

Pfizer to fire 800

UP to 800 scientists will be let go by Pfizer this year in an effort to cut costs and refocus its research.

The New York-based company plans to reduce its global research staff (with current employee numbers around 10,000) by 5-8%, said a company spokeswoman.

Pfizer announced in September that it was reducing its research to six disease areas - alzheimer's, cancer, schizophrenia, pain, inflammation and diabetes.

\$48m scholarships

ABOUT 300 researchers have been awarded A\$48 million in postgraduate medical research scholarships.

The federally-funded projects will cover areas including indigenous health, dementia, melanoma diagnosis, diabetic eye disease and the link between mobile phone use and brain cancer.

"Australian researchers have been responsible for significant advances and discoveries in the fields of health and medical research," Treasurer Wayne Swan said in a statement.

TGA explores role

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration is considering expanding its role to include distribution and wholesaling in a bid to reduce tampering, substitution, spoilage and mislabelling of drugs.

In a briefing to industry about its 2009-10 regulatory program, the TGA said the "globalised nature of manufacturing poses risks to product security and integrity" because a drug can be manufactured, processed, packaged and sold by multiple companies in multiple countries.

A Health Department spokeswoman said that a consultation paper on the TGA's 'Good Distribution Practice' proposal would be released in the first half of this year, AAP reports.

J&J contacts pharmacies

JOHNSON & Johnson has sent letters to pharmacists addressing concerns about the recent media coverage which suggest mouthwashes containing alcohol can increase the risk of oral cancer.

The letter highlights that "the published paper on which these reports were based is from a small, selective review that does not accurately reflect the full body of evidence on the subject."

"As a trusted brand in mouthwashes, 'Listerine' has been mentioned in many of these reports," it says.

J&J, makers of Listerine, also published double-page advertisements in newspapers over the weekend "in order to reassure consumers and keep this issue in context".

The letter was faxed directly to pharmacists on Friday because "this campaign may well trigger additional queries from your customers on these topics so we wanted to give you advance notice of this initiative."

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DISPENSARY CORNER

LOOKING for a better way to show your employees they are valued - how about ending the year with a match-making bonus?

Scientists at the Chinese Academy of Sciences, over 30yrs old and holding PHD's, were rewarded by their company for a year of excellence with an evening of match-making.

Having registered over 400 interested women from a dating service, the single scientists began the evening with the hopes of finding love.

As for the results, 'We actually love life as much as they do, besides, we're all eager to get married and have a family life,' said one of the attending scientists.

SO you've heard of puppy Prozac right, well now there's parrot Prozac!

Joyce Greenslade, started to worry about her 7 year old Amazon parrot when it began to fly into jealous rages whenever her husband would approach Joyce, plucking out its feathers when it couldn't be with her.

A local vet gave the love lorn parrot some antidepressants, suggesting that its neurotic behaviour may have derived from feelings over its previous owner's divorce.

As for the parrot post Prozac, according to Joyce, she is now more content than ever, even cuddling up with Joyce's husband on occasion.



Polly want a Prozac

Dr Deb winners

CONGRATULATIONS to Mark Smith of Merriwa Pharmacy and Helen Lovitt of the Department of Health who were Fri's winners of Dr Deb's *Travelling Well* book.

RGH Pharmacy

Due to popular demand the
RGH Pharmacy
Anticoagulation Handbook
is now available to the
pharmacy industry across Australia.

The handbook gives patients important information about warfarin treatment and has a chart to record INR results.

Repatriation General Hospital is making it available for purchase for \$2.80 per booklet, reduced to \$2.40 for PSA and SHPA members.

More information
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