

Guild chief resigns

PHARMACY Guild executive director Kieran Schneemann has resigned effective 04 Jul.

A statement from the Guild said Schneemann had "decided to pursue other interests," after having been with the organisation since July 2006.

Acting Guild national president Patrick Reid wished him "all the best in pursuing further challenges in the health industry and industry generally."

Snoring product

A NEW Danish anti-snoring product has been released into the Australian market.

The makers of Asonor, a patented formula, say it's clinically proven to effectively stop or reduce snoring.

It works by lubricating and softening the mucous membrane, while lightly tightening the musculature in the throat so that breathing is easier.

Asonor is self-administered using a nasal delivery system and importer Sasmar is distributing it through pharmacies, Priceline stores as well as a range of supermarkets - more info www.asonor.com.au.

Metcash drops Symbion

SIGMA Pharmaceuticals has been left high and dry in its hopes to cut distribution costs through a joint venture with grocery distributor Metcash, after the company yesterday withdrew its bid for Symbion Pharmacy.

The Metcash pullout followed an announcement by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission calling for further submissions in relation to the deal.

It also comes after major Symbion customer Terry White said it wouldn't work with Metcash (PD 04 Jul) if the company succeeded in its bid.

There was also significant opposition to the Metcash proposal voiced by the Pharmacy Guild in its confidential submission to the ACCC.

Metcash said the ACCC move, as well as its detailed due diligence on the business "have caused us to conclude that the value of this business to Metcash is substantially less than the price which we believe would be acceptable to the vendors."

The company said it would immediately withdraw from the sale process and will not be



WE HAVE DONE THE RESEARCH
ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS APPLY THE SCIENCE

space
SUPER PREMIUM MULTIVITAMIN

Available from leading pharmacies including all Terry White Chemists. Ph:1800 99 10 95 or [CLICK HERE](#) for more info.

submitting a final bid.

"We will therefore also be unable to pursue the proposed logistics/buying joint venture with Sigma Pharmaceuticals," said Metcash ceo Andrew Reitzer.

In a parting shot, he said this meant Metcash wouldn't be able to bring its buying, logistical and marketing expertise to the pharmaceutical wholesaling industry "and assist the growth and development of independent pharmacists in the same way that we have strengthened and grown independent grocery retailing in Australia."

The ACCC statement of issues voiced concerns about the effect that the proposed "upstream aggregation" between Sigma and Metcash would have on the supply of wholesale pharmacy products and services to pharmacies.

Market inquiries had revealed concerns that the proposal would effectively reduce the number of independent full line wholesale competitors from three to two "and that this would result in pharmacies paying higher prices for all pharmacy products," the ACCC statement said.

Today's issue of PD

PHARMACY Daily today has two pages of news, including the monthly MIMS update and our regular Thursday travel column on page two.

No cancer IVF link

WOMEN who undergo fertility treatment are no more likely to develop breast or ovarian cancer than others, an international review shows.

Fertility experts say the findings should be reassuring to the 500,000 women treated since the first IVF baby was born in 1980.

Early studies suggested fertility drugs could increase the risk of ovarian cancer.

NSW assistants

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia will host the first ever NSW Pharmacy Assistant Conference and State Finalist Awards dinner next month.

The Novotel Rockford Hotel will host the dinner on Fri 29 Aug, with the one-day conference the next day covering the latest news, products and issues facing Pharmacy Assistants.

More info 02 9467 7100.

July prescribing update

NEW PRODUCTS

• Avamys is an intranasal formulation of **fluticasone furoate**, used in the treatment of seasonal allergic rhinitis and perennial allergic rhinitis in adults and children aged two years and above.

In adults and adolescents aged 12 years or older, the recommended initial dose is two sprays daily in each nostril.

Following symptom control, dose reduction to one spray daily in each nostril is recommended.

In children aged 2-11 years, the recommended initial dose is one spray in each nostril once daily.

Regular use is recommended, and it may take several days of treatment to achieve maximum benefit.

Avamys is available on private prescription at a strength of 27.5 mcg per dose in 120 doses.

