

Igor DVD winner

THE final winner in last week's *Pharmacy Daily* DVD competition was Travis Pitman of JR Pharmacy Chartered Accountants.

His suggestion for the ultimate child's cold remedy 'potion' was:

Shower, dress in "Giraffe" flannel pyjamas and have a warm Milo.

Now that you are feeling great, give the child Panadol for Kids.

A copy of the Igor DVD will be on its way to all the winners shortly.

This week we have another great chance to win - see the Little Fingers competition below right.

Arthritis approval

THE TGA has approved Roche's Actemra (tocilizumab) for people suffering from moderate to severe rheumatoid arthritis, with the drug shown in major trials to offer "rapid and effective relief from the chronic signs and symptoms of the disease."

Health Update Cough & Cold

Today's Health update focuses on **Treating Coughs.**

Coughs fall into two groups - Productive and Non-productive, each of which requires different treatments.

Productive coughs - are phlegmy or chesty. The appropriate treatment is an expectorant, which works by increasing bronchial secretions to thin the mucus, making it easier to cough up. An example is Guaiphenesin or Ammonium salts and senega. A mucolytic such as bromhexine is also helpful for breaking down the mucus.

Non-productive coughs - are tickly, dry, hacking and irritating. Cough suppressants are effective for symptomatic relief. Examples include Dextromethorphan and Pholcodine. A cough suppressant should not be used on a wet, mucus producing cough. Patients should be encouraged to drink plenty of fluids. If the cough lasts more than 2 weeks without improvement medical advice should be sought.



Sponsored by:

Prospan - the heavyweight in chesty coughs. Suitable for under 2's (with pharmacist's advice)

Guild award changes push

PHARMACY Guild President Kos Sclavos is today calling on Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard to intervene in the award modernisation process to "avoid job losses and business closures in community pharmacy."

He was responding to a story in Saturday's *Australian* which revealed that Gillard had stepped in to create a separate award for the restaurant and cafe industry.

Gillard warned the Australian Industrial Relation Commission (AIRC) to take into account the effects of the global financial crisis when considering award revamps - as well as using the full five year transition period to introduce the changes for the hospitality sector.

Sclavos warned that there would be similar massive effects on community pharmacy as a result of the proposed Pharmacy Industry Award 2010, which will impose total wage cost increases of up to 22% on pharmacies because of their long trading hours.

"This will lead to the shedding of thousands of jobs and a reduction in community pharmacy services," Sclavos said.

"We call on the Minister to extend her intervention to ensure that the high service sector and long trading hours of community pharmacy remain," he added.

On Fri the Guild lodged a submission with the AIRC seeking significant amendments to the proposed new award which it has previously warned would create "highly regulated employment arrangements" for the industry.

Pharmacy E-Bulletin

THIS week's edition of the Repatriation General Hospital Pharmacy E-Bulletin gives an overview of Jurnista (hydromorphone prolonged-release) which was recently PBS listed as a restricted benefit for chronic severe disabling cancer or non-cancer pain not responding to non-opioid analgesics.

Jurnista was listed after PBAC recommendations on the basis of cost minimisation when compared with oxycodone controlled-release tablets.

This week's bulletin is available at no charge by emailing chris.alderman@rgh.sa.gov.au.

The paper points out that due to the environment in which community pharmacy operates it's very difficult for pharmacies to pass on the sharp cost increases mandated by the new award.

Options include increasing prices, cutting staff, reducing trading prices and cutting services, and "the Pharmacy Guild wants none of these adopted."

"It is the Guild's position that the Pharmacy Industry Award 2010 cannot function as a modern award, and that it is not simple to understand and not easy to apply - contrary to the expressed original intentions of Minister Gillard."

Sclavos said the amendments proposed by the Guild seek to reduce the significant increase in cost burden, and "provide the necessary casual and part time flexibility required and currently practised by the industry"

Save the ASMI date

THE Australian Self-Medication Industry has today announced that its annual conference and agm will take place in Sydney on 12 Nov.

This year's topic is *Self Care: How Much Is Your Responsibility?* with speakers from government, regulatory agencies, and the non-prescription consumer healthcare industry - see www.asmi.com.au.

Today's issue of PD

PHARMACY Daily today has two pages of news, including an exciting new competition and the first of a new regular Monday *Health Update* feature.

Each week we'll publish a short column dealing with the treatment of common ailments, with the June Health Updates focusing on Cough & Cold - just in time for winter.

New kidney resource

A NEW online information centre on kidney health has launched today with the aim of improving patient care for the two million Australians living with kidney disease.

The new site is now available at www.mykidneyinfo.net and "will allow health professionals to simply, accurately and efficiently direct patients to information about kidney disease and appropriate treatment options."

It features sections on factors affecting kidney function, causes and symptoms of kidney disease, lifestyle advice and treatment options.

There's also a password protected patient section which is available only to those using Baxter dialysis products, which also offers an "exclusive travel club" to allow patients to travel independently, with door-to-door delivery of peritoneal dialysis solutions to almost anywhere in the world.

WIN A PACK OF LITTLE FINGERS NAILS

The Little Fing'rs range offers a wide variety of nail products including artificial nails, self-adhesive nails, nail art and accessories for young girls.

