

## Offshore conference

THE Vic branch of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia will host its first ever Offshore Conference in Penang, Malaysia next Sep.

Timed to coincide with school holidays the conference's first class educational components will be complemented by "exciting social functions and tours" to allow networking in a fun and relaxed environment.

There will also be partner and children programs on offer.

The conference will comprise 13 CPE points, with a brochure available in coming weeks.

Info [events@vic.guild.org.au](mailto:events@vic.guild.org.au).

## Swan on prostate

FEDERAL treasurer Wayne Swan MP is the keynote speaker at the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia's inaugural national conference.

Swan is a prostate cancer survivor and will open the event on Sunday.

Associate Prof Phillip Stricker, Dr Craig Hased and Prof Tony Costello and Dr Stephen Strum will also speak at the two-day conference.

## GSK UK cuts

GLAXOSMITHKLINE plans to close its manufacturing site in Dartford, England, by 2013, according to a Reuters report.

The move, which would cause the loss of 620 jobs, reflects falling demand for drugs made at the site, including Lamictal and Valtrex, as patents expire.

Last week, GSK announced 1,000 sales jobs would be axed in the US by the end of this year.

The site closure is subject to consultation with trade unions and employees.



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## Insulin weight loss misuse

ONE in three type-1 diabetes patients is manipulating insulin for weight control, new research has revealed.

The shock finding has prompted Diabetes Australia to call on all healthcare professionals to discuss the risks of insulin omission with their patients.

The report highlights that almost half (48.5%) of those who skip their insulin intake, do so daily, with a further one in four (28.5%) on a weekly basis.

Dr Ralph Audehm from Diabetes Australia Vic said that while health professionals have made strong inroads in the management of diabetes, there was a need for a new and direct approach to addressing the psychosocial effects of diabetes in patients.

"Studies have shown that in most cases, insulin manipulation reflects deeper psychological issues such as loss of control, anxiety and diabetes-related

distress, and low self-esteem," said Dr Audehm.

The research also found that only 12% of people with type 1 diabetes had spoken with a healthcare professional about skipping or restricting insulin as a means of losing weight.

Manipulation of medications for the purposes of weight loss is now recognised as an inappropriate compensatory behaviour in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM - IV) criteria for diagnosis of an eating disorder.

## Organ donation laws

LEGISLATION setting up the new Australian Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Authority has passed the Senate.

Now the govt will work with clinicians and the community to "build a world-leading system" governing organ donation.

## ASMI registrations

AUSTRALIAN Self Medication Industry has issued a reminder that this is the last chance to register for next week's ASMI AGM & Conference.

As well as the chance to network with colleagues, conference presentations will address the creation of a broader self-care environment in Australia. The conference is on Nov 19 at Australian Technology Park, Redfern Sydney - more info [www.asmi.com.au](http://www.asmi.com.au).

## 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.

Although the Australian dollar has slipped back, shopping and sunshine in Hawaii is still very appealing and Freestyle Holidays is offering an amazing deal to the Aloha state.

Combine 'Earlybird' Hawaiian Airlines fares from Australia to Honolulu from just \$1196, and add on a range of three night Aqua Hotels packages starting from just \$189 per person.

The special is valid for Wednesday departures 09 Feb-14 Mar 2009 - more information from your friendly travel agent.

If you're in search of something more adventurous,

Peregrine Adventures is offering a \$250 discount on selected trips in its new Australia/NZ brochure.

The special is available for bookings made until 12 Dec and travel up to 30 Sep 09.

More information at [www.peregrineadventures.com](http://www.peregrineadventures.com).

And if you're just looking to flop and drop close to home, Queensland's Hamilton Island has released a Stay 7 Pay 5 deal at a number of properties, for travel 18 Jan-31 Mar 09.

Prices for 7 nights start at \$738 per person twin share - for bookings call 13 REEF (13 7333).



## DISPENSARY CORNER

OBSESITY was good news for a Canadian prison inmate this week, after the 205kg gang member was released because he was too big for his cell.

Michel Lapointe - also known as 'Big Mike' - was arrested in 2006 and sentenced to five years earlier this year.

However according to a report in the *Journal de Montreal* newspaper he couldn't fit on the chair in his cell, and his body was also too wide for the prison beds.

Authorities released him early saying he'd already been detained for over two years, two other facilities had refused to accept the 37-year-old, and "your prison conditions are difficult because of your health."

IT'S not quite turning lead into gold, but scientists in Mexico are being described as modern-day alchemists after finding a way to transform tequila into diamonds.

The researchers at the National Autonomous University of Mexico found that the heated vapour from the national drink *tequila blanco* can form a diamond film when deposited on a stainless steel base.

The diamonds formed are very small crystals, too tiny to be used in jewellery, but may have industrial applications including radiation detection, as a silicon substitute in computer chips or to coat cutting tools.

After the initial success with a cheap bottle of tequila the scientists are now studying the effect of fancier tequilas to find which brand works the best.

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