• Neupro (**rotigotine**) is a nonergolinic dopamine receptor agonist available as a transdermal patch, for use in the treatment of idiopathic

early or advanced Parkinson's disease as monotherapy or in combination with levodopa. It is contraindicated in MRI or cardioversion.

The recommended initial dose is 2 mg/24 hour (early stage) or 4 mg/24 hour (advanced disease).

The patch is applied once daily at a similar time every day, and should remain on the skin for 24 hours. The next patch should be placed at a different site.

• Exelon (**rivastigmine**) is now also available as a transdermal patch for the treatment of mild to moderately severe dementia of the Alzheimer's type.

Exelon is contraindicated in patients hypersensitive to carbamate derivatives or with severe hepatic impairment.

Treatment should be started with Exelon Patch 5 once daily.

Exelon is available on the PBS as an Authority item in two strengths, 4.6 mg/24 hours (Exelon Patch 5) and 9.5 mg/24 hours (Exelon Patch 10) for \$165.48 (packs of 30).

NEW INDICATIONS

• Singulair (**montelukast**) indications have been extended to include symptomatic treatment of seasonal allergic rhinitis in patients aged two years or older.

The recommended dose is 10 mg daily (15 years and above), 5 mg daily (6-14 years) or 4 mg daily (2-5 years).

• Celebrex (**celecoxib**) is now indicated for the treatment of ankylosing spondylitis.

The maximum recommended daily dose is 200 mg in one to two divided doses.

Safety-related changes include contraindications in active peptic ulcers or gastrointestinal bleeding; renal impairment (creatinine clearance below 30 mL/min); congestive heart failure (NYHA II-IV); and hepatic impairment (Child-Pugh score of 10 or more).

NSAIDs have been associated with an exacerbation of inflammatory bowel disease associated with spondyloarthropathies.

Short-term exposure to celecoxib in patients with ulcerative colitis in remission has not shown an exacerbation of inflammatory bowel disease in spondyloarthropathies, but the implications of longer-term exposure remain unknown.

SAFETY-RELATED CHANGES

A small number of patients taking Fosamax (**alendronate**) long term (usually for more than three years) have developed stress fractures of the proximal femoral shaft.

Some patients experienced prodromal pain in the affected area, often associated with imaging features of stress fracture, weeks to months before a complete fracture.

The number of reported cases is very low (some 40 worldwide). Patients with suspected stress fractures should be evaluated, including for known causes (for example, vitamin D deficiency, malabsorption, extreme exercise levels), and given appropriate orthopaedic care.

Discontinuation of

bisphosphonates in patients with stress fractures is advisable pending evaluation based on individual benefit/risk assessment.

• Disruption of the body's ability to reduce core temperature has been attributed to antipsychotic agents.

Appropriate care is advised when prescribing Seroquel (**quetiapine**) for patients who will be experiencing conditions that may contribute to an elevation in core body temperature, for example, strenuous exercise, exposure to extreme heat, concomitant anticholinergics or dehydration.

• Dalacin T (**clindamycin phosphate**) topical lotion is contraindicated in people with a history of inflammatory bowel disease or antibiotic-associated colitis.

This list is a summary of only some of the changes that have occurred over the last month. Before prescribing

MIMS

100% pure knowledge

Dud online drugs

A SURVEY published this week in the *British Medical Journal* has found that more than 60% of medicines bought from online pharmacy websites are either counterfeit or of poor quality.

Just 38% of drugs purchased online were genuine.

New HIP role

HEALTH Information Pharmacy general manager Brian Taylor has taken up a new role as Chief Operating Officer of the group.

Taylor joined HIP as gm in Feb 2006 with a strong retail background with Woolworths as well as previously being ceo of bread franchise group Brumby's.

NPS hygiene push

NATIONAL Prescribing Service has renewed its call for people wanting to avoid calls to practice good hygiene techniques rather than take preventive medicines.

NPS spokesperson Karen Kaye said evidence indicates that vitamin C supplements, zinc and echinacea "do not assist in cold prevention."

HOT Travel Deals

WELCOME to *Pharmacy Daily's* travel feature.

Each week we plan to highlight a couple of great travel deals which we're sure will be of interest to everyone in the pharmacy industry.

PHARMACISTS looking for a great short break in July or August should consider this offer from Ocean Hotels at the Hides Hotel in Cairns, QLD.

