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Adopt EU Guides?

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration is calling for comments on whether Australia should adopt a string of health and medicine European Union guidelines.

The extensive list under consideration includes: the 'Guideline on clinical development of fixed combination medicinal products'; 'Guideline on the replacement of rabbit pyrogen testing by an alternative test for plasma-derived medicinal products' and the 'Guideline on excipients in the dossier for application for marketing authorisation of a medicinal product'.

Further guides up for discussion incl. the 'Clinical evaluation of diagnostic agents'; 'Final guideline on the clinical evaluation of direct acting antiviral agents intended for treatment of chronic Hepatitis C'; 'Guideline on the clinical investigations of medicinal products for the treatment of pulmonary arterial hypertension' and the 'Final guideline on the investigation of medicinal products in the term and pre-term neonate'.

The closing date for comments on whether Australia should adopt the forementioned guidelines is 29 Apr 2010

To view all the guidelines see www.tga.gov.au, with comments via email to euguidelines@tga.gov.au.

Greater CVD demand

DEMAND for cardiovascular disease (CVD) medicines is greater in regional areas than in cities or remote areas, according to the latest study by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

The report, based on information taken from supply records of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme and Repatriation Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, theorises that the spike in CVD demand in regional areas, reflects that cardiovascular health is poorer outside of major Aussie cities,

The report also found that mortality and hospitalisation rates from cardiovascular related events is higher in regional areas.

Conversely, demand for lipid-lowering medications is higher in major cities, and city dwellers were statistically more likely to visit GP's for a CVD consultation than their regional neighbors.

Pharmacy to fill NZ gaps

PHARMACISTS in New Zealand are "well placed to step into the gaps" where existing Primary Health Organisations (PHOs) are struggling to meet community needs, according to the Pharmacy Guild of New Zealand.

PHOs in NZ are funded by regional health services, and see a range of health workers such as GPs, dietitians, physiotherapists and pharmacists brought together to provide primary health care services to enrolled consumers.

There are 81 PHOs around NZ - but some aren't doing as well as others, with the NZ Guild responding to statistics released by the NZ Ministry of Health which ranked PHOs for meeting key health indicators such as immunisation, assessment of heart disease and diabetes follow-up.

"With over 900 community pharmacies throughout New Zealand, community pharmacists are the health professionals that

patients see most often," said NZ Guild ceo Annabel Young.

"Pharmacists are medicines experts who are trained to assess a patient's condition and recommend safe and effective treatments - without an appointment," she added.

In light of the figures, there are suggestions that incentive payments previously targeted for the non-profit PHOs should be redirected, with the Guild urging the Health Minister to "consider the effective and efficient option of using frontline community pharmacies.

"New Zealand lags well behind international norms when it comes to using front line pharmacy skills," Young said.

Three pages today

TODAY'S *Pharmacy Daily* features a full page promoting the upcoming Australian College of Pharmacy conference - see **p3**.

Warfarin genetic test

A RECENT US study has found that doctors who use genetic testing on patients who are taking Warfarin blood thinning medication can cut hospitalisation caused by Warfarin complications by as much as 30%.

Researchers found that by gene testing patients they were able to find more potential problems caused by the drug and offset them by changing dosages appropriately, before the complications became an issue.

In the US about 20% of Warfarin patients end up being hospitalised for complications including severe blood clots and bleeding, with the drug prescribed to almost 2m new heart patients per year.

Walgreens growth

US pharmacy giant Walgreens has announced the purchase of 17 more pharmacies in the Memphis area - but instead of keeping them open will simply transfer the patient and prescription files to its own outlets nearby.

The deal will see the 17 Ike's and Super-D drugstores owned by USA Drug close, with Walgreens saying it will "make the transition as seamless as possible for our new customers" who will be notified of the move by a letter.

Walgreens operates more than 7000 pharmacies across the entire USA as well as in Puerto Rico, claiming to "provide the most convenient access to consumer goods and cost-effective pharmacy, health and wellness services in America".

Age sprain change

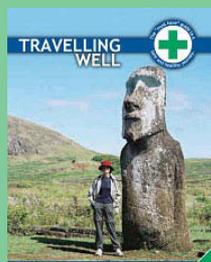
NEW US research incorporating over 82,971 patients has found that the risk of ankle sprain varies greatly with age, activity and gender.

Teens aged between 15-19 had the highest rates of hospitalisation for ankle sprains, whilst 49% of all injuries occurred due to sporting activities (40% of which were from basketball).

27% of sprains were also found to be a result of falls whilst climbing or descending stairs.

Researchers found comparable rates of sprain between males and females, however age played a strong role in the breakdown with males under 30yrs at a higher risk of sprain whilst females were more likely to sprain at over 30yrs.

Win a copy of Travelling Well!



Dr Deb is back again by popular demand, and *Pharmacy Daily* is giving readers the chance to win a copy of her latest book, *Travelling Well*, valued at \$24.95 each day this week.

The book is a must have guide to a safe and healthy journey, with detailed advice about pre-trip preparation, how to look after yourself while away, and what to do if you get sick.

Dr Deb, known as "The Travel Doctor" is one of Australia's leading travel health care providers, and has over 20 years experience in the field.

The 15th edition of *Travelling Well* has been updated to include new vaccines, current recommendations for treatment of travellers' diarrhoea and much more - see www.travellingwell.com.au.

For your chance to win a copy of *Travelling Well*, simply tell us what item you would pack in a Travellers' Medical Kit and why?

Email your answer to comp@pharmacydaily.com.au.

