

## Bloody good effort

GRIFFITH University pharmacy students have been declared the winners of the inaugural NAPSA Vampire Cup.

The joint initiative between NAPSA and the Australian Red Cross Blood Service was established to encourage pharmacy students to regularly donate blood.

Ten of the 12 NAPSA branches participated in the program, which was held late last year, resulting in 101 blood donations.

The Griffith University Association of Pharmacy Students (GUAPS) gave 28 donations.

Paul Buise, NAPSA President, said: "Well done to GUAPS, they beat all of our other organisations hands down. Nationally, our target was to get 100 of our members to donate and we achieved that - just."

## Statin therapy

THIS week's edition of the Repatriation General Hospital Pharmacy e-Bulletin deals with statin therapy for patients with high CVD risk.

It gives an overview of conditions under which patients are eligible for PBS-subsidised statins regardless of baseline cholesterol levels - more info [chris.alderman@rgh.sa.gov.au](mailto:chris.alderman@rgh.sa.gov.au).

## AMA blasts pharmacists

THE Australian Medical Association says pharmacists don't have the skills or training to issue medical certificates.

The claims follow recent publicity about 2006 changes to employment legislation which allow pharmacists to issue the certificates (PD 22 Jan).

"They are very good at being pharmacists, but they are not doctors," said AMA president Rosanna Capolingua, who gave the example of a patient

## Warfarin warning

PHARMACISTS dispensing warfarin should check if the patient is taking glucosamine.

A warning in the ADRAC Bulletin follows a series of reports to the TGA suggesting an interaction between the two medications.

Most cases describe an increase in the INR after the patient commenced on glucosamine.

Similar reports have been received by other drug monitoring bodies overseas, including the WHO Collaborating Centre for Drug Monitoring.

Patients on warfarin should have their INR checked within a few days after they start or increase their glucosamine dosage, ADRAC recommends.

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presenting with a headache who "may in fact have meningitis and by the time their medical certificate is up they are dead."

The Guild has rejected the AMA claims as "scare tactics."

## Champix advisory

PFIZER'S antismoking drug Chantix, marketed here as Champix, is "increasingly likely" to be connected with serious psychiatric problems, say US government regulators.

The FDA last week released a public advisory that recommended patients taking Chantix tell their doctor about any history of mental illness.

"Chantix may cause worsening of current psychiatric illness even if it is currently under control.

"It may also cause an old psychiatric illness to reoccur," an FDA statement warned.

FDA also noted that patients with psychiatric problems were not included in the studies used to prove Chantix's safety.

Two weeks ago Pfizer added stronger warnings to the drug, which was approved in May 2006 and has been prescribed 4 million times in the US.

## New PBS listings

TWO changes to the PBS in February will benefit patients with deteriorating diabetic control and people who have severe dry eyes.

The extension to the listing of pilitazone hydrochloride (Actos®) will allow doctors to prescribe it in triple oral combination therapy with the anti-diabetic drugs metformin and sulfonylurea.

The listing of tamarindus indica seed polysaccharide (Visine Professional®) has also been extended to allow these eye drops to be prescribed by optometrists.



## DISPENSARY CORNER

EATING chocolate might soon help you lose weight.

A research project being funded by the British govt at the Institute of Food Research in Norwich centres on the use of so-called 'galacto lipids' - natural fatty molecules which impede the breakdown of fat in the gut and signal to the brain that the consumer is full.

Although the galacto lipids could be used to suppress hunger in any food or drink product, one of the biophysicists working on the project said they would be most useful in cakes and chocolates.

The London *Times* reported that Cadbury had no plans to add appetite-suppressant compounds to its products.

TOURISTS staying at a Russian health resort were given a really thorough colonic irrigation last week when a nurse accidentally used hydrogen peroxide instead of water to give them enemas.

17 tourists in the town of Yessentuki had to be treated in hospital after the "unfortunate incident," according to the official Tass news agency.

Sources at the sanatorium explained the mishap by saying that "water and hydrogen peroxide look the same."

CONSUMERS in Mexico are being warned of the dangers of applying make-up while driving.

A range of new fines has been implemented in an attempt to cut the Mexican road toll, with hefty penalties for anyone using lipstick or shaving at the wheel.

Other misdemeanours include driving while holding a pet.

Reports don't say whether the men shaving at the wheel typically use shaving cream or an electric razor.

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