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WA wound training

PHARMACISTS will be able to access a new 'high technology education centre' dedicated to wound management which has been launched in Western Australia.

The project is being led by Silver Chain Nursing Association, with the centre to be located at the Curtin University of Technology.

The new wound clinical education centre will provide training for doctors, nurses and other health professionals, with the latest diagnostic and treatment technology and custom-made 'real life' acute and chronic latex wounds and simulation models.

Health Minister Nicola Roxon said that both undergraduate and postgraduate pharmacy students would be able to access hands-on training, along with other health practitioners such as nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and podiatrists.

The project will receive \$380,000 in funding and is expected to be fully operational within three months, Roxon said.

Sigma issues profit warning

SIGMA Pharmaceuticals this morning confirmed that its full year profit is likely to be as much as a third lower than previously expected, due to the performance of its generics business, "the continuing volatility of the industry generally" and significant one-off corporate costs incurred due to consideration of the takeover proposal from its South African suitor Aspen Pharmacare.

The company said its full year after-tax profit is expected to be in the range of just \$43m-\$47m, but said that the "underlying EBTDA" would be in the range of \$190m-\$200m for the year.

"Sigma's performance in the first five months of the financial year has been sound in most areas of the business," the company said.

"The Consumer, Manufacturing, Medical and Retail businesses have all performed broadly in line with expectations," a statement added, with the Wholesaling business recording 9.3% year on year sales

growth.

However "performance in the Generics Division remains below budget" due to intense competition.

"Sigma believes this is primarily due to suppliers seeking market share in anticipation of substantial future growth in the generics market," the company said, warning that there was also considerable uncertainty remaining concerning the "short term impact of foreshadowed regulatory changes" in the Australian market. The board said it was continuing to closely monitor performance, with further guidance expected when Sigma releases its half year results in the coming months.

More orphans arrive

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration has designated Lucassin (terlipressin acetate) and ATG-Fresenius (immunoglobulin - antithymocyte) as orphan drugs. Lucassin is sponsored by Icaria Australia and is indicated for the treatment of patients with hepatorenal syndrome type 1 and for the treatment of oesophageal variceal haemorrhage.

ATG-Fresenius' sponsor is Dutech Diagnostics Pty Ltd, and it's indicated for the prevention of graft versus host disease in allogeneic haematopoietic stem cell transplantation.

UK NHS revamp

THE Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain says it will press the government to ensure that pharmacists have input into a massive proposed revamp of the UK's National Health Service.

Huge changes outlined in a White Paper released this month aim to implement a vision by the new UK government which empowers health professionals, with the RPSGB welcoming the view that "those who are closest to patients are best placed to make decisions for their care."

The society also says that under the new structure there's the possibility of more nationally commissioned health services offered through pharmacy.

"We have the skills, expertise and experience to prevent people becoming unwell through public health interventions," said the RPSGB in a statement.

Avandia in balance

A REVIEW by the US Food and Drug Administration into the diabetes drug Avandia has recommended that the medication remain on the market.

Twelve of the 33 members of the expert panel voted to withdraw the drug, but the majority agreed it could continue to be marketed but with stricter label warnings.

AHPRA capacity up

THE new Australian Health Practitioner Regulatory Agency has responded to concerns about teething problems, boosting its capacity to handle feedback.

"Introducing a new national registration and accreditation scheme is an ambitious undertaking," the agency said in a statement yesterday.

AHPRA said it's had difficulty handling the roughly 3000 enquiries received each day, and there have also been some IT teething issues associated with moving 1.5 million practitioner records from 85 sources into a single system.

"AHPRA has identified the problems and is putting solutions in place," the statement said.

In order to ensure that concerns can be efficiently raised about individual practitioners, a separate pathway for notifications will be introduced, separate from general and registration enquiries.

State-specific phone numbers will be published in the next day or so, routed directly to notification teams in each state.

Other solutions include increasing the number of AHPRA enquiry staff and intensifying staff training.

"We regret that these issues have caused frustration," AHPRA said.

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:

Name 3 other eye products 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.

Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner: **Alex Deaconos** from **JR Chartered Accountants**.

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Alzheimer's discovery

RESEARCHERS from the University of Washington/Seattle have found that intranasal insulin, may help to improve cognitive functioning in Alzheimer's sufferers.

Over a four month period the researchers trialed either a placebo or 20 or 40 IU of daily intranasal insulin treatments on 109 patients.

Those patients taking insulin showed significant improvements in cognitive and functional tests (up to two months after the testing concluded) compared to those who were taking placebos.

"We believe that restoring normal insulin function in the brain may provide therapeutic benefits to adults with Alzheimer's," said researcher Suzanne Craft.

Travel Specials

WELCOME to *Pharmacy Daily's* travel feature. Each week we highlight a couple of great travel deals which we're sure will be of interest to everyone in the pharmacy industry.

