

Guild Update

This week's update from the Guild

H1N1 vaccinations Give your feedback about H1N1 vaccine uptake amongst healthcare workers

Your participation is being sought for a new research project, conducted by the Influenza Specialist Group. The group would like to know your thoughts about how influenza vaccination programs could be better implemented, and also to gauge the proportion of Australian health care workers who have been vaccinated against pandemic A(H1N1) influenza, and the reasons behind this.

Community pharmacy staff, as key frontline health care workers, will be able to provide valuable insights and data to the research team.

The data that you provide will serve to inform future influenza vaccination programs and pandemic planning.

Please complete the survey by visiting: www.isg.org.au and you will also go into the draw to win a \$250 voucher.

The closing date for the survey is 15 January 2010.

If you would like further information, please contact: Hayley Dowling 02 9928 1521; mob 0404 852 884; email hayley.dowling@bm.com Sarah Cornhill 02 9928 1504; mob 0408 978 629; email sarah.cornhill@bm.com



The Pharmacy Guild of Australia

Merck Serono R&D focus

THE Australian operations of European pharmaceutical company Merck Serono are hopeful of attracting more of the firm's clinical trials to Australia, after the local office was given a greater allocation of R&D funding by its Swiss headquarters.

Local Merck Serono managing director David Garmon-Jones told PD at a briefing this morning that the extra resources were likely to see more in-house staff monitoring trials, with the company having a strong pipeline of new products.

Merck Serono is very active in novel (non-chemotherapy) cancer treatments, with the company also hopeful that a first line indication for colorectal cancer for its Erbitux will be granted by the TGA early next year.

Erbitux is already approved for head and neck cancer treatment but has been knocked back six times for PBS reimbursement for

Whitening products ok

THE Pharmacy Board of Victoria has clarified a previous warning about pharmacies carrying out teeth whitening procedures, saying there's no prohibition on the sale of teeth whitening products.

The Board says its earlier statement was "advice to pharmacists that they may infringe legislation if they or their staff were involved in an invasive or irreversible procedure," meaning no contact should be made with the client's mouth, and referral to a dental health professional should be made when necessary.

The statement "clearly advised that it did not apply to the sale of products that are marketed for teeth whitening," the Board said.

third line treatment of metastatic colorectal cancer.

The multiple PBAC refusals have now seen Merck Serono withdraw its previous Erbitux access program for colorectal cancer patients.

Another major focus for the company is multiple sclerosis, with a new "electronic injection" system for its MS medication Rebif also set to launch here next year.

Merck Serono has also submitted an Australian marketing application for Cladribine, which is the first oral therapy for multiple sclerosis.

Other Merck Serono pipeline products include medications in the fertility and endocrinology.

And another exciting development is positive results from a trial of the company's Stimuvax cancer vaccine, which stimulates the body's own defences to fight lung and breast cancer.

Swine flu kills 10,000

US health officials have confirmed that over 50 million Americans have so far been infected with Influenza A (H1N1), killing 10,000 mostly children and younger adults.

Gov responds to obesity

THE federal government, in partnership with the states and territories, has announced a \$72 million dollar funding program boost for local governments to promote healthier lifestyles to Australians, to combat a rise in the risk factors such as obesity relating to chronic disease (PD 11 Dec).

42 Local Government Areas have been invited to apply for a slice of the funding by outlining their plans to target high risk individuals, with twelve areas selected to participate in the pilot scheme.



The Pharmacy Guild of Australia

Registration now open!

www.appconference.com

End to three year rule

THE Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, in conjunction with several other industry bodies including the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee and the Company Chemists Association, is calling for an end to the UK Department of Health's 'Three Year Rule'.

The three year regulation stipulates that European pharmacists cannot act as the responsible pharmacist unless the pharmacy practice they are operating from has been 'registered with the RPSGB' for a minimum of three years.

In its letter the RPSGB argues that the regulation should be scrapped as it does not offer any public benefit because it is not linked to the EU pharmacists competence or length of their own personal RPSGB registration, but rather to the date of pharmacy premises registration.

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Prescription evaluation

THE first TGA Australian Public Assessment Reports (AusPARs) for prescription medicines will be published this month, for submissions considered by the Australian Drug Evaluation Committee held on 02 Oct.

A guidance document has just been released, giving information about the structure and processes for compilation for the review and publishing of an AusPAR, including the principles for determining what information is commercially confidential.

The TGA said before an AusPAR is published it provides the sponsor with an opportunity to review the document to ensure it doesn't contain confidential information.

