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Three pages today

TODAY'S *Pharmacy Daily* has two pages packed with the latest industry news plus a full page promoting the upcoming Australian College of Pharmacy conference in the Barossa Valley, which is now just six weeks away - see **page 3**.

McDonalds WW deal

THE new partnership between Weight Watchers and McDonalds (**PD** Wed) only applies in New Zealand, where McDonalds is a completely separate business from the Australian fast food operation.

A spokesperson for Weight Watchers said that "at this time there is no agreement to bring Weight Watchers Approved Meals to Australia".

MEANWHILE the Heart Foundation says its licensing deal with McDonalds in which the Tick logo is displayed on some meals covers the costs of providing advice on serving meals which are lower in saturated fat and sodium, as well as an ongoing audit program.

"At least once a week, every week, a McDonalds store somewhere in Australia is being randomly audited," a Heart Foundation spokesperson told **PD**.

Vaccination rollout

A **TRIAL** swine flu vaccination program in Tasmanian pharmacies has seen more than 2500 patients immunised at five pharmacies by nurse immunisers in one week, and after positive feedback will now be extended into a second phase in a number of additional locations.

PSA Tas president Shane Jackson said the trial "clearly demonstrated the value of pharmacies being used as locations for swine flu vaccination clinics.

"Many patients with chronic illness frequent pharmacies, and the pilot program allowed them to have a swine flu vaccination in the normal course of their day."

Extra pharmacies are being sought for phase II, particularly in regional areas of Tasmania.

Reckitt ramps up pharmacy

RECKITT Benckiser last night outlined significant plans to further boost its presence in pharmacy, including the roll-out of a new Nurofen for Children range and initiatives surrounding the 01 May up-scheduling of Nurofen Plus.

Regional director Lindsay Forrest said that while RB sells a wide range of household products, in Australasia Nurofen is number one, and was also the company's fastest growing product in each of 2007, 2008 and 2009.

Reckitt Benckiser has also been engaging the industry over the last 12 months through its Ibuprofen in the Community Experts Forum (ICEF) and the Analgesics Advisory Panel, which comprises a number of health care professionals incl GPs, nurses and pharmacists.

Forrest said the company would today release a refreshed version of its education program, endorsed by the Guild and PSA to help pharmacy manage the change in scheduling.

The updated program follows feedback obtained from more than 200 pharmacists across the country to the *Manage Pain - effectively, safely, responsibly* program released last year, with the addition of a point of sale flyer for patients as well as the continued availability of sticky notes which prompt "3 things to remember when taking this medicine" for pharmacists to use when advising patients on codeine containing medications.

Forrest also confirmed that Reckitt Benckiser would release a new 30-tablet pack size of Nurofen Plus, which will be on Schedule 3 as it contains a five day supply.

The company is

also set for a strong focus on Nurofen for Children, with an updated range including a new 'concentrated formula' for ages 5-12 as well as the existing infant drops (3-24 months) and fruit-flavoured liquids for ages 1-5.

Marketing director Frederique Hull said Reckitt Benckiser would also expand a pilot program which has seen Nurofen for Children detailed to GPs in Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne.

Full distribution of the new products is expected by 1st June.

"It's an outstanding product and we're really looking forward to the relaunch, which will be our focus at APP next week," Hull said.

She added that Nurofen Zavance had also been a big success in pharmacy, and had seen some patients switch to it from the codeine-containing products, meaning this will also be a major upcoming focus in the light of the codeine up-scheduling.

MEANWHILE Hull also revealed the launch of a new packaging option for Strepsils, which will now also be available in a 'Handy Tube' containing 10 lozenges in a durable format suitable for handbags.

A new Strepsils Cool product, which combats the burning sensation of a sore throat, has also been launched.



ABOVE: At last night's Reckitt Benckiser pharmacy function, from left, Richard Moore, newly appointed RB healthcare marketing manager; Frederique Hull, RB marketing director; and Lindsay Forrest, RB regional director.

Iodine for pregnancy

WOMEN who are considering getting pregnant or are pregnant or breastfeeding should take an iodine supplement, according to a recommendation issued yesterday by the National Health and Medical Research Council.

250 micrograms per day is the minimum recommendation, and endocrinologist Prof Creswell Eastman said that although Australians now get more iodine in their diets following the mandatory fortification of bread last October, "it is still appropriate for women to supplement their diet with an additional 150 micrograms of iodine every day".

Blackmores has announced that in line with the recommendations it will be updating three of its pregnancy-related products to reflect the 150 microgram suggestion, but has reassured women taking its current 250 microgram formulations that they are safe as the products are still well below the recommended 1,100 microgram "upper limit", with excess amounts simply excreted.

The new formulations are set to hit the shelves in coming months.

Kapidex US change

THE US FDA has approved a name change for heartburn drug Kapidex (dexlansoprazole) to avoid confusion with two other medications - Casodex and Kadian.

From late next month Takeda Pharmaceuticals will market Kapidex in the US under its new name Dexilant.