TRAVELZOO is offering a fantastic 55% off Resort Rooms at Sea World Resort & Water Park on the Gold Coast.

Priced from just \$99 per night (down from \$229) the resort is linked by monorail to Sea World, and also features four restaurants and two bars, a new Kids Club, a host of water sport activities, plus massage and beauty facilities.

The offer is valid for booking until 21 July for stays from now until 17 September, see www.travelzoo.com.

VENTURE Holidays has boosted its Fiji package value, adding a stay six pay three deal at the Shangri-La on the Coral Coast.

The package includes six nights accom, return airfares, transfers and buffet brekkie daily from \$985pp, call 1300 414 151.

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Second H1N1 wave alert

VIROLOGISTS believe that the world is still under threat of a further pandemic H1N1 outbreak, with eminent members of the Hygiene Council last night warning that a second wave of infection across the globe is likely.

The Hygiene Council is a group of scientists convened by manufacturer Reckitt Benckiser, with chairman Professor John Oxford of the London School of Medicine and Dentistry, and Australian representative Prof Dominic Dwyer of Westmead Hospital last night hosting a function in Sydney.

Dwyer told *PD* that previous pandemics had usually seen a second wave of infections, and that the H1N1 virus was also likely to evolve to affect more people.

He also said that the relatively low rate of deaths due to H1N1 could in part be attributed to much better intensive care facilities and antivirals.

"Most people who were admitted to intensive care due to H1N1 would have died in the 1918

pandemic," he said.

A review of the impact of H1N1 so far showed that the usual cohort of elderly people affected by seasonal influenza had not been impacted by H1N1 due to immunity gained during the 1950s.

The experts also said that H1N1 was still prevalent, and although it's possible to look back at what's happened over the last year "it's unusual to do a post mortem while the patient is still alive".

But figures from last year clearly indicate a strong correlation between H1N1 deaths and hospitalisations and pre-existing conditions such as chronic illness - and in particular, obesity.

The Hygiene Council reiterated the importance of preventive measures such as washing hands or using hand sanitisers "to break the influenza chain of infection".

Prof Oxford said that the community should be aware that they have a responsibility not to get infected - or once infected, a further responsibility not to infect others.

New NAPSA team elected

THE National Australian Pharmacy Students' Association held its annual general meeting in Adelaide last weekend, with the event including the election of a new executive.

The new NAPSA president is Ashleigh Coome of Queensland University of Technology, with vice president being Daniel Bowtell of Curtin University.

Sarah Sinclair of the University of Sydney is NAPSA Secretary, while treasurer is Tim Mizzi of CSU Wagga Wagga.

Six new committee chairs were also elected: Teresa McMenomy of James Cook University (Education); Stacey Gough of Curtin University

(IPSF); Hanna Soon of Latrobe University (Pharmacy Awareness); Bethany Cooper of Griffith University (Publications); Briohny Gillespie of University of Canberra (Rural and Indigenous); and Mark Aspden of University of Canberra (Industrial Affairs).

The new executive are pictured above **from left:** Daniel Bowtell, Ashleigh Coome, Sarah Sinclair and Tim Mizzi.



DISPENSARY CORNER

WAS this due to fear of swine flu?

Two off-duty staff at the Six Flags Great America theme park in Illinois have been arrested after allegedly attacking one of their colleagues dressed as cartoon character Porky Pig.

According to a police report, the pair took a photo with Porky on Mon afternoon, and "then punched the mascot in the head 10 to 15 times".

The reasons for the attack weren't clear, and the men were issued citations for battery, with the 24-year-old woman inside the Porky Pig costume suffering headaches and a stiff neck.

Reports also didn't confirm whether the woman said she wouldn't again dress as Porky Pig, telling her employers: "That's all, folks".

IT was the chicken!

A team of British scientists believe that they have cracked the answer to the age-old question of whether the chicken or the egg came first.

The answer, according to the team at the University of Sheffield, is in the eggshell.

Using computer programs, the team managed to simulate the formation of an egg, and in doing so discovered that the OC-17 protein (produced in hens ovaries) starts off the process of egg creation and without it, no egg shell will form.

"Understanding how chickens make eggshells is fascinating in itself but can also give clues towards designing new materials and processes," said Prof John Harding from Sheffield University.

NOT a lover of chondroitin!

A super-keen singer/songwriter, Andy Brandy Casagrande, has braved the deep blue depths to belt out a tune to a great white shark - without a cage.

Yes, that's right, Andy's love of the man-eater is so great that he dived into shark infested waters off the coast of Mexico, with an acoustic guitar, to play them his new song titled 'The Great White Shark Song' which featured such lyrics as "If I was a great white I wouldn't bite you, but I'd swim right next to you".