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**PHARMACY Daily** has today reached another milestone, with 6200 subscribers keeping updated with all the latest industry news by receiving **PD** every day.

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## PBS community input call

**MEDICINES** Australia has called for greater consumer input into determining which drugs get admitted into the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.

"Australia must continue to work towards greater consumer and community involvement in the evaluation process, in line with international best practice," said Medicines Australia gm Brendan Shaw. "A number of developed countries have moved to better involve patient, carer and community evidence in the development of national medicines policies and the appraisal of new products," Shaw added.

The Medicines Australia request comes on the back of a recent report by commissioned by Eli Lilly, 'Enhancing Consumer Involvement in Medicines Health Technology Assessment', which found that Australians in general have less involvement in national medicines policies and new product evaluations than counterpart populations in England, Canada and Scotland.

"This timely report has a number

of important recommendations about how community and patient input into the health technology assessment process can occur and be improved," Shaw said.

Medicines Australia has also submitted its community input concerns to the Federal Government's Health Technology Assessment Review which is currently underway.

## PSA brings in experts

**LEADING** pharmacy educator, Honorary Associate Professor Louis Roller has been confirmed as a keynote speaker at the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia's Expedition Education conference to be held next year in February.

Roller is set to engage delegates in a series of sessions covering topics including 'psychosocial aspects of pharmacy practice', 'pharmacy and complementary medicines', 'pharmacy and vitamins', 'old drugs, new tricks', 'drugs behaving badly' and 'understanding your liver.'

During his 46 year teaching career, Roller has trained more than 5000 pharmacists in a variety of subjects including chemistry, pharmacology, pharmacognosy, pharmaceuticals, clinical pharmacy, psychology, pharmaceutical microbiology and pharmacy practice and has also contributed to hundreds of scientific and professional articles and a number of book chapters.

**MEANWHILE** the PSA has announced more details of its next annual offshore conference for 2010, to be held in Beijing and Shanghai from 28 April to 7 May.

The conference sessions will focus on respiratory, rheumatology and business management areas as well as a range of therapeutic updates and the professional and business impacts arising from the fifth Community Pharmacy Agreement.

For details see [www.psa.org.au](http://www.psa.org.au).

## Ovarian cancer month

**OVARIAN** Cancer Australia is set to launch Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month in February next year, and the group is urging health professionals to take up the baton and educate women about the symptoms of ovarian cancer.

Ovarian cancer is the sixth most common cause of death in Aussie women, with around 1500 women diagnosed per annum - 75% of whom are diagnosed in the late stages.

As pap-smears do not detect ovarian cancer, symptom awareness is generally the principal means of early diagnosis; symptoms include pelvic and abdominal pain, increased abdominal size/persistent bloating, increased urinary frequency and difficulty eating and/or feeling full quickly.

See [www.ovariancancer.net.au](http://www.ovariancancer.net.au).

## Singulair patent upheld

**MERCK & Co** says the US Patent and Trademark Office has agreed to end its re-examination of the company's patent on its US\$4.5b blockbuster asthma drug Singulair.

The re-examination was launched in May after it was challenged by an "online patent-research service" called Article One Partners LLC.

The finding means that generic drug manufacturers will now have to hold off selling their own versions of Singulair until at least 2012 when Merck's patent is due to expire.

Singulair (montelukast) was listed on the PBS from 01 Dec as an add-on therapy to inhaled corticosteroids in children aged 6-14 with exercise-induced asthma (**PD** 23 Nov).

## Disinfectant regs

**THE** TGA has published a "consultation regulatory impact statement" on regulatory reforms for hard surface disinfectants.

The preferred option would maintain current TGA regulation of registrable and listable disinfectants, but transfer responsibility for the regulation of household and commercial grade disinfectants as well as sanitisers, sanitary fluids and antibacterial wipes to the National Industrial Chemicals Notification and Assessment Scheme.

The submission deadline for the consultation is now 12 Feb - more details [www.tga.gov.au](http://www.tga.gov.au).

## J&J Acclarent buy

**JOHNSON & Johnson** subsidiary Ethicon Inc. has entered an agreement to pay about US\$785m for medical technology development company Acclarent, which specialises in ear, nose and throat devices.

## AusPARs published

**AUSTRALIAN** Public Assessment Reports (AusPARs) have now been released on the TGA website for Simponi (golimumab) and Invega (paliperidone), following the announcement by the TGA (**PD** Tue) that it would publish its first AusPARs this month.

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## CPD Calendar

**WELCOME** to *Pharmacy Daily's* Continuing Professional Development Calendar, featuring upcoming events and opportunities to earn CPE and CPD points.

If you have an upcoming event you'd like us to feature, email [info@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:info@pharmacydaily.com.au).

**16-23 Jan 2010:** Pharmacy Study Tour in Aspen, Colorado - [www.medic.com.au/study-tours](http://www.medic.com.au/study-tours).

**4-17 Feb 2010:** PSA Expedition Education conference in Chile and Patagonia. Limited to 50 people - 1300 139 293.

**20 Feb 2010:** PSA Victoria, Pharmacy Management, Saturday Series, Victorian College of Pharmacy board room- 03 9389 4007.