Little Fing'rs has teamed up with *Pharmacy Daily* to give subscribers the chance to win a pack of Fing'rs self-adhesive nails everyday this week.

This fun range of nail products is best suited for girls and includes nails in small sizes, quick drying glues and many self-adhesive nails, which are great for younger buyers.

The Fing'rs range of nail art is the easy way to create individual nail looks for all occasions.

To receive your pack for FREE, simply be the first to send through the correct answer to the following question:

Name one of the Fing'rs Edge nail designs.

Send your answers into comp@pharmacydaily.com.au. Hint! Visit the website at www.fingrs.com for answers.





Sigma Efixor battle

SIGMA Pharmaceuticals this morning confirmed that it's taking legal action against Wyeth in the Federal Court, "seeking revocation of Wyeth's extended release patent in relation to Efixor XR.

"A number of grounds are advanced upon which it is asserted that the patent is invalid," the company said in a stock exchange statement.

Sigma was responding to articles in Fairfax media today which claimed that its generic version of Efixor has been "tripped up by one patent" despite already being registered with the TGA.

Efixor is one of Australia's biggest selling medicines, with the antidepressant last year accounting for more than \$100m of PBS expenditures.

Sigma didn't comment further except to say that "the proceedings are on-going."

Adverse macular reactions

THE TGA's Adverse Drug Reactions Advisory Committee has today advised of a number of reports of drug-associated macular oedema, linked with latanaprost or rosiglitazone.

25 reports of the condition, which

AACP Consultant Pharmacist of 2009

PROFESSOR Jeff Hughes was last weekend named as the 2009 AACP-Pfizer Consultant Pharmacist of the Year at the AACP's annual seminar on the Gold Coast.

ConPharm '09 was held at the Hyatt Regency Sanctuary Cove, with the annual award aiming to recognise the outstanding contribution by an accredited pharmacist to the practice of consultant pharmacy.

Hughes is currently head of the School of Pharmacy at Curtin University of Technology, WA and was one of the early AACP accredited pharmacists and "a pioneering pharmacist who became involved in the medication review process long before formal collaborative structures were implemented."

As well as a medallion and certificate he'll receive a travel grant to the value of \$10,000 to attend an international pharmacy conference of relevance to the practice of consultant pharmacy.

The AACP said Hughes is "dedicated to enhancing the reputation of the profession of pharmacy and has an outstanding and ongoing commitment to the development of consultant pharmacy."

causes blurred or distorted vision due to painless swelling of the macula, have been made, and some have also reported use of an NSAID or a biphosphonate.

The details are included in the latest ADRAC bulletin, which also covers "an emerging association with TNF inhibitors" for drug-induced lupus erythematosus.

TNF inhibitors account for 35 of the 87 adverse drug reaction reports of the condition received by the TGA since 2003 when the first of infliximab, adalimumab and etanercept was PBS-listed.

The third item in the bulletin discusses lactic acidosis, a "rare but extremely serious metabolic complication of metformin usage," warning that diabetic patients should be educated about managing their condition and their medications, particularly metformin, in the context of acute illness.

Herpes patients

THE Australian Herpes Management Forum (AHMF) is calling on healthcare professionals to identify patients who have been diagnosed with and treated for genital herpes to participate in an online study of herpes management and treatment from the perspective of sufferers.

The Genital Herpes Patient Perspectives Survey aims to provide an accurate snapshot of the diagnosis and treatment experiences of the one in eight Australians living with the condition.

The results of the survey will help develop more effective and patient-friendly treatment options in the future - see ahmf.com.au.



DISPENSARY CORNER

NO WONDER it gives you wings.

Authorities in Taiwan have confiscated more than 400,000 cans of Red Bull energy drink from the importer, claiming they contain slight traces of cocaine.

The country's Investigation Bureau said the beverage arrived from Austria in Apr, with the large scale seizure coming on the eve of a major advertising campaign.

Officials have also ordered that the drinks be removed from stores pending the progress of their probe.

AN ENGLISH patient says he's probably the first person in the world to bet on his own life, after wagering against his doctor's prediction that he would be dead within months.

59-year-old Jon Matthews was diagnosed with mesothelioma in late 2006, and placed £100 in a 50-to-1 bet that he would live more than a year.

On 01 Jun 2008 the bet was paid out, and being £5000 richer he made the same bet again, with the target date of today meaning he'll collect once more from bookmaker William Hill.

The betting agency said it had "never before been so pleased to pay out for a bet."

Matthews is once again rolling the dice, this time wagering that he'll live another 12 months with odds of 100 to 1.

THIS truly is a miracle.

An Argentinian minister of religion has escaped death after a Bible he was holding deflected a bullet fired at close range.

38-year-old Mauricio Zanes Condori was attempting to dissuade two thieves from robbing his church in the western town of Rodeo del Medio, about 1000km from Buenos Aires.

One of the men fired and the pair immediately fled, with stunned churchgoers calling for help.

However paramedics said the book had slowed the bullet so it only scratched the pastor's chest.

"That leads me to believe in a God that takes care of me," the relieved preacher said.

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