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### Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today has three pages of news plus a front cover page from Pharmacy Alliance.

## Ultibro Breezhaler TGA approval

**THE** Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has updated the indication for Ultibro Breezhaler (110/50 indacaterol maleate/glycopyrronium bromide).

This is the first long-acting beta-agonist (LABA) and long-acting muscarinic antagonist (LAMA) combination therapy approved to reduce exacerbations of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) in patients with a history of exacerbations.

Professor Peter Frith from Flinders Medical Centre in Adelaide said the "the ability to prescribe a LABA/LAMA combination to high-risk COPD patients should lead to a reduction in the use of inhaled steroids" - [CLICK HERE](#) for the PI.

## A remarkable omission

**IN AN** enthusiastic statement of support for the Therapeutic Goods Administration's (TGA's) up-scheduling of products containing codeine from S3 to S4, the Royal Australian College of Physicians (RACP) has made what Pharmacy Guild national president George Tambassis has called, a "remarkable omission".

The RACP statement failed to face the need for any real time recording and reporting of prescription drugs, and Tambassis said that throughout the debate, doctor groups had avoided addressing the issue.

"According to the Pennington Institute, between 2008 and 2014 Australia experienced an 87% increase in prescription opioid deaths, with the increase in rural regional Australia a shocking 148%," Tambassis said.

New data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics released this week showed almost 70% of drug-related deaths in Australia in 2016 were the result of prescription drug

abuse (*PD* yesterday).

"Despite this, the medical profession has done little or nothing to bring about a national real time recording and reporting system," Tambassis pointed out.

The Guild introduced the MedsASSIST system in 2016 to record and report on usage, and "so far more than 4,000 pharmacies – or more than 70% of all PBS-approved pharmacies - are voluntarily using MedsASSIST."

Approximately 9 million transactions have been MedsASSIST recorded, with a sharp reduction in codeine sales, and thousands referred to GPs for further pain management.

The Guild has long proposed a limited up-scheduling exception to allow pharmacists to supply them under strict protocols with mandatory real-time recording.

"Let's get real about our commitment to protecting Australians from opioid misuse," Tambassis concluded.

## Electronic scripts win

**THE** Electronic Prescription Service (EPS) in the UK is "saving time and improving the patient experience" according to a study by auditors PwC.

Commissioned by NHS Digital, with the support of the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee (PSNC) and NHS England, the study published this month aimed to assess the costs and benefits associated with the EPS Release 2 system compared with paper prescriptions.

Of those who responded to the survey, 65% were either positive or very positive about the system, and 16% were either negative or very negative.

Most pharmacists (61%) preferred the EPS over paper scripts, but 24% preferred paper, *the Pharmaceutical Journal* reported.

The conclusion says pharmacies should install more computer workstations, and at least one pharmacy team member should have the role of EPS champion, to help train colleagues.

## Buy It Right: Pharmacy Inventory Management System

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## Enhance phcy vax role

**THE** ongoing severity of this year's influenza season has highlighted the need to extend the role of community pharmacies in protecting the community from this potentially tragic disease, Pharmacy Guild of Australia executive director David Quilty said in a *Forefront* article.

He explained that immediately extending the National Immunisation Program to community pharmacies and enabling access to the MBS would ensure more vulnerable people would be protected against the disease.

A Galaxy Research survey conducted for the Pharmacy Guild found more than six million Australians would be more likely to have a flu shot if it could be administered at a local pharmacy, including around two million who previously had no intention to vaccinate against flu.

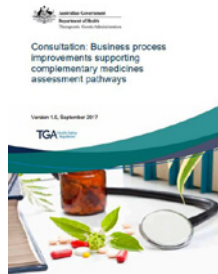
The research revealed that an extra two million Australians were likely to have a flu vaccination this year because of its availability through community pharmacy, highlighting the success of the scheme and emphasising the imperative to extend it further next year, Quilty advised.

## Risk-based CM assessments

**THE** Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) is seeking feedback on a number of proposed reforms that it says will "deliver a more flexible, predictable, efficient and transparent regulatory framework for complementary medicines (CMs)".

There are five key issues on which the TGA seeks input:

1. The introduction of risk-based application categories for pre-market assessments
  2. Proposed application requirements, business processes, legislated assessment timeframes and fee structure for applications in each category
  3. A set of minimum data requirements to standardise complementary medicine pre-market assessments
  4. Criteria and mechanisms for acceptance of reports from comparable overseas regulators and alternate sources of evidence for *de novo* assessments
  5. Strategies to enhance the post-market monitoring and compliance scheme for listed medicines.
- The TGA also points out that while



it has consulted previously on the proposed use of evaluation reports from comparable overseas regulators for prescription medicines and medical devices, this consultation focuses on complementary medicines only.

Visit [tga.gov.au](http://tga.gov.au) for access.

## Stoptober ticks e-cigs

**PUBLIC** Health England's 'Stoptober' quit campaign is backing the use of e-cigarettes, despite them not being licensed medicinal products for smoking cessation, according to a report by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society.

Growing evidence of their success in supporting smoking cessation has led the public health body to encourage health professionals to recommend them to patients.

The campaign is even including images of vaping in its television advertisements explicitly stating that e-cigarettes are a "great way to combat nicotine cravings and carry a fraction of the risk of cigarettes".

**NICE DRAFT GUIDANCE**, published this month, also supported vaping.

## Length of opioid Rx

**FINDINGS** from an analysis that included more than 200,000 US patients who underwent common surgical procedures suggests that the optimal length of opioid pain prescriptions is four to nine days for general surgery procedures, four to 13 days for women's health procedures, and six to 15 days for musculoskeletal procedures, according to a study published by *JAMA Surgery*.

