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Intradermal delivery

IN light of the launch this week of the world-first interdermal influenza vaccine, Intanza, in Australia, the Pharmacy Guild is calling on pharmacists to engage healthy adults in dialogue about the importance of seasonal vaccination.

Intanza is an intradermal microinjection which uses a 1.5mm needle that delivers a 0.1mL dose and 9µg of antigen directly into the dermis, thereby exploiting its high concentration of immune cells (dendritic cells) which then create an equivalent immune response to traditional intramuscular vaccination.

RACP slams new GMiA code

THE Royal Australasian College of Physicians has urged the Generic Medicines Industry Association (GMiA) to further strengthen its proposed code of conduct, which is currently under consideration by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (PD 13 Apr).

In particular the College says suggestions in the Code which say that generic substitution is unlikely to change health outcomes for patients "does not stand up to scrutiny".

The RACP said that switching

between different generic medications "can potentially have substantial negative effects.

"The differing size, shape and colour of different brands of the same generic medicine can produce patient confusion, compliance problems and negative health outcomes," it added.

The RACP's submission to the ACCC enquiry also begs to differ with a GMiA assertion that brand substitution is likely to create savings for patients.

"The College would also like the GMiA to reconsider this in light of the possibility of a pharmacist changing a patient's generic brands purely as a result of industry promotional activities, discounting and reward schemes.

"Further, if a generic medicine is priced under the PBS co-payment, pharmacists can, and do, charge a higher price than the PBS recommended price to consumers.

"As such, brand substitution does not necessarily result in financial savings for the patient," the submission adds.

The RACP also urged that all "educational" events directed at dispensers come under the reporting code along with prescribers, saying "it appears most inappropriate to exclude the reporting of such events directed at pharmacists."

It's suggested that the GMiA make further provisions about influencing the pharmacy channel, with possible wording: "Advertisements/promotions must not offer any personal incentive to a healthcare professional, pharmacy assistant or other non-healthcare professional sales person, to recommend or supply therapeutic goods".

The deadline for submissions to the ACCC consultation closed yesterday, and now the GMiA will have an opportunity to respond to the issues raised.

Sticking with Sigma

AUSTRALIAN Pharmaceutical Industries is yet to see any significant upturn in business from pharmacists as a result of the widely-reported travails of its rival, Sigma Pharmaceuticals.

Speaking after the announcement of the API half year result (PD yesterday), API ceo Stephen Roche admitted that Sigma's profit downgrade and consequent breaching of bank covenants (leading to tightening of trading terms) had created opportunities for API, but also said "we lost large chunks of business in the last six weeks to Sigma through arrangements, but I do think that they've now changed that attitude and we haven't seen that activity continue".

He also said any potential new large customers would have to be assessed for credit risk, and any deals on offer would also be offered in similar arrangements to API's existing customers.

"Pharmacists will stick for a period of time with their current wholesaler until they see what changes at Sigma or what management changes occur," Roche said.

Pharmacy functions

THE North Queensland Pharmacy Ball is set to return to the pharmacy social scene this year.

Although event organisers are remaining tight-lipped on the Ball's details, they did reveal that it will be held in Townsville on 16 Oct.

Stay tuned to PD for further updates as they come in.

MEANWHILE the 2010 Victorian Pharmacy Dinner will be held this year at Leonda By The Yarra on 27 May, and will feature special guest speaker David Smorgon, executive chairperson at Inmatrix and Ambassador for Ochre.

Tickets are \$130 (ACP members), \$150 (non members), and \$105 for students and attendance is worth 1 CPD point, call 03 9819 2542.

WANT YOUR SKIN FEELING SILKY SOFT?

Total Beauty Network has teamed up with *Pharmacy Daily* this week, giving readers the chance to win a Designer Brands Body Butter product.



Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner: Vicki White from Diabetes WA.

Designer Brands Body Butters are made with Natural Oils to assist you in creating long lasting softness whilst nourishing and hydrating your skin. Suitable for all skin types and Dermatologist tested. Leaves a breathable barrier that leaves skin feeling silky soft and protected from the elements. DB Body Butters are made to penetrate skin and provide all day lasting moisture.

For your chance to win a Body Butter product this week, simply send through the correct answer to the daily question below:

What are 2 features of the Lip Butters?

Send entry to: comp@pharmacydaily.com.au.

The first correct entry received each day will win.

Hint! Visit www.tbn.com.au.

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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.

28 Apr-7 May: The PSA is currently holding its 35th annual offshore conference in Beijing and Shanghai - 1300 139 293.

30 Apr-01 May: Blackmores Research Symposium in Sydney - details 1800 151 493.

04 May: PSA Vic 'Misuse and Mental Health: Dealing with the reality', LaTrobe University - 03 9389 4007.

04 May: PSA Qld 'In-Sights on Eye Infections', Woolloongabba, 7.30pm - 8.30pm, 07 3896 1900.

09 May: Drug Interaction Seminar presented by Debbie Rigby and Geraldine Moses, Brisbane - aacp@aacp.com.au.

19 May: PSA ACT 'Male Sexual Dysfunction'; University of Canberra, 7pm - 8.30pm - lillian.lesueur@psa.org.au.

19 May: PSA NSW 'Short Course - Chronic Kidney Disease'; AMA Conference Centre, St Leonards - moyatang@psansw.org.au.

26 May: PSA ACT 'Pharmacy Horizons: Career Options for Pharmacists'; 7pm - 10pm - lillian.lesueur@psa.org.au.

26-28 May: The NPS's National Medicines Symposium 2010, Melbourne Conference and Exhibition Centre - www.nms2010.org.au.

