

Just one click away from keeping up to date with all the breaking news as it comes to hand...



Weekly Comment

Welcome to *Pharmacy Daily's* weekly comment feature. This week's contributor is Gerald Quigley.

Caffeine Fix

Caffeine has been in the news a lot lately.

I gather it enhances absorption of particular over-the-counter drugs (at least, that's what I've been told).

Media hype reveals that elite sports people use it as a performance enhancer, or "upper", to maximize their sporting efforts.

In fact, I saw on the sports news the other night an AFL club staff member wandering around before the game with a bowl of capsules and a texta written label "No-Doz 2-3".

I watched in awe as a high profile forward stepped up, put his hand in the bowl and washed either one or more down with a quick slurp of water (might have been something else).

The media frenzy here revolves around caffeine as an "upper" followed by the after-game "downer" which seems to be in the form of medically prescribed temazepam.

Interestingly, a spike in the sales of caffeine tablets over the last few days means a renewed interest in the performance enhancing aspects.

What are our obligations here as health professionals?

Do we supervise the sales of these medicines?

I can hear the objections though.

"They are available at my local service station in small packs", "why not supervise the sales of Mother drinks, and all guarana drinks", "if it's good enough for AFL players to use them, why bother?"

We're missing the point here.

Maybe it's time for us to be professionally responsible by advising the purchaser, as we do for Pharmacist Only Medicines.

Maybe we can demonstrate once again our role in being "supervisors of medicines".

There is no doubt that caffeine use in sport at all levels is quite common.

We need therefore, as responsible health professionals, to keep it out of junior sports, and away from the well-meaning but competitive parent who wants his or her Johnny to give best-best-on-ground displays every week?

Can we do it? Will we do it?

PITP arrives in pharmacies

THE Pharmaceutical Society of Australia has advised that pharmacists should expect to receive their new Practice Improvement Training Program (PITP) kits throughout this week.

Designed to help pharmacists train staff in the supply of non-prescription medicines, the new kits are made up of six training modules as well as a resource kit and a variety of training materials.

Delivered by store pharmacists, the training modules are each around 30 mins in length, and can be delivered in any order, according to the needs of individual pharmacies.

"Pharmacies can use the training as an induction tool for new staff, or they could present to groups with a skill mix for more experienced members to guide others in their learning," said National President of the Pharmaceutical Society of

Australia, Warwick Plunkett

The program counts towards QCCP accreditation, which requires a total of three hours per annum of training for staff involved in supplying Pharmacy Medicines and Pharmacist Only Medicines.

The training can also count towards CPD points, giving pharmacists four points for every hour presentation.

The kits themselves have been developed by the PSA and the Guild, with funding provided by the Government under the Fourth Community Pharmacy Agreement.

Antidote inventory

PHARMACEUTICAL

manufacturer Phebra this morning issued a statement calling for the establishment of a National Antidote Inventory to help with the emergency treatment of victims of poisoning.

Phebra ceo Mal Eutick said a central inventory would improve the safety and security of supply of antidotes in Australian hospitals.

"Our experience is that hospitals around the country often don't always have the antidote they urgently require, and sometimes they do not have enough to treat an affected patient," he said.

US policy reversal

A CHANGE in policy in the US state of Washington is set to allow pharmacists to follow their conscience when it comes to dispensing abortion drug Plan B.

RGH E-Bulletin

THIS week's edition of the Repatriation General Hospital Pharmacy E-Bulletin gives an overview of reports of abnormal bleeding associated with the use of Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors.

The bulletin is available for download at no charge from www.auspharmist.net/ebulletin.php.

Flu shots in pharmacy

THE South African Government has donated around 500,000 doses of H1N1 flu-vaccine to pharmacy groups in the wake of the FIFA Soccer World Cup.

The move comes after months of vaccine shortages in the private sector, following the Health Department's decision to grab the majority of shots in the lead up to the World Cup, in order to vaccinate its police force, World Cup workers and healthcare professionals.

In order to ensure the stocks are used, the vaccine that has been provided to pharmacies has an expiry date of September, and all restrictions on who can receive the shots have also been lifted.

The pharmacy sector has been critical of the gov't's stockpiling and flu shot restrictions, saying that it had been "gearing up for a big scene that never arrived" and in doing so, had left many vulnerable people without flu protection.

Today's PD issue

TODAY'S *Pharmacy Daily* has two pages jam packed with news and competitions, plus a full page from the Guild which reveals details of the 2010 Offshore Business Conference- set to take place this year in Penang, Malaysia, between 27 Sep and 03 Oct.

See **page three** for details.

Friday Comp winner

CONGRATULATIONS to Katherine Webb from Clermont Pharmacy who was the luck winner of Friday's Aromababy Competition.

See **page two** for this week's Kohl Pencils competition.