As rates of opioid prescribing have increased dramatically in recent years, the overprescription of pain medications has been implicated as a driver of the burgeoning opioid epidemic and the associated increases in overdose deaths in the United States, researchers wrote.

The study of 215,140 people, showed median opioid prescription lengths ranged from four days post general surgery to six days for musculoskeletal procedures, but there was less refill if used for nine to 15 days respectively.

Opioid prescriptions post-surgery should balance adequate pain treatment with minimising the duration of treatment adding that a seven-day limit, as per the CDC, may be "inappropriately restrictive", authors concluded.

**CLICK HERE** for the research.

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## Dispensary Corner

**THE** canary in the coalmine or the crayfish in the brewery tank?

Crayfish equipped with high-tech sensors have been drafted in by a Czech brewery, the Protivin brewery in South Bohemia, in its quest to keep their water supply pure.

The crustaceans, highly sensitive and reactive to changes in their aquatic environment, are placed in fish tanks through which is pumped water from the same natural source that the brewery uses.



The animals are fitted with infrared bio-sensors which monitor their highly reactive heartbeat and movement.

Data is analysed by a computer, and any changes in the animals' body or behaviour flags a change in the purity levels of the water in their tank.

The system is the product of the South Bohemia University.

**WOULD** you like flyspray and acetone with that?

In a creative effort to get teens to think a little more about synthetic drugs, a pair of West Auckland police in New Zealand is asking troubled teens if they would like those ingredients on their hot meat pie.

Constables Dermot Forde and Reuben Jakich have given six presentations at Alternative Education centres where they hand out a pie before taking it back and spraying it with chemicals, including acetone and flyspray.

## NZ Pharmacy Guild joins PHA

**THE** Pharmacy Guild of New Zealand has announced it has become a full member of the Primary Health Alliance, signalling the intent of both organisations to “work collaboratively to further benefit the health and wellbeing of all New Zealanders”.



The Primary Health Alliance (previously the PHO Alliance) was formally established in Sep 2006 to provide national leadership on key issues affecting the primary health care strategy and primary health organisations in New Zealand.

Membership now includes PHOs, allied health, pharmacists, midwifery, community NGOs and a range of key sector partners and stakeholders encompassing more than one million New Zealanders.

See more at [primaryhealth.org.nz](http://primaryhealth.org.nz). Primary Health Alliance chairman, John Ayling said, “The overriding focus of the Primary Health Alliance is the health of our population and we continue to say that cannot be addressed by any one single professional group or organisation

working in isolation”.

Guild chief executive Andrew Gaudin said, “The Guild is grateful for the opportunity to be working alongside Primary Health Alliance members who clearly see how a collaborative and integrated health care sector can benefit our population and help improve health outcomes.

“We look forward to representing community pharmacy on the alliance,” Gaudin said.

### Biologic meds course

**GUILD** Learning and Development has partnered with AbbVie to develop an online course titled ‘Understanding biologic medicines’.

Pharmacy Guild of Australia national president George Tambassis said, “Pharmacists need to have a comprehensive understanding of both originator biologics and biosimilars so that they can form a balanced and expert opinion on all options available to their patients”.

Go to [myCPD.org.au](http://myCPD.org.au) for access.

## WIN WITH INNOXA

This week Pharmacy Daily and INNOXA are giving away each day the new INNOXA Eye Lift Palette.

INNOXA introduces an all-in-one kit that is designed to prime, contour, define and brighten the eye area, creating a more youthful and lifted appearance. Containing a cream to powder base primer that optimizes soft focus and is long lasting, and a silky touch matte powder that is pigment rich and provides moisture, with the INNOXA Eye Lift Palette you can achieve this bright and awakened look in five simple steps. **CHECK OUT THE WEBSITE** for more info.



To win, be the first person from VIC or TAS to send the correct answer to [comp@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:comp@pharmacydaily.com.au)

What is the primer formula?

Congratulations to yesterday's winner, Lisa Robertson from SA Pharmacy.

## FIP pumps AMR

**THE** “One Health” approach, which recognises that the health of humans, animals and ecosystems are interconnected, should be applied to measures to control antimicrobial resistance (AMR), the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) has said in an updated Statement of Policy issued this week.

The policy makes a number of new recommendations to governments and pharmacists, seeking demonstrations of “political will” to address the issues.

FIP said the new statement reflected developments since its last statement on this topic in 2008.

Visit [fip.org](http://fip.org) to access the new policy statement.



## Events Calendar

**WELCOME** to *Pharmacy Daily's* events calendar, opportunities to earn CPE and CPD points.

If you have an upcoming event you'd like us to feature, email [info@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:info@pharmacydaily.com.au).

- 17-19 Oct:** World Self Medication Industry General Assembly 2017; ICC Sydney; registrations opening soon: [www.wsmiga2017.com](http://www.wsmiga2017.com)
- 26 Oct:** CMA Annual Conference and Industry Awards; Sydney; details here: [www.cmaustralia.org.au](http://www.cmaustralia.org.au)
- 26-28 Oct:** Pharmacy Assistant National Conference; QT Gold Coast; for details see: [www.pharmacyassistants.com](http://www.pharmacyassistants.com)
- 16-19 Nov:** Medicines Management Conference 2017; ICC Sydney; details tbc: [www.shpa.org.au](http://www.shpa.org.au)