29-31 May: The AACCP's annual ConPharm clinical seminar at The Grand Chancellor Hotel in Hobart - details www.aacp.com.au.

04-06 Jun: Pharmacy Expo in Sydney - earn up to 20 CPD points in 3 days. More info www.pharmacyexpo.com.au.

15-18 Sep: Pharmacy 2010, the Pharmacy Management Conference on Hamilton Island - www.pharmacyconference.com.au.

11-14 Nov: The 36th National SHPA Conference, Medicines Management 2010 in Melbourne - mm2010shpa.com.

PSA on pain management

THE Pharmaceutical Society of Australia is encouraging pharmacists to play a larger part in the support and management of chronic pain patients.

"Chronic pain is a significant issue in the community with many patients unable to receive adequate support and care for their condition," said PSA Qld president and member of the National Pain Summit, Dr. Lisa Nissen.

"Some of this is due to a lack of access to appropriate medical care and pressure on an already overstretched health system."

According to Nissen, pharmacists as informed and highly trained health professionals are perfectly suited to assist patients in managing their condition.

"We should not undervalue the impact we can make for these

Codeine day tomorrow

THE Pharmacy Guild has thanked GlaxoSmithKline for its assistance in the production and distribution of a new counter sign relating to tomorrow's changes in the scheduling of codeine products.

Also available are referral pads for use by pharmacy assistants who receive requests for Pharmacist Only Medicines, including analgesics containing codeine, with Guild President Kos Sclavos saying: "Many consumers may be confused or inconvenienced by the changes, so it is important that they are properly informed that community pharmacies are required by law to comply with the new scheduling requirements".

HRT patches now here

ESTRADOT (oestradiol), Estalis Continuous and Sequi (oestradiol/norethisterone acetate) hormone replacement therapy patches are now available on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme as a first-line treatment for menopause.

The patches are designed to manage the short term symptoms associated with menopause, and to also prevent bone density loss in postmenopausal women who are at increased risk of future osteoporotic fractures and are intolerant of, or contraindicated for, other medicinal products approved for the prevention of bone mineral density loss.

chronic pain patients who are often mostly 'invisible' within the community," she added.

As part of the pain drive, pharmacists are being urged to help link pain patients up with other support services including the Australian Pain Management Association's Pain Link Helpline (1300 340 357) and Chronic Pain Australia's National Phone Information and Support line (1800 218 921) which not only provide support for patients, but also their carers and health professionals.

"One example is the Home Medicines Review where patients can sit down in their own home with an accredited pharmacist who reviews their medications and helps them to optimise their pain management regime," Nissen said.

"In conjunction with services like the support line and the help line, the professional services and advice provided by pharmacists can make a real difference in helping chronic pain sufferers manage their condition," she concluded.

Reporting reactions

DUE to a considerable spike in the number of calls to the Adverse Medicines Events hotline, the National Prescribing Service is reminding pharmacists of the importance of accurately reporting all adverse medicine events.

"Health professionals have a duty of care to report suspected reactions to new medicines and vaccines as this is the only way in which information can be accurately collected and used in the interest of public health," said NPS ceo, Dr Lynn Weekes.

The NPS is urging pharmacists to record as much info as possible including batch numbers.

Willach joins PACE

ROBOTIC dispensing manufacturer Willach is offering pharmacy students access to one of its state-of-the-art machines in conjunction with the Pharmacy Australia Centre of Excellence.

A CONSYS robotic dispenser, as well as a set of FAMA drawer systems have been installed in two tutorial rooms at the University of Queensland's School of Pharmacy.



DISPENSARY CORNER

FASTING for 74 years?

An Indian man, Prahlad Jani, claims that he has not eaten anything or consumed any beverages for 74 years.

The 82 year old man has told authorities that he was blessed by a Goddess when he was eight who gave him a hole in his palate from which he is sustained by occasional drops of water which filter through.

Jani first presented himself and his claims at Sterling Hospitals in 2003 and now The Indian Defense Institute Physiology and Allied Science has placed him under the observation of a team of 30 doctors for 15 days.

During this time Jani will for a undergo rigorous testing, including MRI's and blood studies, to determine if this phenomenon is indeed true, and if so how it can be replicated.

ANYONE for Royal Jelly?

A woman hanging out her washing in Victoria got a rude shock when a swarm of 20,000 bees decided to attach themselves to a pair of her colourful pants and a pair of her equally colourful socks.

Beekeeper Brian Gardiner was called to the rescue of the terrified woman.

He later told reporters that the bees were in the process of trying to find a new home, after overcrowding forced their queen to leave the nest with a few of her loyal followers.

The bees had chosen to take some respite on the colourful washing whilst scouts went on ahead to find the best location for their new kingdom.



No wonder socks go missing!