

Penang conference

PHARMACISTS are being invited to register for the 2010 Offshore Business Conference in Penang, Malaysia - details on **page three**.

Pfizer expands nutrition

Pfizer is set to pour US\$100m into expansion plans for its Singapore Nutrition Plant, responsible for the manufacture of its products for infants and children.

The investment will see the plant blow out in size to 91,963 square metres and will see its production capacity double, and in turn expand its market foothold in the Asia Pacific region.

"Infant Formula is one of the most stringently regulated consumer products in the world," said Natale Ricciardi, senior vice president of Pfizer and president of Pfizer Global Manufacturing.

"Quality and compliance are critically important aspects of the Pfizer Global Manufacturing Culture," she added.

Ibuprofen limits upped

THE UK Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency has increased the maximum strength of ibuprofen gel available over the counter for the local symptomatic relief of pain and inflammation from 5% w/w to 10% w/w.

The announcement comes after an extensive period of public consultation.

In addition to increasing ibuprofen strengths, the MHRA has also upped the maximum pack size available to the public from 2.5g ibuprofen to 4g, and has increased the maximum treatment period from seven to 14-days.

For info see www.mhra.gov.uk.

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Board issues PI reminder

PHARMACISTS across the country were yesterday reminded of the requirement under the new national registration arrangements to have appropriate professional indemnity insurance cover.

A statement issued by the Australian Health Practitioner Registration Agency said that with the national law now in force effective 01 July, all registered health practitioners must have cover consistent with their relevant National Board's approved registration standard.

The communique also confirms that a number of the national boards are "considering clarifications to their approved registration standards for

professional indemnity insurance" - but before any changes are proposed to the Ministerial Council, consultation will occur.

The AHPRA said the requirements could be achieved by individual practitioners taking out their own insurance cover, or through arrangements arising out of employment situations.

Pharmacists were encouraged to consider whether private insurance coverage is necessary in their individual circumstances, with particular regard to the availability of run-off cover, the retroactive effect of the coverage, and the scope of their practice.

Young Pharma wins

THE Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia HOSPIRA DBL Young Pharmacist Award has been awarded to Catherine Hughes.

Former President of the National Australian Pharmacy Student's Association, Hughes graduated in 2006 and was a pharmacy intern at the Repatriation General Hospital, Adelaide.

At present Hughes is the Chair of the SHPA SA&NT Branch, and after having worked Adelaide hospitals was drawn to a pharmacy management role at Mount Gambier Hospital, South Australia.

"When I commenced working as the Director of Pharmacy in a rural hospital, I was struck by the relative inability to provide a pharmacy service for our patients compared to metropolitan hospitals," Hughes said.

"This drove my passion to analyse and develop smarter ways to deliver effective pharmacy services with reduced resources and support.

"It is a challenging area of practice and much can be learnt to optimise service provision and improve a patient's experience," she added.

With the financial support granted through her new award Hughes is now set to undertake an international preceptorship study tour in Canada where she will conduct an observational review of rural and remote hospital pharmacy services in three of the country's provinces.

Devices for approval

THE Advisory Committee on Medical Devices has recommended that the Therapeutic Goods Administration approve the following devices: RTI Biologicals' Sterling Bovine Bone; HeartWare Ltd's Outflow Graft (an accessory to a Heartware System); Sorin Group Australia's Mitroflow Aortic Pericardial Heart Valve Model LX and Boston Scientific Pty Ltd's Xeniform Soft Tissue Repair Matrix.

New FDA warning

UNAPPROVED usage of the malaria drug Quaalain (quinine sulfate) is being strongly advised against, after evidence of serious side effects was brought to the US FDA's attention.

According to the FDA the common practice of using Quaalain for the (unapproved) treatment of night time leg cramps has led to 38 US cases of serious side effects including low levels of platelets in the blood and hemolytic uremic syndrome/thrombotic thrombocytopenic purpura - a blood disorder that results in clots in small blood vessels around the body that can be accompanied by kidney impairment.

So far, between Apr 2005 and Oct 2008 two people have died from kidney complications arising from unapproved use of Quaalain.

As a result of the FDA's warning, Quaalain's manufacturer has had to develop a risk management plan aimed at educating health care professionals and patients about the potential risks.

Quaalain was approved in 2005 for the treatment of uncomplicated malaria.

WIN A PURE SPA PACK



Pharmacy Daily is once again giving readers the chance to win an All Pure Spa® baby pack every day this week, courtesy of Aromababy.

Valued at \$45, Pure Spa® offers a simple choice in pure and natural baby skincare and an easy way to care for your precious baby and yourself the way Mother Nature intended.

To win an All Pure Spa® baby pack, simply send in your answer to the question below to comp@pharmacydaily.com.au

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Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner: **Amanda Miller** from Carmex.

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Cancer conference

THE second Sydney Cancer Conference is set to be hosted by the University of Sydney next week 14 - 16 July.

Titled "profiling risk, personalising treatment, and predicting outcomes" the conference will feature presentations from a host of international and national researchers, from basic scientists to clinicians, epidemiologists and psychologists on topics as diverse as The Future of Cancer Research and Pathways to Regulating Blood Cell Production.

Professor Simon Chapman, a leading public health and tobacco control advocate and researcher, will open the conference with a free public lecture on Wednesday 14 July, to open SCC2010.

