

"It generates direct sales and just as importantly good will with customers"

Read what Jo McDowall has to say, click here.



Dengue breakthrough

RESEARCH published this week in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* reveals the latest move in the battle against dengue fever - the breeding of genetically engineered mosquitos.

Scientists believe they can create genetically altered males which will mate with females to create offspring with a gene which inhibits wing growth.

The virus, which affects up to 100 million people a year and threatens more than a third of the world's population, is spread by the bite of infected female mosquitos.

The researchers estimated that if released, their new breed could suppress the native mosquito population in just six months.

It's said to be an ideal way to tackle the disease as dengue is only spread by a small number of species of mosquito - unlike malaria which is carried by a wider variety, according to the *BBC*.

TGA AusPARs added

THE TGA has released two more of its AusPAR prescription medicine reports, detailing the evaluation of Erbitux (cetuximab) and Berinert (Human C1 esterase inhibitor) - now online at www.tga.gov.au.

Guild embraces reform plan

THE Government's new plan to take full policy and funding responsibility for hospital, GP and primary health care services in Australia (*PD* yesterday) presents a "once in a generation opportunity for community pharmacy," according to the Pharmacy Guild.

Shortly after Prime Minister Kevin Rudd announced the move, the Guild issued a statement saying it would "open the way for community pharmacy to negotiate funding for professional pharmacy programs to be delivered in both private and public hospital pharmacies."

The Guild said that the proposed nationally consistent approach to hospital funding would allow systematised professional pharmacy programs, which could be taught as part of university courses as well as via CPD training for existing registered pharmacists.

"This neatly dovetails in with my discussions with the Federal Minister for Health and Ageing, Nicola Roxon, who has clearly indicated the government's desire that professional pharmacy programs be accessible to all Australians, regardless of where

they live," said Guild President Kos Slavos yesterday.

He urged that the new health environment should provide funding for nationally consistent medication discharge summaries, to be sent to the patient's preferred community pharmacy via the new e-health system.

Other programs suggested include hospital pharmacist-initiated medication reviews and "numerous hospital-to-home transition programs for specific disease states and conditions, where intervention programs by pharmacists will prevent hospital readmission via better medication management."

Too many pharmacists

YESTERDAY'S first ever Pharmacy Practice Research Summit in Canberra included a presentation of a workforce summary which showed that there will be a significant surplus of pharmacists in Australia.

According to the report the oversupply will peak in 2025, when up to 3000 Australian pharmacists may find themselves unable to work the number of hours they would like.

US RUM program

THE US National Community Pharmacists Association (NCPA) has officially announced a new partnership with a company called Sharps Compliance Inc, under which member pharmacies will be offered discounted services for the "Sharps TAKEAWAY Environmental Return System".

Sharps Compliance provides a range of disposal solutions for medical and pharmaceutical waste and the new agreement provides a way for pharmacies "to meet a growing patient demand for a safe and environmentally friendly way to discard unused medicines," according to NCPA President, Joseph Harmison.

The program, being promoted in conjunction with Earth Week (17-24 Apr) allows pharmacies to offer their patients postage-paid envelopes to return medicines for disposal, as well as via collection boxes in a secure location within each pharmacy.

"It's not every day that pharmacists can help achieve a cleaner environment and less prescription drug abuse...while introducing new customers to their local community pharmacy," Harmison said.

March MIMS Monthly Medicine Update

NEW PRODUCTS

Circadin (melatonin) is a naturally occurring hormone produced by the pineal gland and is structurally related to serotonin. Physiologically, melatonin secretion increases soon after the onset of darkness, peaks at 2-4 am and diminishes during the second half of the night. Melatonin is associated with the control of circadian rhythms and entrainment to the light-dark cycle. It is also associated with a hypnotic effect and increased propensity for sleep. The activity of melatonin at the MT1/MT2 receptors is believed to contribute to its sleep-promoting properties via their distinct actions on the circadian clock. The MT1 receptors are thought to inhibit neuronal firing, while the MT2 receptors have been implicated in the phase-shifting response.

