

SSRIs under fire

INAPPROPRIATE prescribing of anti-depressants is the subject of an investigation by *The Australian*, which claims today that doctors are giving young people the drugs against official advice, and without warning them of potential adverse side effects.

The Therapeutic Goods Administration recommends against the drugs' use in the treatment of depression in children, adolescents and adults aged up to 24, because they may increase the risk of suicidal thoughts and self-harm.

The Australian reports that a review this week of consumer medicine information for SSRIs marketed in Australia revealed inconsistent warnings.

A Melbourne mother, who claims Zoloft made her 16-year-old daughter suicidal, has also escalated her campaign to the Magistrates Court, suing the teenager's doctor for \$100,000 in damages.

In her statement of claim, Nicola Mulcahy alleges that Vanessa Haller misrepresented and falsely promoted Zoloft as a safe, effective and approved drug for children, and did not explain the side effects.

The report also analysed PBS dispensing records, saying that more than 270,000 Zoloft and Prozac scripts were prescribed to children last year, contrary to official advice.

Pharmacy heart health help

A GROUP of Victorian pharmacies will this month take part in a heart health research project in conjunction with Monash University, the University of Tasmania and the Greater Green Triangle University Dept of Rural Health in Warrnambool.

The project looks at the health benefits which can result when community pharmacists take a greater, more specific role in cardiovascular health care.

Gardasil set to eradicate HPV

GARDASIL is expected to virtually wipe out human papillomavirus (HPV) infections in Australian women by 2050, Cancer Council NSW announced today.

A new study has suggested that, if the high rate of immunisation amongst girls continues, the number of new HPV cases in women will fall by more than 50 per cent in the next two years; and in 40 years, the number of cases will fall by 97 per cent.

A national program launched last April has seen 3.7 million girls receive the cervical cancer vaccine.

Before the vaccination program, there were 108,000 new infections of HPV16 - responsible for half of cervical cancers - every year, but that number is expected to fall to 47,000 by 2010.

Codral brand push

CODRAL claims its brand presence has never been stronger, with outdoor advertising, TV ads and advertorials combining to drive consumers into pharmacy.

The \$5.2m promotional campaign also includes a recently launched MediFacts Infomercial with an "underlying message for consumers to visit a pharmacy for the most effective and reliable relief from colds and flu."

Arthritis a frequent "fellow traveller"

ARTHRITIS is the most frequent "fellow-traveller" in people with other health problems and may help to make them worse, according to new research.

A high proportion of those seeing their GP have two or more potentially serious and long term health problems, with arthritis and back pain among the most common diagnoses in combination with psychological problems and heart disease, the study showed.

Dr Mona Marabani, president of Arthritis Australia, said arthritis and back pain could have a more profound impact on our health and longevity than many people have suspected.

"We agree with one of the main conclusions of this research, which is that you can't focus on single diseases because if you do, you lose the chance to help people where it really hurts - in their joints and backs and allow them to take on a healthier lifestyle," she said.

GSK herpes ads

GLAXOSMITHKLINE this week launched the next phase of its *The Facts* sexual health campaign educating Australians about genital herpes.

Marketing will include ads in print, online and on TV, showing a wide range of underwear to highlight the fact that "anyone can get herpes."

GSK is encouraging pharmacists to visit www.thefacts.com.au and stock up on *Facts Packs*, a free patient information resource for people newly diagnosed with or living with genital herpes.

RGH Pharmacy

Due to popular demand the
RGH Pharmacy
Anticoagulation Handbook
is now available to the
pharmacy industry across Australia.

The handbook gives patients important information about warfarin treatment and has a chart to record INR results.

Repatriation General Hospital is making it available for purchase for \$2.80 per booklet, reduced to \$2.40 for PSA and SHPA members.

More information
chris.alderman@rgh.sa.gov.au



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Health boost for frequent flyers

Frequent Flyer Health Boost is a multivitamin supplement specifically formulated for air travellers, containing Vitamin C, zinc, Echinacea, herbs and essential vitamins and minerals to help support the immune system while travelling. Coming in an orange flavoured effervescent tablet it is convenient to take and absorbed quickly into the body.

RRP: \$14.95

Stockist: Care Pharmaceuticals, Tel: 1800 788 870



Discreet leg relief

SoluVein looks like normal knee high stockings, but provides the ideal compression level needed for everyday wear. The lycra product is ideal for people who regularly suffer from leg circulation relief, as well as those who are flying, recovering from sport or pregnant. The product also has microcapsules of six essential oils for built-in freshness.

RRP: \$24.90

Stockist: Trimex, Tel: (02) 93159472

Babies' breath

NoseFrida is a nasal aspirator for infants aged 0-2 years that reduces the amount of mucus in the nose, helping the baby to breathe, feed and sleep easier. Its hygiene filter may also help to eliminate any risk of bacterial transfer from the child to another family member.

RRP: \$19.95

Stockist: Max Pharma

Tel: (03) 9888 5222



Waterless cleansing

Garnier Skin Naturals Clean Sensitive is the first full-service range that does not require water to cleanse or wash away make-up. Free from alcohol and fragrance, the products contain water lily, lipo amino acid derivative and vitamin B5 for their moisturising and soothing properties.

RRP: \$7.49 - \$9.99

Stockist: L'Oreal Paris, Tel: 1300 659 259

Vera Wang wedding

A fresh green floral, Vera Wang Bouquet sets out to capture the romance and beauty of a radiant, modern bride. Opening notes of dew drops and blackcurrant leaves mellow to a honeysuckle and paper-white narcissus heart, with a warm cedar wood base.

RRP: \$120 - \$160

Stockist: Coty, Tel: 1800 812 663



SOS: save our soft hands

Nivea Hand SOS Intensive Balm repairs and relieves dry, chapped hands. The key ingredient, panthenol, provides long-lasting skin-softening effect. Panthenol is a component of co-enzyme A, which encourages regeneration of cells, helps repair wounds and reduces inflammation.

RRP: \$5.50

Stockist: Nivea, Tel: 1800 444 002



DISPENSARY CORNER

POLICE investigating a woman who shoplifted some cosmetics in Germany last week were left with a pretty good clue.

33-year-old Birgit Mahler stuffed about \$200 worth of products into her handbag and hurriedly left the shop in the city of Sonthofen without paying, running off after a security tag activated an alarm.

"Unfortunately she forgot about her six-year-old daughter who was left standing alone wondering where her mother had gone," said a police spokesman.

After social services were called, the child's father arrived and "seemed genuinely surprised to hear how his daughter had been lost."

Police have arranged to interview the miscreant mother.

VIAGRA may be effective for women, too, according to a US study which found that females on antidepressants suffered less sexual side effects if they also took the erectile dysfunction medication.

The *Journal of the American Medical Association* report said that sexual problems can prompt many people to stop taking drugs to treat depression.

"By treating this bothersome treatment-associated adverse effect...patients can remain antidepressant-adherent, and improve depression disease management outcomes," said Dr George Nurnberg of the University of New Mexico.

The researchers studied 98 women with an average age of 37 who suffered a lack of arousal due to antidepressants.

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