The move follows reports of a number of dispensing errors because of confusion over the similar drug names.

Abbott GSK deal

ABBOTT and GlaxoSmithKline have announced an agreement for the development of a molecular diagnostic test which could help select patients who may benefit from a skin cancer treatment being developed by GSK.

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DISPENSARY CORNER

LAST night Reckitt Benckiser revealed some interesting statistics which probably don't reflect well on the partying habits of Australians (see p1).

Marketing director Frederique Hull confided that RB advertises its various Nurofen brands on TV for fifty weeks per year - but apparently doesn't see the need to promote for two weeks over the festive season because it sells so well at that time anyway.

"We see a seasonal peak [in sales] around the Christmas period - it's all the hangovers," she said.

HERE'S evidence that you just can't beat good genes when it comes to living a long life.

An English woman who's just turned 100 says she believes her longevity is probably due to cigarettes and alcohol.

Lorna Gobey, of Cheltenham, estimates she's gone through more than 500,000 cigarettes since she first lit up in 1940, and continues to smoke 20 a day.

And her regular tippie is a glass of Guinness - with a whisky chaser.

She sounds quite formidable, saying "People try and tell you it's bad for you but my family wouldn't dare ask me to stop.

"If they did, I'd put them across my lap and give them a slapped bum," she said.

MEN, this is why you have trouble when you call Telstra or your bank.

Researchers at Edinburgh University have confirmed what most blokes already know - electronic voice recognition systems have trouble understanding male voices.

The scientists analysed recordings from a call centre ("for training and coaching purposes?") and found that the computers failed to understand men's speech because they make more "umm" and "err" sounds than women.

The study was published in the *Speech Communication* journal, with one of the authors saying the results aimed to "help create better systems that will be simple and efficient for people to use."

PSA urges prevention push

THE Pharmaceutical Society of Australia has responded to the Government's hospital package (PD Wed) package by calling for a re-evaluation of healthcare focus, and the implementation of an integrated national preventative health care program, specifically targeted to reduce the amount of hospitalisations.

"The Government is rightly looking at ways to ensure the health system in Australia remains sustainable in the face of a growing ageing population and increased incidence of chronic disease," said PSA president Warwick Plunkett.

"But PSA believes the announced approach does not adequately look at preventing illness and maintaining the wellbeing of consumers to try to avoid hospital admissions," he added.

The PSA said that focus needs to shift away from the doctor and hospital-centric system, and move

towards patient self care and primary health care services provided by pharmacies, so that hospital admission becomes a 'measure of last resort'.

"The provision of professional services by pharmacy is fundamental to the successful and sustainable implementation of an efficient and workable preventive health system in Australia," Plunkett said.

Urgent Qld PSE alert

QUEENSLAND Health has today reported that data from Project STOP and audits of pharmacies indicate that doctors are now being targeted by drug runners seeking prescriptions for pseudoephedrine - often in large quantities with numerous repeats.

Pharmacists are being advised to review each patient's history on Project STOP before dispensing any PSE - including those who have it on prescription, as well as log all sales of PSE onto the system including scripts and rejected sales.

Prescribing doctors should also be contacted if there's any concern about a patient's history and where appropriate GPs should be asked if the prescription should be cancelled.

Psoriasis listing

THIS month has seen the PBS listing of psoriasis treatment Stelara (ustekinumab), which is the first in a new class of biological therapies which has shown effectiveness in the treatment of plaque psoriasis.

WIN AN AUSTRALIS LIP PENCIL



CONGRATULATIONS to Joanne Campbell of Gosford Hospital Pharmacy Department who was the first reader yesterday to tell us that Australis Lip Pencils are soft.

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

What should you use your lip pencil for?

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

The first correct entry received each day will win.

Hint! Visit www.australiscosmetics.com.au.

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.

11-14 Mar: The 19th Australian Pharmacy Professional Conference and Trade Exhibition on the Gold Coast - appconference.com.

15 Mar: PSA Qld CPD seminar on Rheumatoid Arthritis in Townsville - 07 3896 1900.

16 Mar: PSA Vic CPD session on Codeine Scheduling in Ballarat - details 03 9389 4013.

17 Mar: PSA NSW short course - CM - Benefits & Adverse Reactions, St Leonards. Info Moya Tang 02 9431 1100.

17 Mar: Medicines Update - Analgesia at Cooma NSW - more info 02 9431 1120.

24 Mar: APSIG Clinical Forum 2 presented by Dr Josephine Thomas at Unley, SA - details Anne Curran 08 8272 1211.

26-28 Mar: PSA NSW March Weekend on the theme of Men's and Women's Health, at Mantra Ettalong Beach. 27.5 CPD credits - www.psa.org.au.

14-18 Apr: Australian College of Pharmacy conference Barossa Valley - 1300 651 239.

28 Apr-7 May: The PSA will hold its 35th annual offshore conference in Beijing and Shanghai - details on 1300 139 293.

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

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

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

15-11 Nov: The 36th National SHPA Conference, Medicines Management 2010 in Melbourne - mm2010shpa.com.

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