Circadin is indicated as monotherapy for the short term treatment (up to three weeks) of primary insomnia characterised by poor quality of sleep in patients who are aged 55 or over. The recommended dose is 2 mg once daily, 1-2 hours before bedtime and after food. This dosage should be continued for up to three weeks. Circadin is available on private prescription as 2 mg prolonged release tablets in packs of 7 or 21.

Nebilet (nebulivol) is a racemate of two enantiomers, *d*-nebulivol and *l*-nebulivol. Pharmacological studies have shown that the *d*-enantiomer is largely responsible for the beta-receptor antagonist activity while the *l*-enantiomer has mild vasodilating properties attributable to an interaction with the L-arginine/nitric oxide pathway. Nebulivol is a selective beta1-receptor antagonist in extensive metabolites and at doses less than or equal to 10 mg. Nebulivol is devoid of alpha1-adrenergic receptor blocking activity and lacks intrinsic sympathomimetic

and membrane stabilising activity at clinically relevant doses/concentrations. Many of nebulivol's hydroxylated and glucuronidated metabolites contribute to beta-blocking activity. Single and repeated doses of nebulivol reduce heart rate and blood pressure at rest and during exercise, both in normotensive subjects and in hypertensive patients. The antihypertensive effect is maintained during chronic treatment. During acute and chronic treatment with nebulivol in hypertensive patients, systemic vascular resistance is decreased. Despite heart rate reduction, reduction in cardiac output during rest and exercise may be limited due to an increase in stroke volume. The clinical relevance of these haemodynamic differences as compared to other beta1-receptor antagonists has not been fully established. In hypertensive patients, nebulivol increases the NO-mediated vascular response to acetylcholine (ACh) which is reduced in patients with endothelial dysfunction.

Nebilet is indicated to treat stable chronic heart failure, as an adjunct to standard therapies in patients 70 years or older, and essential hypertension. Contraindications include patients with liver insufficiency or liver function impairment, acute heart failure, cardiogenic shock or episodes of heart failure decompensation requiring IV inotropic therapy, sick sinus syndrome, second and third degree heart block (without a pacemaker), history of bronchospasm and/or asthma, untreated pheochromocytoma, metabolic acidosis, bradycardia, hypotension and severe peripheral circulatory disturbances. The recommended dose for hypertension is 5 mg once daily, alone or in combination with hydrochlorothiazide (12.5-25 mg). The treatment of stable chronic heart failure is initiated at 1.25 mg once daily

with a gradual up titration of dosage at 1-2 weekly intervals until the optimal individual maintenance dose is reached. Maximum recommended dose is 10 mg once daily. Nebilet is available on PBS - Streamlined Authority [3234 Moderate to severe heart failure in a patient stabilised on conventional therapy which must include an ACE inhibitor or Angiotensin II antagonist, if tolerated] as 1.25, 5 and 10 mg tablets.

Qlaira (dienogest + oestradiol valerate) is a new cycle adapted combined oral contraceptive (COC) pill. Contraindications and precautions are similar to other COCs. Qlaira is available on private prescription in wallets containing 28 tablets consisting of 2 dark yellow tablets (3 mg oestradiol valerate), 5 medium red tablets (2 mg oestradiol valerate + 2 mg dienogest), 17 light yellow tablets (2 mg oestradiol valerate + 3 mg dienogest), 2 dark red tablets (1 mg oestradiol valerate) and 2 white placebo tablets.

Vidaza (azacitidine) is a pyrimidine nucleoside analog of cytidine. Azacitidine is believed to exert its antineoplastic effects by causing hypomethylation of DNA and direct cytotoxicity on abnormal haematopoietic cells in the bone marrow. DNA hypomethylation may allow for the re-expression of genes involved in normal cell cycle regulation and differentiation. The cytotoxic effects of azacitidine may be due in part to its incorporation into RNA with subsequent inhibition of protein synthesis and/or its ability to activate DNA damage pathways leading to apoptosis. In vitro, non-proliferating cells are relatively insensitive to azacitidine. Vidaza is indicated for the treatment of patients (in whom allogeneic stem cell transplantation is not indicated) with intermediate-2 and high-risk myelodysplastic syndromes according to the International Prognostic Scoring

System, chronic myelomonocytic leukaemia (10%-29% marrow blasts without myeloproliferative disorder), acute myeloid leukaemia with 20-30% blasts and multi-lineage dysplasia, according to World Health Organization Classification. Vidaza is contraindicated in patients with advanced malignant hepatic tumours, severe renal impairment (creatinine clearance < 30 mL/min) and in pregnancy.