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Online depression

RESEARCHERS at Sydney University are piloting an online program to aid Chinese Australians suffering with depression.

The program includes six lessons spread over eight weeks which encourage participants to recognise and gain control of depression symptoms - see the special website at www.virtualclinic.org.au.

Dementia risks

THE risk of dementia in older adults may be lessened through diet and exercise, according to the results of three long-term studies.

"Research has pointed us towards a number of factors that may impact our risk of Alzheimer's and cognitive decline, the strongest being reducing cardiovascular risk factors," said William Thies, Chief Medical and Scientific Officer at the US Alzheimer's Association.

The Framingham Study, which has followed the population of Framingham since 1948, has found that those who performed moderate to heavy levels of physical activity had a 40 percent lower chance of developing dementia.

Additionally, the Cardiovascular Health Study of 4,800 persons aged 65 years and older, found that those that drank tea regularly had a slower rate of cognitive decline, than participants who did not.

Reporting these results at the annual US Alzheimer's Association International Conference, the Assn. said that whilst helpful, there needed to be more long-term studies into the correlation between food, exercise and cognitive function in order to understand the connection, and develop better treatment and prevention programs.

Pharmacy Daily Pharmacy Job of the Day!

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Sigma might sell generics

SIGMA Pharmaceuticals today confirmed that it's evaluating expressions of interest for parts of the company "including Sigma's generics business".

The details were contained in a stock market update, in which Sigma also confirmed that it's continuing to work with its South African suitor Aspen Pharmacare to remove the company's "highly conditional" takeover conditions.

Last week Aspen confirmed a bid for Sigma at 55c per share (PD Wed) with a series of 11 conditions including a continuation of its exclusive dealing period with the beleaguered Aussie firm.

However in today's statement Sigma said hoped to help Aspen "to improve the proposal for Sigma shareholders, including the removal of conditions that had the effect of making the proposal highly conditional".

The Sigma directors said they had also advised Aspen that the ongoing discussions "should not be

interpreted as a willingness on the part of the Board to recommend to Sigma shareholders and offer of \$0.55 per share".

Sigma also has not granted an extension to the previous exclusivity period which has now expired.

"Sigma continues to consider the most appropriate business and financial structures to take the Group forward," the company said.

Energy drink debate

THE Australian Medical Association is calling for a national discussion on whether energy drinks should be available and in what quantities.

The calls come as the energy drink debate continues to heat up, with the AMA calling into question the wisdom of allowing beverages with around three times the amount of caffeine in them as coffee, to be mixed and drunk with alcohol in large quantities.

The AMA also suggested that said that the proposed discussion should be federally funded.



DISPENSARY CORNER

IT'S official - he is psychic!

Yes, Paul the German octopus, loathed and reviled by his adopted country but loved by everyone else, is clairvoyant, having correctly picked the winner of every FIFA World Cup match.

Paul's surprising run finished last night, after Spain (who he tipped to win) won the final round of the tournament.

Having suffered through a rather torrid few weeks, following his correct prediction that Germany would lose their bid to enter the FIFA final, Paul has managed to win back some favour when he predicted Germany would come in third.

Notwithstanding this, officials had to step up security at Paul's German aquarium after it was flooded with threats against his life.

Spain's president has since offered official bodyguards to protect Paul, and has also said that he is happy to offer Paul free asylum within Spanish borders.

DRINKING is bad for your health.

A US man has been rushed to a Texas burn centre after he was found on fire by the side of the road by police officers.

The intoxicated man told police that he had let his friends set his prosthetic leg on fire in fulfilment of a bet that he had made.

According to reports, the man and his buddies had agreed that whoever drank the least over the course of the evening would be set on fire.

Managing to down six beers, the man let his friends set his leg on fire, and then bundle him in the car to take him to hospital.

Halfway to the emergency room however his friends got cold feet in the face of the growing foot fire, and set him on the side of the road, still aight, to wait for passing police.

Although stop, drop, roll would have been preferable the man merely stripped down naked when the heat got too great, and was eventually treated for minor burns to his remaining non-prosthetic leg and buttocks.

WIN A KOHL PENCIL



Every day this week, **Pharmacy Daily** is giving readers the chance to win a kohl pencil from the latest Honey Comb pencil display, courtesy of Total Beauty Network.

Exclusive to Designer Brands is a range of makeup pencils for eyes and lips offering the hottest fashion colours in

creamy, yet defining formulas.

Designer Brands Lip Pencils are luxuriously soft, offering incredible definition without bleeding.

Designer Brands Kohl Pencils glide on gently, allowing great eye definition or easy blending for sexy, smoky looks.

For your chance to win your very own kohl pencil this week, simply send through the correct answer to the daily question below:

How many pencils is in the Designer Brands Range?

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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