



The Pharmacy
Guild of Australia

This week's update from the Guild Project STOP!

The story "Australia's Ice Man", broadcast on Channel Seven's Sunday program on 1 March, confirms the need to make use of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia's Project STOP mandatory.

As the Guild said in a press release on 15 January, it is time for the highly successful initiative to be boosted by mandatory reporting of sales Australia-wide to combat the criminal misuse of pseudoephedrine based products to manufacture methamphetamines.

Since August 2007, more than 2 million transactions have been processed through Project STOP.

At the height of the cough and cold season in 2008 it peaked at 7000 transactions per day.

The Guild works with police and Government agencies to identify risk products and this is the first time we have been made aware of a problem with liquid pseudoephedrine.

To date liquids have not uniformly been entered onto Project STOP due to the risk profile.

The Guild will confirm with authorities if this is an isolated event and, if there is a shift towards liquid pseudoephedrine by criminals, everyone across pharmacy will be more vigilant in relation to these sales.

Since the Project STOP system went online in 2005, pharmacists have denied sales on 26,000 occasions and the program is undeniably a contributing cause to the 49 per cent fall in pseudoephedrine sales since 2006.

At no time, however, has the Guild claimed that the system is 100 per cent effective.

Because of varying legislative provisions across the States, the reporting requirements for such sales are confused and confusing.

Furthermore, the uptake of Project STOP has varied sharply across the States.

For example, 92 per cent of pharmacies in Queensland are registered, while only 49 per cent of NSW pharmacies are part of the system.

The Guild believes Project STOP has been so effective that it is worthy of 100 per cent support, and Sunday night's program reinforces that point.

Dispensing software alert

THE National Prescribing Service has urged that improvements be made to dispensing software to ensure pharmacists "do not become desensitised to prompts and alerts".

NPS research, published in the *Medical Journal of Australia*, surveyed three pharmacy software packages as well as six GP prescribing programs, to check how the software handled potential drug interactions.

Most systems picked up the 20 clinically important interactions tested, and all gave alerts for two potentially life-threatening interactions but "they provided little or no information on clinical effects of the interaction and advice on management."

NPS ceo Dr Lynn Weekes said pharmacists need to be aware of the limitations of the decision support features in the software

Interpreting service

REGISTERED pharmacies across Australia are now able to access telephone interpreting services at no charge.

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship operates the service, which has been made available free to pharmacy due to a government decision last Dec.

The TIS National system is available to "pharmacies for the purpose of dispensing Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS medications).

The program has access to more than 1300 contracted interpreters across Australia speaking over 120 languages and dialects.

It's available 24 hours a day seven days a week and can be accessed by calling 131 450.

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"including the quality and source of the underlying evidence.

"Deficiencies in drug interaction decision support can impede the quality use of medicines, both in terms of individual patient management and more broadly by causing 'alert fatigue', desensitising users to prompts and alerts," she said.

"We believe what users need is more information about the clinical effects of an interaction and advice on patient management, fewer alerts about minor interactions, and clearer presentation," Weekes added.

She also urged the introduction of national guidelines for pharmaceutical decision support tools, a priority which has already been identified as part of the National e-Health Strategy.

New dental plan

AGEING minister Justine Elliot has announced the first oral and dental health care plan for nursing home residents, under which a staff member from all 2830 aged care homes across Australia will be trained in dental hygiene by 2010.

The staff member will in turn educate other aged care workers to help maintain the teeth of residents and reduce illness related to dental health.

The move follows a major shift in the number of residents who have their own teeth, compared to the situation some years ago where many had full dentures.

The training package includes oral hygiene and desensitisation techniques as well as treatment of xerostomia (dry mouth) which is a side effect of some medications.

No OTC remedies for under-6's in UK

BRITISH health authorities have announced that parents in the UK should no longer use over the counter cough and cold medicines in children under 6.

And for 6 to 12 year olds the medicines will continue to be available, but will only be sold in pharmacies.

The move follows a review of the benefits and risks of the medicines conducted by the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency, which said that for under-6's "there is no evidence that they work and can cause side effects, such as allergic reactions, effects on sleep or hallucinations."

It's an extension of previous restrictions introduced in Mar 2008 which prohibited the use of the products in under-2's - a move which was also followed by the Therapeutic Goods Administration.

