

Robotic exposure

A STUDY in the US has found that some medication-dispensing robots expose pharmacy workers to unsafe levels of airborne drug agent particles.

Independent laboratory AlburtyLab tested three types of systems - the McKesson/Parata RDS, which uses air pressure to eject pills into prescription bottles; ScriptPro SP 200, which uses gravity; and manual counting.

The air pressure-driven robot, used in hundreds of retail pharmacies, was shown to expose workers to "pill dust".

"Furthermore, the concentrations and particle size ranges observed frequently exceed the levels that are considered safe under USEPA [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency] Standards," wrote the authors of the study.

They recommended further studies and procedures to monitor the health impact on staff.

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API reassures investors

THE share price of Australian Pharmaceutical Industries climbed 30% yesterday after the company issued an update confirming earlier guidance of pre-tax earnings of \$49-\$50m.

API is due to announce its full year results on 30 Oct and up until yesterday its share price had collapsed about 75% since Feb.

Chairman Peter Robinson said the company was "continuing to deliver on its strategic plans."

He said API continues to record double digit sales growth in its Pharmacy Distribution business, adding that "during July and August the company successfully managed the largest series of price reductions (PBS Reforms)

with minimal impact on customers.

"In addition our distribution arrangement with Alphapharm continues to deliver to expectations," Robinson said.

He also said that API's retail Priceline Pharmacy franchises were reporting "very positive sales growth as a result of strong brand position and targeted marketing," with growth in both store numbers and revenue.

The company also said that it didn't need to raise extra cash to finance a \$60m investment in its 'Revitalise' supply chain program.

Revitalised is expected to deliver \$18m a year in cost savings for API once completed.

PA08 opens

THE Pharmacy Assistant National Conference was officially opened this morning by Wendy Phillips, Pharmacy Guild ceo.

The event kicked off last night with welcome drinks at the Holiday Inn Surfers Paradise.

The winner of the Pharmacy Assistant of the Year, who was selected at yesterday's judging session, will be announced tonight.

Seroquel XR on PBS

SEROQUEL XR (quetiapine fumarate), the new simplified treatment for schizophrenia, will be available on the PBS from 1 November.

The once-daily, extended release drug aids compliance in patients with schizophrenia.

It has been shown to prevent psychotic relapse and is well-tolerated when switching from other antipsychotics.

Win a Slimmm Starter Pack!

THIS week **Pharmacy Daily** has teamed up with Slimmm and API to give subscribers a chance to win a Starter Pack for the exciting new weight management program, Slimmm - and today is your last opportunity to win!

Slimmm is a meal replacement program, designed to fit in with busy lifestyles, it works by replacing two meals per day with shakes, soups or bars.

The Starter Pack includes a week's supply of shakes, a shaker, a program guide and 2 FREE meal replacement bars.

To enter, pharmacists simply have to send the correct answer to the following question to comp@pharmacydaily.com.au.



Today's question is:

What are two products from the
Slimmm range?

The first person to respond with the correct answer will win this great prize.



HINT: For clues and information visit
www.slimmm.com.au.

CONGRATULATIONS to Paula Caird of Fremantle Hospital and Health Service who was yesterday's winner.

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Qld training

THE PSA and SHPA will hold a continuing professional education seminar on Indigenous Health Equality at 7pm on Wed 29 Oct at Rockhampton Base Hospital.

There's also a session on Chronic Pain Management to be held next Mon 20 Oct from 7pm at Griffith University on the Gold Coast, with a complimentary light supper from 6.15pm.

Registrations 07 3844 4900.



DISPENSARY CORNER

HOW about this for social security fraud?

The family of a dead woman in the USA have been arrested on charges of "embezzlement and elder abuse" after continuing to collect her pension checks despite her death last Dec.

Authorities believe that 84-year-old Ramona Allmond died of natural causes, but say the family covered up the death by cremating her remains on a makeshift barbecue in their back yard.

RESEARCHERS in the USA have found that the 1977 Bee Gees disco anthem "Stayin' Alive" could actually save your life.

Dr David Matlock of the University of Illinois said the song's tempo, of 103 beats per minute, almost exactly matched American Heart Association recommendations for CPR.

He found that a sample group of doctors and medical students who performed chest compressions while listening to "Stayin' Alive" kept up a perfect pace, with the findings confirmed even if they just hummed the song in their minds.

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