Vidaza is administered subcutaneously and is available in single vials containing azacitidine 100 mg.

Evoltra (clofarabine) is a purine nucleoside antimetabolite. Its antitumour activity is believed to be due to 3 mechanisms: DNA polymerase alpha inhibition resulting in termination of DNA chain elongation and/or inhibition of DNA synthesis/repair; ribonucleotide reductase inhibition with reduction of intracellular deoxynucleotide triphosphate (dNTP) pools; disruption of mitochondrial integrity with the release of cytochrome C and other proapoptotic factors leading to programmed cell death even in non-dividing cells. In addition, halogenation of the adenine ring at the 2 position increases resistance to cellular degradation by adenosine deaminase, and substitution of a fluorine at the C-2' position in the arabinoside configuration decreases the susceptibility to phosphoryl cleavage by acid and bacterial purine nucleoside phosphorylase. Evoltra is indicated for treatment of acute lymphocytic leukaemia in paediatric patients who have relapsed or are refractory after receiving at least two prior regimens. This use is based on the induction of complete responses. It is contraindicated in patients with severe renal insufficiency or severe hepatic impairment and in breastfeeding women. Evoltra is administered by IV infusion and is available in single vials containing 20 mg/20 mL.

NEW FORMULATIONS

Boostrix, Twinrix and Infranix IPV are now all available as preservative free formulations.

SAFETY RELATED CHANGES
Pioglitazone hydrochloride (Actos) is now also contraindicated in patients with symptomatic heart failure and in patients with NYHA Class II heart failure.

During treatment with **cyproterone acetate (Androcur)**, adrenocortical function should be checked regularly, as preclinical data suggest a possible suppression due to the corticoid-like effect at high doses. Red blood cell count should also be checked regularly during treatment as anaemia has been reported.

Immune mediated haemolytic anaemia has been observed in patients receiving cephalosporin class antibacterials including **ceftriaxone (Rocephin)**. Severe cases of haemolytic anaemia, including fatalities, have been reported during treatment in both adults and children. If a patient develops anaemia while on ceftriaxone, the diagnosis of cephalosporin associated anaemia should be considered and ceftriaxone discontinued until the etiology is determined.

Cases of suicidal ideation and behaviour have been reported in patients taking **tetracycline**. Particular caution should be exercised in treating patients with a history of depression or prior suicide attempts or ideation.

This list is a summary of only some of the changes that have occurred over the last month. Before prescribing, always refer to the full product information.

Pharmacy DAILY

Thursday 4th March 2010

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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.

EVERY Norfolk Island holiday package sold by Coral Seas has been discounted by \$100 per person, for bookings made before the end of the month.

One example is a seven night deal staying at the Panorama Seaside Apartments, costing just \$1329 per person including return economy airfares from Brisbane, accommodation, a half day tour, daily car rental, airport transfers and three specialty dinner shows.

More information 1800 641 803 or see your travel agent.

HOW about a last minute holiday in Italy?

Small group specialist Ciao Bella Tours is offering a big saving on bookings for its upcoming Italian Healthy Indulgence and Slow Food Tour in Tuscany, which departs 27 May.

If you book and pay before 31 Mar you can save \$640 per person, but the offer is very limited with just a few places left.

For more information see www.holidaystoeurope.com.au.

OR if you really want something to tell people about at your next dinner party, what about this trip to Iran?

Intrepid Travel's 15-day Iran Adventure departing 10 Apr is on sale at 15% off, meaning it costs just \$1920 per person (land only).

The trip takes in colourful bazaars, ancient Persian ruins, fascinating nomads, shimmering deserts and snow-capped peaks, and includes a range of interactions with the hospitable Iranian people.