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Mirixa roadshow heads south

LAST night it was Tasmania's turn to learn about the Pharmacy Guild's new Mirixa system, with Apple Isle pharmacists gathering in Hobart to be updated by Guild President Kos Sclavos.

Pictured right at the event are, from left: Melissa Verbeeten, Kingsmeadows Capital Pharmacy; Louise Sullivan, Pharmacy Guild; Sue Leitch, Pharmacy Guild; Christine White, Prospect Vale Market Pharmacy; and Luciana Torrents, City Capital Pharmacy.

Tonight the roadshow moves onto Bendigo and then Melbourne on Thu.



LEFT: Also in Tassie, from left: Anna Dalla Riva, GlaxoSmithKline; Peter Bond, Riverside Capital Pharmacy; Phil Jones, Rosetta Pharmacy; Stuart Hughes, Derwent Park Pharmacy; and Graham Priest, Sorrell Chemmart Pharmacy.

BELOW: Guild President Kos Sclavos is all smiles in Hobart with Louise Sullivan, Pharmacy Guild (left) and Guild Tasmanian Branch president Judith Liauw.



DISPENSARY CORNER

DO you drive everyone mad with your doodling?

Well it could be a sign of an alert mind, according to research carried out recently by the UK's Plymouth University.

Scientists carried out memory tests on 40 volunteers, in which they listened to a phone call and were then questioned on names and places.

The team found that doodlers performed 29% better than non-doodlers, concluding that scribbling on paper "helped people focus on mundane tasks."

Possibly doodling could stave off the onset of dementia.

AND speaking of forgetfulness, authorities in Sweden are appealing for the return of the life savings of an 80-year-old woman who left the money on a tram on her way to the bank.

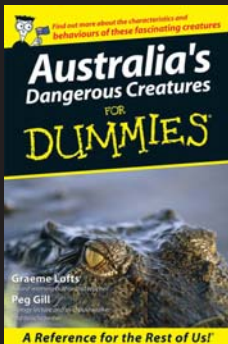
The old lady had kept her cash - about 500,000 kroner (about \$86,000) - at home in a desk, but after some years finally decided it would be safer to deposit it in an account.

She filled a paper bag to the brim with piles of notes and caught a tram to the centre of her home town of Gothenberg, but unfortunately forgot to take the bag when she alighted from the streetcar.

At first she was too embarrassed to tell her family what had happened to the stash, but when they finally found out and contacted the transport company the money was apparently long gone.

Police said they were hopeful they might find who ended up with the money using surveillance camera footage.

WIN A COPY OF THIS BOOK



Did you know the second most dangerous creature in Australia is the honey bee? Each day this week **Pharmacy Daily** is giving readers the chance to win a copy of **Australia's Dangerous Creatures for Dummies**. Valued at (Wiley \$29.95), this book is a fascinating portrait of unique and deadly animals down-under, providing detailed descriptions of each creature, its habitat and its typical behaviours.

The authors provide tips on observing these creatures safely as well as a comprehensive

first aid section in case your observation or encounter ends badly!

To enter today, simply send your answer to the following question to comp@pharmacydaily.com.au.

TODAY'S QUESTION:

What has 6 legs, makes honey and is the deadliest of all species found in Australia?

This great prize will go to the first correct response, so for your chance to win, make sure you send in your entry NOW!

CONGRATULATIONS to Melbourne pharmacist Peter Allan, who was the first to tell us that the REDBACK spider curls into a ball.

Medicinal foods listed on PBS

AMYLOPECTIN (Glycosade) has been listed on the PBS for the treatment of patients who have glycogen storage disease.

This item is estimated to help two patients in its first year of listing at a cost of up to \$17,213, and up to 10 patients in the fifth year of listing, costing \$86,064.

Essential amino acids formula (EAA Supplement) is also now listed for use in the dietary management of urea cycle disorders and other conditions that require a very low protein diet.

Phenylalanine with carbohydrate (Phenylalanine Amino Acid Supplement) has been listed for patients with tyrosinaemia; and triglycerides (MCT Pro-Cal) is listed for use in the dietary management of fat malabsorption, fatty acid oxidation disorders, chylothorax, Type 1 hyperlipoproteinaemia, and management of malnutrition.

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