, consistent expectations for high-quality care delivered virtually - whether through hospitals, primary and community healthcare, or commercial providers - and will be part of a national approach to strengthen clinical governance and drive high-quality care and better outcomes for patients.

"Our leadership in clinical governance describes how health services can provide the right culture, structures, support and leadership to deliver high-quality care," said Commission CEO Conjoint Professor Anne Duggan.

"Applying this to virtual care will provide a nationally consistent approach regardless of how or where care is delivered."

The standards will be published by the end of 2027.

PSA seeks inaugural harm reduction champion

THE Pharmaceutical Society of Australia is searching for its first PSA harm reduction champion to act as a national spokesperson, advocating for and supporting PSA's work in policy, professional practice and community engagement.

The champion will elevate pharmacist leadership in harm reduction, and strengthen the profession's role in improving access to care, reducing stigma, and supporting safer health outcomes for the community.

Passionate pharmacists looking to do more to support patients accessing harm reduction services, such as opioid dependence therapy (ODT), the administration of long-acting injectable buprenorphine, naloxone access, and needle and syringe programs are encouraged to submit an expression of interest (EOI).

"Pharmacists have an important role to play in harm reduction, through improving access to essential services such as ODT, take-home naloxone, and needle and syringe programs, but there is still more to be done to support the equitable access to these services,"

PSA national president Professor Mark Naunton said.

"This is why we're looking for a pharmacist who is making a real impact in their community, and ready to help lead the conversations, support their communities, and advocate for expanded access to care through the PSA harm reduction champion initiative.

"If this sounds like you, or someone you know, I encourage you to submit an EOI to become PSA's first harm reduction champion."

EOIs close 30 Jun - more [HERE](#). MEANWHILE, Penington Institute has released a snapshot of its annual overdose report, with drug-induced deaths the highest number on record.

Unintentional overdose deaths rose 15% in 2024 to 2,091, with opioids the most common drug involved in unintentional deaths at 42%.

Stimulants, including ice, ADHD medication and ecstasy, contributed to 37% of unintentional deaths, while benzodiazepines contributed around 25%.

"These are not random or



unavoidable tragedies," stated Penington CEO John Ryan.

"They are the predictable consequence of policy failure, political hesitation and a refusal to treat drug use as a health and social issue."

Ryan noted that harm reduction is one of the least developed components of Australia's response, receiving only 1.6% of proactive government drug funding, while 64% of the total budget was spent on law enforcement.

The snapshot is [HERE](#) - the full report will be released when figures are finalised. KB

Prof Lisa Nissen to give Sansom lecture

THE Australian Pharmacy Council (APC) has announced that this year's Emeritus Professor Lloyd Sansom AO Distinguished Lecture will be delivered by internationally recognised leader in pharmacy workforce policy and practice, Professor Lisa Nissen.

The pharmacist and University of Queensland academic will present a speech entitled 'Workforce reform and innovation is a team sport', which delves into the importance of

collaboration and trust amongst colleagues for workforce change.

"Professor Lisa Nissen is a highly regarded speaker, known for delivering with clarity, insight and impact," said APC Chief Executive Officer Bronwyn Clark.

"Workforce reform is one of the most pressing challenges facing healthcare today - it's under increasing scrutiny, and meaningful change is essential.

"Lisa brings both authority and vision to this conversation."

Learn more [HERE](#).

Mitochondrial health

KANEKA Ubiquinol has announced the program for its upcoming Mitochondrial Health Summit, a healthcare practitioner-only event focusing on antioxidant activity and mitochondrial energy production from pre-conception through all life stages.

Guests will include Japanese researcher Dr Kazunori Hosoe, who has been at the forefront of coenzyme Q10, ubiquinol and mitochondrial research for over 50 years.

The summit will take place in Sydney on 26 Jun - more [HERE](#).



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Dispensary Corner

IF YOU think getting older is inevitably linked with physical and cognitive decline, you may take heart from new Yale University research that presents a far more optimistic picture - especially if you have a positive mindset.