The lucky book winners will be announced in the *Pharmacy Daily* issue next Monday.

One of yesterday's entries came from Dave Taggart from Hillarys Community Pharmacy, who wrote: *Besides all the usual first aid bits and pieces a large wad of high denomination US dollars. They would certainly buy your way out of a lot of close scrapes and problems and open doors for urgent and immediate first aid treatment. They could also be used as a wad/filler under a pressure bandage over a non-stick sterile dressing on a profusely bleeding wound.... life saving.*



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.

20-21 Mar: PSA Vic clinical weekend on Reproductive Health, Lorne - 03 9389 4012.

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

31 Mar: PSA SA Maintenance Treatment in Chronic Pain - Unley - more information sa.branch@psa.org.au.

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.

30 Apr-01 May: Blackmores Research Symposium in Sydney - details 1800 151 493.

09 May: Drug Interaction Seminar presented by Debbie Rigby and Geraldine Moses, Brisbane - aacp@aacp.com.au.

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.

04-06 Jun: Pharmacy Expo in Sydney - earn up to 20 CPD points in 3 days. More info www.pharmacyexpo.com.au.

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

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

Arabic medicine resource

A NEW Arabic 'Medimate' brochure has been launched today by the National Prescribing Service, to provide "practical and easy to understand advice regarding medicines usage" for people who speak Arabic.

The translated brochure offers info on prescription medicines, OTC drugs, herbal and natural therapies and also provides advice regarding the safe usage of medicines, managing multiple medicines and also living medication free.

The brochure itself has previously been translated into Chinese, Greek, Italian, Vietnamese, Macedonian and Croatian, as a joint venture between the NPS and the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia.

Chika health boom

FORMER NSW opposition leader Kerry Chikarovski has moved right away from politics, by creating her own range of health products specifically designed for women over 40.

"There's a real gap in this particular segment for supplements, in particular those that are designed with weight loss for the 40+ woman in mind," said Chikarovski.

The first product to launch will be the 'Supprexxa' metabolism formula which is purported to boost metabolism and suppress sugar cravings, with key ingredients including Panax ginseng Root and Capsicum Annum fruit.

Melancholia illness

A **RENEWED** push to have melancholia listed as a clinical illness in order to stave off over-diagnosis of depression is being led by Sydney psychologist, Gordon Parker of the University of NSW.

According to Parker, melancholia (which was first diagnosed in Ancient Greece) is a condition which is prevalent in patients from birth, and is unrelated to their surroundings or circumstance, but rather to their endocrine metabolism.

Parker argues that treatment of melancholia with conventional depression therapies such as counseling often led to higher rates of suicide.

"Australians from non-English speaking backgrounds are at higher risk of experiencing [medication] problems," said NPS ceo, Dr Lynn Weekes.

"We are committed to ensuring that all Australians have access to the same high-quality information about using medicines safely, and will continue to develop information in languages other than English," she added.

The brochure is available free of charge from the NPS- to order go to www.nps.org.au/medimate, or call 02 8217 8700.

Not so salty

FOOD manufacturing giant Kraft has announced that it will reduce the amount of salt in all of its products sold in North America by 10% over the next two years.

The company said the move would affect over 1000 products, with the aim of appealing to health-conscious consumers.

Incredibly this will reduce Kraft's salt usage by an amazing 5 million kilograms of salt a year.

Kraft said it was also planning to reformulate some of its products in international markets.

FDA OKs Carbaglu

THE US Food and Drug Authority has approved Carbaglu (carglunic acid) tablets for the treatment of patients with the rare disorder, N-acetylglutamate (elevated levels of ammonia in their bloodstream).

The disease is a genetic disorder diagnosed in babies soon after birth, and if not caught early can be fatal.

Low for high chairs

THE US government has announced a major recall of more than 1.2 million Graco infant high-chairs, because they could "pose a fall hazard to children".

The US Consumer Product Safety Commission said screws holding the front legs of the high chair could loosen and fall out, while plastic brackets could cause the chair to "tip over unexpectedly" if they began to crack.

The recall affects the Harmony range of chairs, which the company said isn't in production any more.



DISPENSARY CORNER

IT'S not the exclusive realm of Harry Potter anymore!

German scientists have created what they believe to be the world's first cloak of invisibility.

Using transformation optics - which uses metamaterials to bend and control light, the scientists have successfully used a 'cloak' comprised of special lenses, to hide a small bump on the surface of a gold bar.

The cloak worked as a kind of carpet, which canceled the gold and the bump.

Not wanting to delve too far into what the technology could potentially mean for the future, lead researchers Tolga Ergin said that for the moment the "cloaking devices are just a beautiful and exciting benchmark to show what transformation optics can do".

ICED Tea or just plain Ice?

Overzealous sniffer dogs at Melbourne International Airport thought they were onto a winner when they snaffled out 29-year old Philippine tourist Maria Silva's bag recently.

Customs officials then used high-tech analysis to confirm that three of the bags found in Silva's possession contained 2.44kgs of methamphetamines.

Convinced of her crimes the police charged Silva with the importation of drugs, and proceeded to lock her up for five days, during which she could not reach her friends or family.

On the fifth day however further tests on the powder conducted by a Federal Police forensic team found that the powder in question was in fact just plain old lemon iced tea.

A humble barrister for CUsToms told the Melbourne Magistrates Court that the lemon iced tea contained an ingredient that was often mistaken for drugs.

The court awarded Silva \$5000 for her troubles, with Silva's lawyer telling the media through who met the emotional tourist outside of court that she had simply bought the powdered beverage as a treat for her friend.

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