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Rotarix OK - TGA

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration has backed the continuing use of the Rotarix vaccine in infants, following the FDA's advice to cease its use earlier this week (**PD Mon**).

According to the TGA, GlaxoSmithKline alerted it to the presence of porcine coronavirus type 1 (PCV1) DNA in its Rotarix vaccine on 17 Mar.

The TGA said that although the PCV1 virus is common in pigs, it has not yet been found to cause illness in either animals or humans.

The agency is currently working in conjunction with other overseas regulatory groups including the US Federal Drug Administration and the European Medicines Agency, alongside GSK to examine whether the vaccine is safe and effective.

In the meantime, the TGA has advised that all Rotarix vaccination programs that have already commenced should continue, and that based on current evidence (pending further review) it does not consider the vaccine a threat to public health and safety.

There are currently two oral vaccines approved for the prevention of the rotavirus in infants in Australia - Rotarix and RotaTeq.

Dodgy snoring claims

THE Australian Competition and Consumer Commission has ordered the withdrawal of 'misleading' advertising claims for ATQOL's Anti-Snoring Therapeutic Ring.

According to the watchdog, the manufacturer's claims that the ring used "acupressure" to stop snoring and alleviate insomnia and sinus problems, as well as saying that the ring had a 'proven history of successful drug free treatment of snoring' and was 'tested and recommended by a Physician' were misleading because they led customers to believe that the product had proven medical outcomes, when in fact it did not.

As of today a court enforceable order has been issued that ATQOL cease making claims about the anti-snoring, sinus and insomnia relief properties of the Anti-Snoring Ring product, and that the company will not make any further representations that the ring has been medically tested, proved and/or approved.

Health identifier law push

PEAK pharmacy bodies have joined together to urge all sides of politics to support the new Healthcare Identifiers Bill, which will shortly return to the Senate for consideration after being referred to a committee (**PD 26 Feb**).

The legislation will see the creation of a unique 16 digit

number for every single Australian and every health care provider for usage in conjunction with the new e-health system.

The Guild said the number would also help improve communication between prescribers, hospitals and pharmacists, by assisting access to information regarding patients' current medications and subsequent medication changes.

The Health Identifiers legislation was passed by the House of Representatives earlier this month, and is now on its way for Senate approval.

Joining the Guild in calling for Bill support are a plethora of groups under the umbrella of the Australian Pharmacy Liaison Forum including The Australian Association of Consultant Pharmacy; the Council of Pharmacy Schools of Australia and New Zealand; the Australian College of Pharmacy; The Pharmacy Guild of Australia; the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia; the Australian Pharmacy Council; Pharmaceutical Defense Limited and the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia.

New UK standards

THE Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain has welcomed the publication of the General Pharmaceutical Council's proposed future regulatory standards for pharmacy in the UK.

Based on the existing code of ethics the Standards would continue to allow pharmacists to opt out of providing services such as dispensing the contraceptive pill based on conscience.

This conscience clause would however be contingent on notices being placed in pharmacies alerting patients that they could be refused certain medications based on religious grounds, as well as guidelines on when and how pharmacists who have refused to supply medications can recommend the services of another chemist.

"We are pleased that the GPhC has listened to the views of all stakeholders, including the Society and has indicated that it will, in the first instance, be operating a 'principles approach' model," a statement from the RPSGB said.

The new proposed standards are of particular interest within the UK due to intense media scrutiny and subsequent public outcry after a Lloyd's Pharmacy chemist who refused to sell a patient the pill based on her religious beliefs (**PD 11 Mar**)

An internal investigation of the matter by Lloyd's head office found that there seemed to be conflicting guidance between National Health Service contracts and the Pharmacy Code of Ethics.

Before being finalised the new guidelines, which also include standards for owners and superintendents; standards of conduct and ethics; and performance, proficiency and education standards, will be up for a protracted period of industry consultation.

Baby sling warning

THE US Consumer Product Safety Commission has issued a recall of more than one million baby carriage slings by manufacturer Infantino.

The recall has been issued due to new evidence suggesting that the soft fabric slings, in particular the 'SlingRider' and 'Wendy Bellissimo' products, have the potential to cause suffocation and death.

Earlier in the year the agency urged parents against the use of all brands and types of sling carriers due to the potential for suffocation.

The sling design is part of the problem with the soft material wrapped around the chest (designed to bond parents and babies) having the potential to suffocate babies by pressing against the infant's nose and mouth and blocking breathing passages, and by the easy ability of babies to fall into a curved position, causing their heads to fall chin-to-chest restricting the baby's airflow.

Already three infant deaths in the US have been linked to the use of the slings, and the Commission is currently in negotiations to create a voluntary set of sling safety standards which would be adopted by all manufacturers.

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.

BEYOND Travel is offering a \$1000 discount on a selection of its eight-day European Christmas river cruises.

12 departure dates are available on board *Viking Sky* or *Viking Pride* throughout November and December.

Cruise only prices start from \$1700 per person and bookings must be made by no later than 30 April.

For details call 1300 363 554.

MELBOURNE'S new five-star boutique Art Hotel 'The Olsen' is offering discounts of up to 35% off standard room rates.

Guests wishing to take advantage of this offer will pay

just \$149 per room, per night inclusive of a free upgrade to a Deluxe Studio suite (subject to availability), late check-out, free in-room internet and a free Olsen art gift pack.

The special deal is valid for booking until 31 March for stays until June; for more information see www.travelzoo.com.au/news.