Published in *Geriatrics*, the 12-year study of over 11,000 people aged 65 and older found that nearly half experienced measurable gains in cognitive function, physical function, or both, suggesting that improvement in later life is far more common than many people realise.

The data came from the US Health and Retirement Study, a federally funded long-term survey of older Americans.

Researchers used a global cognitive assessment to measure changes in cognitive abilities, while physical function was evaluated through walking speed. Over the 12-year study period, 45% showed improvement in at least one of the two areas examined, with 32% showing cognitive gains and 28% progressing physically.

In looking at why some people improved and some did not, the researchers found a link between positive attitudes to ageing at the beginning of the study and an upswing over time - and this held after adjusting for age, sex, education, chronic disease and depression.

"And because age beliefs are modifiable, this opens the door to interventions at both the individual and societal level," the authors noted.

Addiction trailblazer honoured

IT HAS been quite a time for Professor Suzanne Nielsen, who was named winner of the health category for the *Financial Review* Women in Leadership Awards, then days later the PSA Victorian Pharmacist of the Year (**PD 15 Jun**).

Presenting the award at the Sydney Opera House ceremony earlier this month, the *Financial Review* highlighted Prof Nielsen's role setting up the Monash Addiction Research Centre, where she oversees a team of more than 170 researchers and produces work that has influenced Australia's drug policy.

The PSA also pointed to her internationally leading work in addiction medicine research, as well as her contribution to advancing pharmacists' role in harm reduction and opioid dependence treatment, and shaping policy and practice to improve patient safety and outcomes.

"It was a very humbling week," Prof Nielsen told *Pharmacy Daily*.

"I'm very honoured by both awards - being recognised for leadership, and for the work that I do at the intersection of pharmacy, policy, addiction medicine and harm reduction mean a lot to me."

Prof Nielsen was originally inspired to move into the clinical treatment of addiction, then research and academia, after witnessing the positive impact of a methadone and buprenorphine program as a pharmacy intern.

Her work has led to the rescheduling of codeine products to pharmacist-only, and the down-scheduling of naloxone to be available over-the-counter - a move she believes has saved an estimated three lives per day, she told the *Financial Review*.

Another of her initiatives was the



development of the Opioid Safety Toolkit, an overdose prevention resource for people taking opioids for chronic pain.

"The awards do reflect my work, but also, I work with amazing people - much of my work is done in large interdisciplinary teams," Prof Nielsen said.

"More broadly, if the work I do makes a difference, particularly the clinical research, it reflects the collective efforts of colleagues across pharmacy and addiction medicine.

"I feel incredibly grateful to work in a space with such an opportunity to make positive, meaningful change in improving access to evidence-based care." **KB**

New-look PBS website launched

THE Department of Health, Disability and Ageing has launched a redesigned Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) website, featuring enhanced search functionality, advanced filtering options, and improved visibility of updates to PBS-listed medicines.

The PBS team is inviting enquiries and feedback - visit the website **HERE**.



Weekly Comment

Welcome to *Pharmacy Daily's* weekly comment feature. This week's contributor is **Amit Saha**, head of technical & innovation at **LaCorium Health**.



Supporting postpartum hair loss

HAIR shedding is a common concern among women in the months following childbirth.

Known medically as telogen effluvium, this temporary but often distressing condition occurs as hormones, particularly oestrogen, return to their pre-pregnancy levels, causing a greater number of hair follicles to enter the shedding phase of the hair growth cycle.

In most instances, postpartum hair loss resolves without the need for medical treatment.

As trusted healthcare professionals, pharmacists can play an important role in reassuring patients and advising on practical strategies to support hair health.

These include maintaining a nutritious diet, addressing any nutritional deficiencies, minimising excessive heat styling and selecting products that add volume and improve the appearance of fuller hair.

Emerging hair restoration formulations such as Dermal Therapy Hair Restoring range are also providing new options for women seeking additional support.

These products are designed to nourish the scalp, strengthen existing hair and encourage healthier hair growth by helping optimise the hair growth cycle.

Learn more **HERE**.

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