

4 Symbion bidders

METCASH remains in the running for Symbion Health's pharmacy and consumer divisions, alongside three other contenders according to the *Financial Review*.

Cerebos is understood to have exited the bidding ahead of a 10 Jul deadline for final bids.

Private equity firms Ironbridge and Archer Capital are still interested, alongside Zuellig Pharma, while Pacific Equity Partners is also reportedly looking at the assets which Primary Health Care inherited when it finally got its hands on Symbion.

Sigma Pharmaceuticals has officially pulled out, but retains an interest through a proposed joint venture distribution arrangement with Metcash.

New treatment

A NEW anti-inflammatory drug has shown to reduce signs of both Huntingdon's and motor neurone disease in rats.

Early human trials had shown the drug, delivered orally, had no major side-effects.

The drug, PMX205, works to block a protein involved in the body's inflammatory processes.

University of QLD pharmacologist Trent Woodruff, developer of the drug has shown in animals that PMX205 blocks inflammation of a type of brain cell, known as glia.

"It interrupts the inflammation cycle in the brain...thereby preventing cell loss," he said.

Minfos key e-script role

THE Minfos pharmacy dispensing system is playing a key role in the launch of Australia's first electronic prescribing program, currently under trial in the Northern Territory.

Last month the NT's Top End Division of General Practice launched a new E-Scripts program which is designed to combat fraud and transcription errors.

Although pharmacists are renowned for their expertise in reading doctors' scrawls, this may no longer be an essential skill.

The program replaces handwritten signatures with an

Medclaims closing

MEDICARE Australia's MedClaims claiming channel will close on 30 Jun 08, with GPs who currently use the system forced to switch to an alternative by that date.

Hi-Tech underpants

HIGH TECHNOLOGY underpants could soon save men from heart attack and stroke.

So-called "smartpants" are being developed to monitor the blood pressure of male wearers via sensors in the waistband that detect the speed of blood flow through arteries.

The underpants are part of a four-year project to incorporate health-monitoring systems into clothes, bedding and home appliances.

NEW

No need to
SMOKE.

Program for Pharmacy



electronic version and a barcode, generated by the GP.

Patients still receive a printed hard copy of the prescription, but the data is also sent to the pharmacy's dispensing system via the internet.

"The data from the electronic script is imported directly into minfos," said a spokesperson for the firm, Daniel Thomas.

"Essentially this will reduce human error which can occur as a result of the pharmacists' transcription or because of badly handwritten scripts which are hard to decipher," he said.

Online renewals

THE Pharmacy Board of NSW is offering online renewal of Pharmacy premises registration on its website.

Users will need to use the registration number (commencing with PC) and the password provided on the renewal notice to login at www.pbns.org.au.

Smoking hurts babies

A THIRD of babies whose parents smoke at home end up in hospital before their first birthday, research shows.

Doctors have found passive smoking weakens babies' immune systems and puts them at higher risk of potentially lethal infectious diseases.

The study, published on the respected Tobacco Control journal's website showed babies exposed to passive smoke in their first six months were 45 per cent more likely to need hospital treatment for an infectious disease by age eight.

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DISPENSARY CORNER

A FOUR-YEAR-OLD boy in Taiwan is in nicotine rehab after he became addicted to smoking his father's cigars.

The father took his children, aged 9 and 4, for therapy after catching them stealing his cigarettes and cigars.

The boys admitted the theft, saying they did it because they thought their father looked "cool" when he smoked.

A doctor at the rehabilitation centre criticised the man for not having treatment alongside his children.

"The best way to remove a child's addiction is to set a good example," said Dr Xue Guangjie.

A NURSING home in Germany has come up with a unique way to stop its residents with Alzheimer's from wandering off.

The Benrath Senior Centre in Dusseldorf has built a fake bus stop out the front of the facility.

It looks identical to a standard stop, but no buses stop there.

An official said the move followed a number of patients needing to be rescued after absconding trying to get home.

"The long-term memory is still active. They know the green and yellow bus sign and remember that waiting there means they will go home," he said.

"We will approach them and say that the bus is coming later today and invite them into the home for a coffee. Five minutes later they have completely forgotten they wanted to leave."

DOCTORS in Japan had good news for a man last week after an operation to remove a tumour.

He did not actually have cancer - but the "growth" that had been causing him significant discomfort was actually a surgical towel which had been left inside him during a surgery 25 years earlier.

Surgeons at the Asahi General Hospital apparently accidentally left the towel behind after an operation to treat an ulcer.

"The towel was greenish blue although we are not sure about its original colour," said a spokesman for the hospital.

HOT Travel Deals

WELCOME to *Pharmacy Daily's* new 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.

Escape winter with this great deal from Club Med Lindeman Island, where partners can stay for free. Club Med offers an all inclusive package with flights, accommodation, all meals and an open bar. Prices ex Sydney for an 8 night stay start from \$2994, for travel before 26 Sept 08. For bookings call 1800 258 263.

www.travel.com.au has free Upgrade offers with British Airways. Fly to Singapore, Bangkok or Europe and receive a free upgrade in one direction. Available until 15th July, go to www.travel.com.au to book.

Broome and The Kimberley Holidays still have availability on the September departure of their exclusive 18 night rail/cruise expedition. The tour includes 2 nights on 'The Ghan', 3 nights in Darwin with a 1 day tour to Litchfield National Park, plus a 10 night expedition aboard the Oceanic Discoverer exploring the Kimberley coast between Darwin and Broome, finishing with 3 nights at the Cable Beach Club Resort in Broome. Airfares not included. Prices for this fabulous adventure start from \$10,552 pp. To book call 1300 245 565