ORION Expedition Cruises is offering a special \$3000pp fare on its six night 'Tropical Reefs and Culture' cruise from Cairns to Thursday Island.

Departing on 28 April the cruise takes in Lizard Is, Stanley Is, Orion Reef, Cape York and Possession Island - call 1300 361 012.

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New TB treatments

RESEARCHERS at the University of Sydney's Centenary Institute have announced a new drug development discovery which they say has the potential to treat latent stage tuberculosis.

If successful it would herald the first new TB treatment since 1962, and is of particular interest because this type of the disease is resistant to antibiotics.

"We have investigated a protein that is essential for TB to survive and we have had some success in developing a drug that will inhibit this protein," said Dr Nick West, Associate Faculty of the Mycobacterial group at Centenary.

Our goal over the coming months is to find out the full extent of this drug's potential," he added.

MEANWHILE UK scientists have also reported on a compound found in an antibiotic agent which could be a "promising scaffold" to treat tuberculosis."

Dr Geoff Coxon from the Strathclyde Institute of Pharmacy and Biomedical Sciences said that a long period of research and testing is still required before testing of the potential drug could begin in humans

New DAA, PMP webinars

THE Pharmacy Guild is promoting two new educational videos developed with funding under the Fourth Community Pharmacy Agreement which provide information about the implementation of the Dosage Administration Aid and Patient Medication Profiles programs within community pharmacies.

The online education programs aim to help pharmacies which would benefit from delivery of professional services, and also outline how the DAA and PMP schemes can benefit patients.

The videos provide real-life case studies of the implementation of the services in a remote NT pharmacy as well as a pharmacy in Sorrell, Tasmania.

Darryl Stewart from Gove and Madeleine Bowman from Sorrell share how they approached the

services in their pharmacies, providing insights into why they decided to offer them, the business model, the roles of pharmacy staff and barriers encountered while delivering the service.

Guild President Kos Sclavos said "I would encourage pharmacists to watch these videos if they are considering delivering professional services such as DAAs and PMPs in their pharmacies."

To view the webinars go to www.guild.org.au/pps.

Phebra approval

AUSTRALIAN pharmaceutical company Phebra (formerly known as Pharnalab) has today announced that its CAFNEA (caffeine citrate) injection and oral solution had been granted marketing approval by the TGA.

The company said the new "life saving medicine" will be used to treat potentially thousands of premature Australian babies suffering from apnoea.

Cafnea is approved for the short term treatment of apnoea (pause of breathing) in premature infants between 28 and 33 weeks gestational age.

Phebra ceo Mal Eutick said he was delighted at the approval, which follows Cafnea being granted Orphan Drug designation by the TGA in Aug 2007.

X-rays miss fractures

A RECENT study conducted by researchers from Duke University has found that standard x-ray machines can miss fractures.

The scientists re-checked 92 patients who has complained of pain after getting the all clear from standard X-rays with comparative scans taken by an MRI scanner and found an additional 35 fractures had been missed.

"The diagnosis of traumatic fracture most often begins and ends with X-rays of the hip, pelvis, or both," said research head Charles Spritzer.

"In some cases though, the exclusion of a traumatic fracture is difficult," he added.

Researchers are urging the use of MRI technology particularly in patients with hip and pelvis injuries.



DISPENSARY CORNER

A BREAST cancer campaign in Poland has been blasted for encouraging workplace harassment, with its slogan causing outrage amongst women.

The catchy "I check the breasts of my workers on my own" tag line was the creation of a cancer hospital in the south of the country which aimed to encourage employers to get their female workers regularly checked for lumps or other symptoms.

"This is a sexist slogan that obviously brings sexual molestation to mind," said a spokesperson for women's group Feminoteka, who added "I wonder if this would be equally funny if it were changed to 'I check the penises of my workers on my own.'"

THIS little piggy went to market and the rest of them left home.

A Chinese boy who holds the record for the largest amount of fingers and toes has undergone surgery to remove his extra digits.

Born with a whopping 15 fingers and 16 toes six-year old Jing Peng spent five hours under general anesthetic while four doctors worked to rectify his extra digit issues.

According to local media reports Peng's mother said she did not notice the extra fingers and toes until he grew older.

Peng was eager to undergo the surgery on the eve of starting big school, saying he suffered shyness at kindergarten when other children would often stare.

"Considering the boy is due to start schooling quite soon, and his family is not well-off, we decided to do the hands and feet together, although it was quite challenging," said Tian Lijie, director of surgery at Shenyang Hospital.



Peng's extra digits pre-surgery.

WIN A FOREVER MATTE GIFT



CONGRATULATIONS to Lyn Geale of Glossodia Pharmacy who's won a Forever Matte product by correctly answering yesterday's competition as 'Bare Suede, Chocolate Tempter, Lady in Red and Purple Velvet'.

Total Beauty Network has teamed up with *Pharmacy Daily* this week, giving readers the chance to win a Forever Matte

product.

Matte make up is the hottest trend - it doesn't mean that your make up becomes flat or boring, instead think of it as sheer or satiny.

It definitely tones down any dewiness or sparkle.

The Forever Matter collection includes Mineral Powder Foundation, Eyeshadow, Lipstick and both lip and eye pencils.

For your chance to win a Forever Matte product this week, simply send through the correct answer to the daily question below:

What is attached to the end of the Matte pencil?

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

The first correct entry received each day will win.

Hint! Visit www.tbn.com.au.