More info 1300 360 887.

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CAPS pharmacy opportunity

THE new Continence Aids Payment Scheme (CAPS) which comes into effect from 01 Jul will create significant opportunities for pharmacies to expand their continence category, according to manufacturer Hartmann Group.

The program helps eligible patients with permanent and severe incontinence to meet some of the costs of continence products, and unlike the current Continence Aids Assistance Scheme, under CAPS subsidies will be paid directly to consumers.

"This means they can purchase products from a range of continence product suppliers, pharmacies or retail outlets and provides a huge opportunity for pharmacy," Hartmann said in a statement this week.

The company suggested that selling opportunities for the products could be maximised through staff training and expanded product ranges.

"Marketing your pharmacy as a continence management centre will attract new customers," Hartmann suggested, along with offering home delivery options to help patients who want to make their purchases discreetly.

Hartmann Moli is endorsed by

the Guild as a pharmacy-only continence product range.

Pharmacies are also being urged to consider pharmacy-only products because market research shows that 'first purchases' of continence products occur in pharmacies where professional advice is available, with subsequent top-ups via grocery.

"Supporting pharmacy-only products can ensure customers return," the company said.

More info 1300 736 003.

UK pharmacy inquest

THE controversial case in Britain where a pharmacist was given a criminal conviction for incorrect dispensing (*PD* 15 Apr 09) is receiving further publicity due to an inquest into the 2007 death of 72-year-old Carmel Sheller.

Pharmacist Elizabeth Lee gave her propranolol instead of prednisolone, and the grandmother died just a few days later.

The Berkshire Coroner this week heard evidence that Lee was a locum who had worked for more than 10 hours without a break.

It's also suggested the incident was due to the similar spellings and packaging of the drugs.



DISPENSARY CORNER

THIS is an example of a real dope.

A 26-year-old German man has been arrested in Nuremberg after he attempted to snort amphetamines off the roof of an unmarked police car.

The nightclub reveller wasn't aware that the vehicle belonged to the police, who happened upon him as they returned to the car.

"He got horrible luck," said one of the officers.

THE latest must-have for people who have more money than sense has been revealed at a luxury goods fair in Verona, Italy.

It's a golden coffin, which is on sale for just €280,000 (A\$500,000) - and just when you thought it couldn't get more ridiculous, the coffin comes complete with its own cellphone.

It's presumably for making those spooky calls from the afterlife.

WHEN you advise your patients to exercise more, let's hope they don't do it like this.

An English dog owner has been fined after he took his pet for a walk - while driving next to him.

Prosecutors said police spotted Paul Railton "driving at low speed" along a country lane, with his arm out the window holding the dog's leash as the animal trotted alongside.

Railton pleaded guilty this week to not being in proper control of a vehicle, with his lawyer admitting that "it was a silly thing to do."

"There was an element of laziness," he added.

THE US Centers for Disease Control has released a study showing that US marriages last longer than "cohabiting unions" which don't involve a wedding.

Intriguing results of the wide-ranging report into US couples also found that those who don't have children are more than twice as likely to break up within 10 years of starting their relationship than those with kids.

The CDC also found that 75% of marriages where the men and women are aged 26 or over last at least a decade.

WIN AN AUSTRALIS LIP PENCIL



CONGRATULATIONS to Lyn Geale of Glossodia Pharmacy who was the first reader yesterday to tell us that Australis Lip Pencils prevent feathering.

Australis has once again teamed up with *Pharmacy Daily* this week, giving readers the chance to win an Australis Lip Pencil, valued at \$8.95.

Line, define and fill your lips with this high-quality range of lip pencils.

With 10 new shades, each pencil shade has been perfectly matched to the Australis Colour Inject Mineral lipsticks so the age old problem of matching shades is no longer - we've done the hard part for you!

This beautifully soft, anti-feathering pencil is a must to complete your lip look.

For your chance to win your very own Australis Lip Pencil, simply send through the correct answer to the following question:

Are Australis Lip Pencils hard or soft?

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

The first correct entry received each day will win.

Hint! Visit www.australiscosmetics.com.au.