

ADHD scripts rise

ADHD medication prescriptions have risen 24.5% since the drugs were PBS-listed.

The rapid increase, between April and December last year, occurred after Concerta was added to the PBS, which cut its cost from \$150 to \$31.30.

Strattera was listed last July. According to the figures, Concerta, Strattera, Ritalin and dexamphetamine cost taxpayers \$9.89m between Apr and Jul 07.

The Royal Australasian College of Physicians, which will soon release ADHD guidelines, says stimulant medication is "the single most effective treatment" for children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

Warming dangers

A UNIVERSITY of Missouri study has found that heating polycarbonate plastic baby bottles causes bisphenol A to be leached into the liquid.

Bisphenol A is a synthetic form of oestrogen and has been linked with a range of medical problems.

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Genepharm Strides deal

GENERPHARM has entered into a new strategic partnership with Indian branded generic maker Strides Arcolab Limited.

Under the deal Strides will sell its Australian and Asian business to Genepharm, in exchange for shares in Genepharm which will ultimately take it to a 55% ownership of the company.

The combined regional businesses will have revenues of about \$100m, with Genepharm ceo Dennis Bastas saying the deal "represents an excellent opportunity for Genepharm to build scale and diversity, leveraging the combined capabilities of Genepharm and Strides to create a premium healthcare business in the Australian and Asian regions."

The Strides businesses involved in the deal include Drug Houses of

Australia (Asia) Pte Ltd which has sales and marketing activity in Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Hong Kong and Australia.

DHA is the leading local generic maker in Singapore, which will become the Asian hub for Genepharm's Asian operation.

Genepharm will also have the first right of refusal to distribute all existing and future Strides products into Australia, NZ and south-east Asia, with Genepharm giving Strides the first right of supply in the region.

The deal is subject to due diligence, with exclusivity until 30 Apr, and is expected to be finalised by late Mar.

Trading in Genepharm shares is expected to resume this morning, after they were suspended on Thursday pending the announcement - just after a 25% surge in the price.

SHPA survey

THE Society of Hospital Pharmacists is asking members to give feedback on its focus and priorities for 2008 and beyond.

An online survey is now available at www.shpa.org.au for completion by 29 Feb 08.

Green tick move?

A GREEN tick could be used to identify evidence-based complementary medicines, as part of reforms to better regulate the category.

The proposal follows a study published in the *Medical Journal of Australia* last week that claimed regulation of complementary medicines, particularly weight-loss herbal treatments, is ineffective.

Lead author Ken Harvey, a senior research fellow at La Trobe University, said the green tick had generated interest from several organisations, practitioners and complementary medicine makers.

Multiple supplement users healthier

PEOPLE who take a wide range of daily dietary supplements are more likely to add years to their life, according to a recent study.

Researchers at the University of California have found that long-term users of multiple supplements are less likely to have nutrient deficiencies and more likely to have higher HDL (good cholesterol) levels.

The study also revealed a 52% lower risk of high blood pressure and a 73% lower risk of diabetes as well as other benefits.

Primary closing in

PRIMARY Healthcare this morning announced it now holds 49.7% of takeover target Symbion Health.

Primary has said it would remove key conditions from the bid if acceptances reach 50.1% by the close of business tomorrow.

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DISPENSARY CORNER

A JAPANESE company offering baldness treatments has agreed to pay compensation of 4.3m yen (A\$45,000) to a man whose hair didn't regrow after five years of treatment.

The 58-year-old businessman signed a contract for weekly treatments at Mohatsu Clinic Reve 21 in 2001, and was assured his hair would "definitely grow back" within three years.

However after no change by 2006 he sued the company seeking ¥6.8m in damages.

TRAVACALM watch out.

Swedish scientists will today launch 60 baby fish into orbit aiming to develop new insights into motion sickness.

The cichlid hatchlings will be shot 260km into space on an 11m-long rocket, where they will experience six minutes of weightlessness.

Each will be housed in its own space aquarium, with an array of cameras watching to see how they react.

"Fish, when they get motion sick, begin tumbling around, swimming in circles and miss their balance," said one of the researchers.

FORGET injections - tattoos could be a better way to administer vaccines, according to scientists in Germany.

A study undertaken using mice found that tattoos were much more effective in provoking an immune system response than injections into muscle.

Tattooing a vaccine produced 16 times more antibodies, with researcher Dr Martin Mueller postulating that the better response was due to the greater damage done by the rapidly vibrating tattoo needle.



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