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Pharmacy



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Editorial correction:

Retail Pharmacy May issue

The Health Series article, 'Managing Winter Skin' (page 42) contained an image error. The original article includes a headshot image of Dr Vincent Candrawinata founder of Renovatio Bioscience, captioned as being Associate Professor Stephen Shumack from the Australasian College of Dermatologists. However, this is an error and Associate Professor Shumack's headshot was not used within the article – Dr Candrawinata's headshot was used in error. The team at *Retail Pharmacy* magazine sincerely apologise for this error. This error has been rectified in the digital version of the magazine, available at: retailpharmacymagazine.com.au/magazine/retail-pharmacy-may-2023/

IMPROVING YOUR POWERS OF PERSUASION

By Dr Monique Beedles.

With our science training, pharmacists are very good at taking an evidence-based approach to making decisions and giving advice. It can be frustrating then, when people without similar training ignore or dismiss the evidence that we've diligently analysed and reviewed.

The OECD's Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies uses a five-point scale for numeracy. Pharmacists would have a numeracy level of five, which involves evaluating the reliability of evidentiary sources and making high-level inferences using specialist knowledge. However, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, about 55 per cent of the Australian adult population has a numeracy level of two or lower. At this level, people can make basic inferences of data presented to them, but only where the links are explicit.

The status quo doesn't shift because you're right

Allan McDonald, Director of the Space Shuttle Solid Rocket Motor project for the *Challenger* space shuttle was concerned that below-freezing temperatures might impact the integrity of the solid rockets' O-rings. The night before the shuttle was due to launch, he refused to sign the launch recommendation, over safety concerns.

NASA administrators ignored Mr McDonald's advice and the launch went ahead anyway. Seventy-three seconds into its flight, the shuttle exploded. Mr McDonald's technical advice was sound, but his technical explanation failed to influence the decision-makers. He could have lived his life with an attitude of 'I told you so', but instead chose to learn from the



experience and, by sharing his lessons, did his best to ensure that subsequent generations could tell a different story.

Later, when he shared his experiences with the shuttle program, Mr McDonald emphasised that the most important lessons were those about communication. He decided that what was better than thinking about what could have been, and should have been, was to make sure it never happened again.

Evidence is necessary, but not sufficient

Whether it's an individual choosing to smoke, a parent refusing to vaccinate their child, or a politician implementing government policies, in many situations the factual evidence, while necessary, is not sufficient to persuade someone to change their behaviour or their decision.

Engaging people to take an interest in your idea, big or small, requires a level of influence. Critical to this is that the person you're trying to persuade understands how the idea fits with their own priorities. They're sure to ask, 'What's in it for me?' Whether it's washing hands or investing in healthcare, humans make decisions based on their own priorities, as they perceive them.

Effective persuasion therefore requires building three cases: the technical case, the business case and the human case. In the technical case, you're applying data and evidence to propose a solution. In the business case, you're demonstrating the impact of your idea and how it will create value, whether that value is financial or non-financial, tangible or intangible.

In the human case, you're using influence to create a meaningful narrative, one that carries importance for the other person, rather than just for you. It takes humility to put yourself in someone else's shoes and see things from their perspective. Humility, good listening, and collaboration are key to understanding the needs of those you're engaging with, and to improving your powers of persuasion.



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