

Reliance on asthma inhalers

MANY asthma patients are over-relying on OTC salbutamol inhalers, according to a survey in seven Queensland pharmacies.

The study, by University of Queensland researchers, found 75% of patients had poorly controlled asthma but two-thirds of these people did not realise how bad their asthma was and about half did not have a regular GP.

More than one-third of patients should have been using a preventer but did not have one, while many of the people who had a puffer used it every day.

Only 23% had a written asthma action plan.

The findings, presented at the National Medicines Symposium, suggest there is a significant subgroup of asthma patients relying on puffers, rather than getting their condition brought under control by a GP and pharmacist.

New ear vaccine

A VACCINE for ear diseases could be available in Australia by early next year.

Synflorix, developed by GlaxoSmithKline, claims to cut ear diseases by one-third. GSK said the application to approve the vaccine had been lodged in Australia.

Poster comp winner

THE winner of the National Pharmacies ASSITEJ poster design competition is Abby, aged 7, of Beaumont.

Her winning design was displayed in the windows of six National Pharmacies stores in SA and Victoria during the ASSITEJ 2008 World Congress and Performing Arts Festival for Young People.

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First national PSA AGM

LAST night Pharmaceutical Society of Australia national president Brian Grogan presided over the PSA's first ever annual general meeting as a "single, unified organisation".

He outlined the major achievements of the organisation over the last year - in particular the historic vote and signing ceremony which made the new structure possible.

Grogan said members were currently in the process of electing branch committees in each state, which will in turn be able to nominate one Director to

See us at HIP expo

PHARMACY Daily will be at the Healthcare in Pharmacy Expo tomorrow and Sat, being held at the Melbourne Exhibition Centre.

Come and visit us at Stand No 1 and enter our competition for your chance to win a Nintendo Wii.

Biotech billions

THE biotechnology industry has yet to turn a profit, but billions of dollars continue to be invested in the development of genetically engineered drugs required by pharmaceutical companies.

Biotech firms worldwide raised \$31.2 billion in 2007, including a record \$5.7 billion in venture capital funding for biotech businesses in the US, according to an article in *The Advertiser*.

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the board - with states comprising over 20% of PSA's membership each nominating an extra director.

He formally thanked all PSA branches, singling out the state representatives involved in the transitional process who had "been very dedicated, cohesive and cooperative in overcoming the hurdles that have arisen."

Despite the major structural changes PSA's work for members continued unabated, he said.

The establishment of PSA's Projects Section had seen the delivery of resources in partnership with Alzheimer's Australia, while the Pharmacy Self Care program delivered a huge seven campaigns in 2007.

The meeting also formally adopted the annual report and accounts for the year to 31 Dec 07.

Glaucoma doubles

GLAUCOMA costs may double in Australia to almost \$4 billion a year in the next 20 years, a report predicts.

The study by Access Economics for the Centre for Eye Research estimates that 50 per cent of people with the disease are undiagnosed and unaware their peripheral vision is disappearing.

The total cost of the disease in 2005 was \$1.9 billion including \$342 million in direct healthcare costs for medication and doctor visits.

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.

For those with a taste for the unusual, Flight Centre has put together a list of some of the most unique accommodation options available worldwide:

Woodpecker Hotel - Vasteras, Sweden - is perched in a 130yr old Oak tree, 13m above the ground. A small hotel, it can only accommodate 1 or 2 guests per visit. Access to the tree house lodge is by rope ladder only. Flights to Stockholm from Sydney are priced from \$1976 contact local Flight Centre for hotel rates.

Dog Bark Park Inn - Cottonwood, Idaho, USA - this

2 storey B & B was made famous for being the 'World's biggest Beagle'. Entrance is through his hindquarters, with a bed in his tummy, a second sleeping area in his head, and a reading nook in his muzzle.

Packages priced from \$1998 including flights from Sydney.

Quebec Ice Hotel, Quebec City, Canada - spend the night in a snow fort, open from Jan to Apr, made from 15,000 tons of snow & 500 tons of ice. With over 30 artistically designed rooms including cinema, wedding chapel & more.

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DISPENSARY CORNER

CHEWING gum could become an important part of the treatment regime for patients recovering from bowel operations.

A study at Dorset County Hospital in the UK found that people who had bowel surgery were able to be discharged from hospital about two days earlier if they chewed gum for 30 minutes three times a day.

The chewing action reportedly triggered gastric hormones, in turn stimulating the bowel to allow patients to resume normal eating.

"Gum gets patients better and home quicker," said consultant nurse Harriett Wright.

"We will now recommend it after surgery to help bowels to recover quicker. Hopefully it will become practice now," she said.

HERE'S an expensive way to clog your arteries.

A hamburger outlet in New York's Wall Street financial district has just raised the price of its most expensive offering - a US\$175 hamburger.

The Wall Street Burger Shoppe said it needed to put the price up (from the previous US\$150 level) to ensure that it remained the most expensive burger in New York.

"Wall Street has good days and bad days. We wanted to have the everyday burger (for \$4)...and then something special if you really have a good day on Wall Street," said a spokesperson for the eatery.

The US\$175 burger has a Kobe beef patty, black truffles, aged Guryere cheese, wild mushrooms, seared foie gras and "flecks of gold leaf" on a brioche bun.

The restaurant said it sells about 25 a month in its fine dining room - compared to hundreds of \$4 burgers at a counter downstairs.

Without the black truffles the expensive burger is a snap at just US\$32, and it also comes with "golden truffle mayonnaise, Belgian-style fries and a mixed greens and tomato salad."