End of free Gardasil

THE Cancer Council is urging all women eligible for the 2nd and 3rd dose of Gardasil to go and get it before the cut off on 31 Dec.

Vaccine issuers are also being advised to order their final free Gardasil stocks by no later than 18 Dec.

Win an A'kin PureMAN pack



Every day this week, A'kin is giving **Pharmacy Daily** readers the chance to win an **[A'kin] PureMAN Everyday Essentials Pack** valued at \$39.90 each.

[A'kin] PureMAN Energising All-In-One Hair + Body Wash 150ml, **[A'kin] PureMAN Visibly Fit 24 Hour**

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New Sigma sleep product

SIGMA Pharmaceuticals has announced a new licensing agreement with Israeli firm Neurim Pharmaceuticals which will see its Circadin launched in Australia.

Circadin is indicated for the treatment of primary insomnia, and is currently approved for use in 33 countries, containing prolonged release melatonin.

Sigma said it would launch Circadin in Australia in 2010, with the agreement seeing it pay Neurim an upfront amount as well as an ongoing share of revenues.

"Circadin is the first and only approved melatonin based ethical drug," said Neurim's chief scientific officer, Prof Nava Zisapel.

The company said Circadin is an "IP protected formulation" which essentially mimics the normal nocturnal profile of melatonin, a naturally occurring hormone produced by the pineal gland which has a pivotal role in the regulation of circadian rhythms and sleep.

Sigma Pharmaceuticals md Elmo

de Alwis said he was pleased to licence Circadin "and introduce a new class treatment for insomnia into Australia and New Zealand.

"We are confident that Sigma, the first Asia Pacific partner to Neurim, will be able to realise the full potential of Circadin for the benefit of Australian patients," de Alwis said.

The move follows the TGA approval of Circadin, based on clinical studies showing positive effects on sleep induction, sleep quality and day-time functioning, as well as no signs of dependency.

Neurim said there were already plans in place to register Circadin in NZ, the US, Asia-Pacific and Latin America, with the company seeking strategic partners for marketing and distribution in additional markets.

Heart linked to cancer

A RECENT study has linked cancer during childhood and adolescence with increased risks of heart disease.

The results of the research found that although the risk was low, participants were still six times more likely to develop congestive heart failure, myocardial infarction, pericardial disease and valvular abnormalities in the five years or more post-diagnosis, when compared with their siblings.

The authors recommended ongoing clinical monitoring of the patients for heart conditions.

Inside Radiology

A NEW comprehensive patient information website has been launched by the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists, featuring the latest information about radiology tests and procedures in easy-to-understand language.

Aimed at educating anyone worried about an upcoming radiological procedure including joint injections and X-rays, the site provides details on specific tests and procedures and also explains why a doctor may have ordered a test, what will happen throughout the treatment, how to best prepare for it and if there will be any side effects.

The site is open to the public; see www.insideradiology.com.au.



DISPENSARY CORNER

RESEARCHERS from James Cook University in Qld have finally provided an answer to the age old question... to rip or not to rip.

According to a recent article in the *Medical Journal of Australia* a quick-rip removal of a Band-Aid is much better than a slow and steady two-second pull.

Some 65 intrepid medical students applied Band-Aids to their bodies, and removed them, either in a quick pull or a steady slow removal procedure, and rated their pain levels from 0-10.

The average pain level for a quick rip was 0.92 as opposed to the higher 1.58 for the slow removal.

"We hope that our results will assist parents, carers and health care staff in adopting the least painful method of Band-Aid removal," the researchers said.

AN Australian dentist is in a fair bit of financial pain after being busted for defrauding an insurance company for the unnecessary treatment of 25 teeth.

According to reports, Dr Mark Phung treated Todd Dean for a few chipped teeth after he was walloped in the mouth by a branch while working as a tree lopper - with a total bill of \$345,000.

Phung instructed Dean to return on several occasions throughout 2002-2003 for further mouth work, charging Dean's insurer \$73,645 for root canals on 28 teeth (ouch!) as well as \$38,740 for other undisclosed procedures.

Dental experts testifying in the legal case brought against Phung by both Dean and his employer have told the court that the dental work performed by Phung was a "complete case of fraud and an extremely poor dentistry job".

"Mr Dean had every nerve, artery and vein within every tooth in his head amputated," said dental expert, Dr Neil Peppitt.

The presiding judge found in favour of Dean and his employer saying that Phung's actions were "a clear case of unjust enrichment" and that he had been 'deceptive' in claiming to be a competent dentist.