For further information visit www.cancerresearch.med.usyd.edu.au/SCC2010/.

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 Jul, 30 Jul: One day intensive conference on Pharmaceutical Law - Melbourne (28th) and Sydney (30th) - 02 9224 6011.

28 Aug-02 Sep: 70th FIP World Congress, Lisbon, Portugal - www.fip.org/lisbon2010.

11-12 Sep: Australasian Conference for Compounding Pharmacists - www.accp.net.au.

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

28-31 Oct: PSA's Pharmacy Australia Congress in Melbourne - details www.pac10.com.au.

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

01-10 May 2011: The PSA's 2011 Offshore Conference in Venice, Italy and Salzburg, Austria - expressions of interest at www.psa.org.au.

ASMI pregnancy response

THE Australian Self-Medication Industry says a newspaper article this week about the use of vitamin supplements during pregnancy sends a "confusing message" to expectant mothers.

The article published in some Fairfax newspapers quoted nutritionist Dr Maria Makrides from the University of Adelaide, saying there was little scientific evidence to support the taking of iron or iodine

Weight-loss danger

US patients taking Que She, a herbal weight-loss supplement, have been warned to immediately cease use and seek the advice of a doctor, after the Food and Drug Administration discovered that not all of the product's ingredients were listed on the pack.

The FDA has warned that some of the unlisted ingredients may have harmful effects, particularly on those that suffer from cardiovascular conditions.

Unlisted ingredients featuring in the Que She recipe include fenfluramine (a stimulant drug withdrawn from the US market in 1997 after studies demonstrated that it caused serious heart valve damage) and propranolol (a prescription-only beta blocker drug that can pose a risk to people with bronchial asthma and certain heart conditions)

Further unlisted ingredients include ephedrine (a stimulant drug that is legally marketed over-the-counter for temporary relief of asthma but can pose a risk to people with certain cardiovascular conditions) and sibutramine (a controlled substance, sibutramine was the subject of a study whose findings showed an association between its usage and increased risk of heart attack and stroke).

The FDA has also said that consumers need to be doubly cautious, as the unlisted ingredients are also likely to interact with other medications.

Que She has not been approved for use in Australia via the ARTG, however it is a widely available and popular weight-loss product available for sale via many internet websites.

For info see www.fda.gov.au.

supplements during or ahead of pregnancy.

ASMI spokesperson Ruth Kendon said there were valid reasons for using supplements in pregnancy that are supported by the "latest official advice and research.

"The suggestion that all supplementation is unwarranted is in direct contradiction to the advice of the National Health and Medical Research Council provided in January this year," she said.

"That advice clearly makes the point that pregnant and breastfeeding women are not getting sufficient iodine."

Concerns have also been raised by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare about deficiencies in iodine, folate and vitamin D.

"The best available advice from all official sources suggests that many women are deficient in iron and iodine, and that the use of nutritional supplements is necessary to rectify this imbalance in these cases," said Ms Kendon.

Potential acquisition

MARKET analysts at Datamonitor have tipped the target of a rumoured upcoming \$20 billion acquisition by pharmaceutical giant Sanofi-Aventis to be a US based target.

According to Giles Somers, senior healthcare analyst at Datamonitor, "in terms of prescription pharmaceutical companies, the unidentified target could be one of Biogen Idec, Allergan or Genzyme".

"To date, the majority of [Sanofi] acquisitions have taken place in the generics, consumer healthcare and vaccine sectors as the company looks to expand its presence in areas that both benefit from high-growth potential but are also insulated from the competitive threat of patent expiration and generic competition.

"If suggestions of an imminent \$20 billion acquisition are true, however, this would signal a notable statement of intent by the company as it looks to re-shape the focus of its core prescription pharmaceuticals business, building on the major overhaul of the company's internal R&D pipeline last year," Somers added.



DISPENSARY CORNER

IT'S official- Lady Ga Ga is bad for your eyes.

Doctors are warning against an alarming rise in the use of 'circle' contact lenses after Lady Ga-Ga wore them in her 'Bad Romance' video-clip.

The circle contact lenses give the wearer a doe-eyed effect by extending beyond the iris and thus making the eye appear larger.

Due to the illegality of selling OTC contact lenses in the US, it seems teens have turned en-masse to the internet to supply themselves with ill fitting circle lenses.

"Any type of contact lens is a medical device that requires a prescription, proper fitting by an eye care professional and a commitment to proper care by the consumer," the the American Academy of Ophthalmology warned in a statement.

Doctors are now urging wide-eyed teens who feel any pain or discomfort from their illegally-gotten lenses to seek medical assistance immediately to avoid serious eye complications and infections.

TAIWANESE dentists are warning consumers about the risks posed by over-extending their jaws to bite into big burgers.

According to the *China Post*, dentists have seen a marked increase in visits to their surgeries from patients presenting with jaw injuries after attempting to chow down on extra large burgers.

Healthcare authorities in Taiwan are blaming the rise in jaw injuries on fast-food outlets who are selling burgers that are around eight-centimetres in height (normal jaw extension for food should be around 4cms).

WEEDING for drugs.

A US man has received a rude shock after he decided to his unruly weed filled garden- only to discover someone had hidden a tray of 28 marijuana seedlings in the melee.

Immediately reporting his find to the police, the man pledged to keep his garden in better repair in the future.



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