

BigPond launches health portal

TELSTRA in partnership with Virtual Medical Centre, has announced the debut of BigPond Health, a new website which offers consumers medical, disease and healthy lifestyle information online.

According to Telstra Media Group md, Justin Milne, BigPond Health includes more than 22,000 pages of specialised information about "diseases, pharmaceuticals, practical remedies, healthy living and diet tips."

There are also educational videos, a medical dictionary and 19 categories including info about prescription drugs, immunisations and sections for women, men and children.

See: www.bigpond.com.

Immunisation rules

MEDICARE Australia has updated its National Due and Overdue Rules for Childhood Immunisation.

The rules are derived from the Australian Immunisation Handbook, and the changes are effective from 01 Jan to reflect changes made to the government's Maternity Immunisation Allowance.

NAPSA heads west

MORE than 250 pharmacy students from across Australia will gather this week in Perth for this year's National Australian Pharmacy Students Association congress, hosted by the Western Australian Pharmacy Students Association.

This year's event has the theme *Evolution*, with delegates set to be "challenged, enlightened and encouraged to think outside the square as future Australian pharmacists."

The 2010 congress will take place on the Gold Coast, hosted by the Griffith University Association of Pharmacy Students.

NPS remote reach program

NATIONAL Prescribing Service is inviting pharmacists involved in providing services to remote Aboriginal Health Services to participate in an outreach support program.

The *NPS Outreach Pharmacists for Remote Aboriginal Health Service* program was initially piloted in June last year in the NT, but will now be extended to pharmacists across Australia.

Workshops are scheduled to commence in March, with participation helping pharmacists to meet the QUM and educational requirements of their contractual agreements with the Aboriginal Health Services.

"Working with remote communities is often very

demanding and isolating.

"By participating in this program pharmacists will be able to expand their knowledge through continuing education and have an opportunity to network with other pharmacists who work with Aboriginal communities, while health services will benefit from the pharmacists' improved skills," said NPS Education and QA manager, Judith Mackson.

The workshops are free, and NPS will also cover costs of participation including travel to training workshops, background reading materials and teleconference support.

More info call 02 8217 8700 or email: ptravermason@nps.org.au.

Sleep apnea test

DETECTING sleep apnea may soon be possible by looking at a photo of the patient's face.

Researchers have recently developed a simple test based on facial geometry.

According to the *Sleep Journal*, the test has been tried on 180 patients, with 76% correctly classified.

Researchers hope to do further testing of patients to validate the findings, while RNS hospital has patented the technology.

Medical cert take-up

FEW pharmacists are providing medical certificates, a year after being allowed to offer the service, according to the Pharmacy Guild.

A report on yesterday's www.6minutes.com.au said that there had not been a big take up, and exact figures were unknown.

AMA president Rosanna Capolingua told 6minutes that pharmacists felt 'uncomfortable' about the onus of sick notes and suggested that this may be due to the medico-legal risks involved.

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HOW about this for a high pain threshold?

Recently elected New Zealand P.M John Key certainly didn't let personal considerations interfere with his official duties on the weekend, when he tripped down some stairs at a Chinese New Year function in Auckland and hurt his arm.

Key shrugged off the incident and participated in a further hour of the celebration - including shaking hands with 120 rugby players - before heading to a doctor to have the injured limb checked out.

It eventuated that the arm had been broken in two places, with Key now sporting a plaster cast and sling - and probably also taking a few analgesics.

HERE'S a tricky way to pass your pharmacy exams.

A Japanese man has been caught impersonating his 20-year-old son in a test which would have authorised the young man to handle over-the-counter drugs.

The father runs a medication distribution company, and was reportedly hoping to have his son work with him.

In order to perpetrate the ruse the 54-year-old had his hair permed so that he looked similar to his son.

NO, that's not a ghost sitting next to you - you've just had too much coffee.

A recent survey has looked into caffeine habits of men and women, with results showing that those who consumed more than seven cups a day were 3 times more likely to see or hear things that were not there.

A separate study has also linked large amounts of caffeine with people believing they can sense ghosts.

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