

## Ageing committee

PHARMACY isn't represented on a "revamped industry advisory committee" announced this week by Ageing Minister Justine Elliot to improve consultation within the aged care sector.

The new Ageing Consultative Committee merges the former Aged Care Advisory Committee and the Community care Advisory Committee.

MEANWHILE Elliot also yesterday met with a Dutch group called Humanitas Foundation which offers an innovative housing model allowing many older people to live in their own homes until the end of their lives.

Known as "ageing in place" the "Apartments for Life" model was developed by academic Dr Hans Becker, who's currently touring Australia.

Elliot said the Australian aged care industry could incorporate some elements of the project in its future operations.

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## Symbion deal opposition

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia is formally opposing a proposal by grocery distributor Metcash to buy the former Symbion Pharmacy and Consumer divisions from new owner Primary Health Care.

The Guild has sent a submission to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission in response to a letter inviting feedback as part of an ACCC "informal review" of the deal, according to a *Financial Review* report today.

Metcash is one of a number of bidders for Symbion Pharmacy Services, and its offer includes a proposed joint distribution venture with Sigma Pharmaceuticals (PD 23 May).

Sigma ceo Elmo de Alwis last month outlined the deal which

would see the logistics and buying functions of the Sigma and Symbion Pharmacy wholesaling businesses combined "to deliver buying and cost synergies."

The ACCC probe into the deal is ongoing, with submissions finalised last week and the findings due to be announced on Wed 09 Jul.

Full details of the Guild ACCC submission weren't available before PD's deadline today.

MEANWHILE Primary Health has extended the deadline for second-phase bids on its sale of the Symbion businesses until the end of Jul.

## Gardasil knockback

CSL Limited has been rebuffed by the US Food and Drug Administration, with an application by marketing partner Merck to extend the use of HPV vaccine Gardasil refused.

Merck had applied to allow the vaccine's use in women aged 27 to 45, but questions raised by the FDA didn't allow a decision to be made within the appropriate timeframe.

The company said it expected to be able to respond to the undisclosed issues next month.

## MA hails report

MEDICINES Australia has welcomed the release of the *Australia's Health 2008* report (PD Tue), saying it "reaffirms the critical role of innovative new medicines in the healthcare system."

MA ceo Ian Chalmers said the report found that cholesterol lowering medication helps "nearly two million people a day" while anti-depressants were making a difference to the lives of 780,000 people.

"This report demonstrates very clearly the enormous benefit that Australian patients gain from the appropriate use of prescription medicines," he said.

"These findings reinforce the importance of the Government's strong focus on preventative health and chronic disease."

## Diabetes alert

DIABETES Australia (DA) says more needs to be done to combat the rising tide of diabetes.

"Clearly, national strategies are needed beyond behaviourally based awareness raising campaigns that focus just on physical activity and healthy eating," said DA president Gary Deed.

"We need concerted, committed and coordinated action at systems and organisational level to address the underlying social determinants of health that cause risk factors for obesity and diabetes," he said.

Deed was responding to this week's Australian Institute of Health and Welfare report (PD Tue) which showed the prevalence of diabetes had doubled in the past ten years.

## Migraine surgery

A CLINIC has opened in London today which claims to offer for the first time a "surgical approach to migraine."

The procedure involves the removal of a small muscle around the eyebrow, with the clinic claiming that the surgery is based on the finding that "many migraine attacks are triggered by an interaction between the corrugator muscle and the trigeminal nerve."

They warned that not all migraines are triggered at these points so the surgery will not be suitable for all sufferers.

Other migraine treatments which have gained popularity in the US in recent years use Botox to paralyse forehead muscles.



## DISPENSARY CORNER

BE careful when you take those passport photos.

Strict new rules have caused problems for a bald British man, who was told his pictures weren't acceptable because his pate was "too shiny".

42-year-old Ian Down submitted his documents at a passport office, where a clerk noticed a flash reflection off his head, and told him the picture wasn't acceptable.

He was sent away to get some new pictures taken and the next time used talcum powder to reduce the glare.

TALK about natural energy!

UK mobile network operator Orange has come up with the perfect solution for active people wanting to keep their mobile phones operating - a device which uses "dance energy" to charge the batteries.

Orange has teamed up with a firm specialising in renewable energy called Gotwind, and is offering the special chargers which attach to a user's arm.

They apparently utilise a system of weights and magnets which top up charge in a storage battery as the wearers dance, which can later be used to recharge the phone.



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