**20 Feb 2010:** PSA Victoria, Diploma of Management, Victorian College of Pharmacy board room - 03 9389 4007.

**11-14 Mar 2010:** The 19th Australian Pharmacy Professional Conference and Trade Exhibition on the Gold Coast - [appconference.com](http://appconference.com).

**26-28 Mar 2010:** PSA NSW March Weekend on the theme of Men's and Women's Health, at Mantra Ettalong Beach. 27.5 CPD credits - [www.psa.org.au](http://www.psa.org.au).

**14-18 Apr 2010:** Australian College of Pharmacy conference Barossa Valley- 1300 651 239.

**28 Apr-07 May 2010:** The PSA will hold its 35th annual offshore conference in Beijing and Shanghai - details on 1300 139 293.

**26-28 May 2010:** The NPS's National Medicines Symposium 2010, Melbourne Conference and Exhibition Centre- [www.nms2010.org.au](http://www.nms2010.org.au).

**29-31 May 2010:** The AACP's annual ConPharm clinical seminar at The Grand Chancellor Hotel in Hobart - details [www.aacp.com.au](http://www.aacp.com.au).

**15-18 Sep 2010:** Pharmacy 2010, the Pharmacy Management Conference on Hamilton Island - [www.pharmacyconference.com.au](http://www.pharmacyconference.com.au).

**27 Sep-03 Oct 2010:** Inaugural Guild Offshore Conference in Penang - 03 9535 3646.

**18 Nov 2010:** The 2010 ASMI Conference - [www.asmi.com.au](http://www.asmi.com.au).

## Sinemet CR shortage alert

THE Pharmaceutical Society of Australia has been advised by Merck Sharp & Dohme of a "significant shortage" in the supply of Parkinson's disease drug Sinemet CR (levodopa/carbidopa) throughout 2010 and continuing into 2011.

According to MSD, the shortage isn't due to any quality or safety issue, but is part of a temporary global shortage related to a change in the source of supply and the necessary time required to obtain regulatory approvals for the change.

MSD is asking pharmacists to immediately direct all patients taking Sinemet CR to their prescribing doctor to have their current treatment reviewed, and where medically appropriate, switch to an alternative treatment.

GPs, neurologists and geriatricians have also been advised of the impending shortage, and MSD said about 80% of patients currently taking Sinemet CR will need to be switched to other treatments to ensure continuation of supplies for

patients for whom there is no suitable alternative.

MSD is also asking pharmacists not to place increased orders for Sinemet CR to avoid prematurely exhausting existing stocks.

Supplies of the immediate release formulation of Sinemet 100/25mg and 250/25mg tablets aren't expected to be affected.

Pharmacists with queries about Sinemet CR are advised to contact MSD on 1800 645 712.

## New bowel terrorism

**YESTERDAY** the Gut Foundation launched a new confronting '12 a day' bowel cancer TV advertising campaign which is aimed at putting the disease at the front of the nation's health agenda.

"This campaign highlights the fact that if 12 people were dying every day from a terrorist attack we would take drastic action," said Terry Bolin, president of the Gut Foundation.

The 30 second TV ad can also be viewed at [www.gutfoundation.com](http://www.gutfoundation.com).



## DISPENSARY CORNER

**THE** Australian health industry today started its very own social network, after an email slip-up from a Health Department staffer saw an avalanche of messages sent back and forth.

At 8.54am the first message went out to a department media mailing list asking for information about an ABC program on suicide rates this morning.

Recipients started replying to the message saying they didn't know about the program, but most used the 'Reply All' function meaning that the replies were also sent to everyone.

This cascaded into a series of exchanges, with some people offering Christmas greetings, promoting organ donation and even offering second hand cars for sale.

At last count hundreds of messages had been forwarded, with the onslaught appearing to stop once the Health Dept removed the offending group email address from its system.

*Pharmacy Daily* confesses that we too joined the fray, advising recipients that they could sign up to the newsletter - and consequently we'd like to welcome all of our new readers today.

**DRUG** tests are set to be introduced at the World Pie Eating Championship in the UK, among accusations that some competitors are illegally using cough medicine to help the pies slide down their throats.

The contest, held in Wigan, has already banned the use of gravy as a lubricant, but organiser Pauline Westwood said: "It's the dry tickly cough linctus that's the secret weapon for some."

"We allow them to have pints of water on the table but that's it."

"We've booked a couple of big lads as security who'll be frisking people looking for medicine or anything else that seems dodgy."

Westwood confirmed that tests had shown the cough mixture could knock up to two seconds off the time it takes to eat a championship pie.

## 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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**For your chance to win this great prize, simply be the first reader to email the correct answer to the daily question below to:** [comp@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:comp@pharmacydaily.com.au).

**True or false [A'kin] PureMAN Calming After Shave Balm is alcohol free?**

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Congratulations to yesterday's winner **Niroshni Gunewardhane** from **MIMS Australia**.

Check out the Purist website for hints at [www.purist.com](http://www.purist.com).