Until 31 Aug the hotel is offering Cairns Couples Getaway Deals featuring 2 nights accom and starting from just \$205pp.

The price includes free daily breakfasts, a Sunlover Reef Outer Barrier Reef full day tour ex Cairns (including meals), a free cap, special rates for a Seawalker Experience on the Sunlover Reef Cruise and free car parking.

For more information email

hideshow@oceanhotels.com.au or call 1800 079 226.

And for those looking for a longer break, *ecruising.travel* has a great cruise special available at the start of 2009.

The 11-night South Pacific Cruise onboard *Pacific Dawn* departs on 05 May 2009 and visits destinations in Vanuatu and New Caledonia, including the amazing Mystery Island, Pentecost Island - the home of the famous 'land-bungee', and the beautiful Isle of Pines.

Prices start from \$1899 ppts - call 1300 369 848 or see ecruising.travel for more info.

RUM project turns ten

THIS month the Return Unwanted Medicines Project celebrates ten years of service to Australian consumers.

The project has been hailed across the globe as a world first, with project manager Simon Appel telling *PD* that compliments are regularly received from overseas countries "envious of the cooperation and contribution made by community pharmacy and pharmacy wholesalers".

The free service, funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing, allows consumers to return unwanted and out of date medicines to any community pharmacy.

Wholesalers then facilitate the delivery and collection of RUM Project materials to and from the pharmacies across the country.

Statins for kids

THE American Academy of Pediatrics is controversially recommending the use of cholesterol-lowering drugs in obese children aged as young as eight.



Your team
in the Pharmacy and
Professional Health
IT industry

sales service support

1300 554 694

www.pharmit.com.au



DISPENSARY CORNER

ANOTHER wacky study is being carried out by British researchers, who've given a Rubik's Cube to an octopus.

But they say they don't expect the sea creature to solve the puzzle, but instead want to determine if it has a favourite tentacle for picking things up during the month-long project.

If the octopus does manage to solve the Rubik's Cube that would just be a bonus.

HYGIENE is set to increase in southern India, where residents are being paid to utilise public urinals.

The new scheme promotes the use of new 'ecosan' (ecological sanitation) toilets, which recycle collected urine for testing as a crop fertiliser.

Locals in the remote town of Musiri in Tamil Nadu state are earning up to US\$1 per month by changing their toilet habits, with dozens of people queuing up to use the facilities.

TURN off the TV while eating.

That's the recommendation of Canadian research which found that children who watched TV while eating lunch ate more.

"Eating while watching TV overrides our ability to know when to stop eating," said the Canadian Institute for Health Research.

SNORING is a major problem for many people, with the importers of Asonor (*see story p7*) citing issues associated with the condition incl daytime drowsiness, irritability, headaches and decreased libido.

In fact, according to the firm, in the USA snoring even constitutes grounds for divorce, and is cited as a contributing factor in 6% of marriage break-ups.

It kicked off in Jul 1998 with headquarters in Adelaide, before relocating to Melbourne in 2001.

The project has been such a success that collections of unwanted medicines now exceed an average of a whopping 36 tonnes per month.

The service sees community pharmacy making a "major contribution to the Quality Use of Medicines strategy," Appel said.

Bird flu vaccine fear

A VACCINE used to combat outbreaks of the avian influenza virus in chickens in Hong Kong could be losing its efficacy.

Professor Yuen Kwok-yung of the University of Hong Kong said the vaccine is becoming less effective because the virus was mutating and shifting away from the Fujian strain of H5N2 for which it was developed in 2001.

Tests showed that in 2005 the vaccine was producing only 25% of the antibodies to protect against the virus compared to the level produced in 2001.

He told the *South China Morning Post* that the city must get rid of all live chickens in markets before the vaccine becomes completely ineffective.

His warning follows an outbreak of H5N1 virus in four wet markets in Hong Kong in June.

**Tell your
pharmaceutical
friends about
*Pharmacy Daily***

**They can sign up for a
free subscription at**

www.pharmacydaily.com.au

Click here

pharmacy women's congress



motivate - inspire - empower

melbourne 29 - 31 august 2008

visit www.guildevents.com.au