



## Pharmacy Symposium

**THE** National Prescribing Service is urging pharmacists to attend the National Medicines Symposium to take part in the "national discussion about the safe and judicious use of medicines" after the signing of the Fifth Community Pharmacy Agreement (PD Tue).

Held in Melbourne 27-28 May the Symposium includes contributions from a wide variety of fields across the health sector, including health professionals, academics, consumer groups and policy makers.

"The medicines environment is constantly changing and the National Medicines Symposium presents pharmacists with a unique opportunity to hear firsthand about the latest developments in clinical practice and interventions," said NPS ceo Dr Lynn Weekes.

The line-up of speakers includes Professor Andrew McLachlan, chair of Australia's National Medicines Policy Committee, Professor Andrew Gilbert, director Quality Use of Medicines and Pharmacy Research Centre, University of South Australia and Professor Michael Dooley, Director of Pharmacy, Alfred Health.

For further information including go to [www.nms2010.org.au](http://www.nms2010.org.au).

## Life after menopause

**BAYER** Schering has signed a deal with EndoCeutics for the development and commercialisation of a new intra-vaginal medication for the treatment of vaginal atrophy and female sexual dysfunction in postmenopausal women.

According to Bayer, Vaginorm (dehydroepiandrosterone or DHEA), which is currently in its phase III trials, is set to meet a "largely unmet medical need" in treating women who experience changes to their vaginal tissue after menopause, with reports showing almost 25% of all post menopausal women suffer from one form or another of vaginal atrophy.

## AMA slams generics code

**THE** Australian Medical Association has urged the Generics Medicines Industry Association to include disclosure of spending on educational activities for pharmacists as part of the proposed GMiA Code of Practice which is currently under ACCC consideration.

"While there is no financial gain to doctors from prescribing one brand of pharmaceutical over the other, community pharmacy does have a pecuniary interest in dispensing a particular medicine," an AMA submission said.

"Loyalty programs which reward pharmacies with gifts in exchange for dispensing the company's generic drugs interferes with the professional obligations of pharmacists to remain impartial about their dispensing decision.

"Therefore it is appropriate for

GMiA member companies to report on all educational events, not just those provided to prescribers".

The AMA made reference to a survey conducted by the Health Department in 2006 which found that 97% of decisions about whether a generic was dispensed rather than the originator drug were made by pharmacists.

Medicines Australia also backed the call for disclosure of incentives to both prescribers and dispensers, saying that the GMiA code should impose the same requirements on members as those required by the Medicines Australia code.

## H1N1 breakthrough

**AUSTRALIAN** scientists from biotechnological company, Marinova, have discovered a natural compound, 'Maritech 926', derived from the *Undaria Pinnatifida* species of seaweed, that arrests the H1N1 virus.

Testing of Maritech 926 (a natural polysaccharide) found that even in extremely low doses it inhibited the swine flu virus.

Marinova is now working on patenting Maritech 926 for a range of potential supplements, hand washes and nasal delivery products which both prevent and retard a range of viral conditions.

"Fucoidan extracts such as Maritech® 926 are known to have significant inhibitory effects on a range of coated viruses," said Marinova's senior scientist, Dr Helen Fitton.

"We are particularly excited by the fact that these seaweed extracts have now been shown to have an inhibitory effect on H1N1 at extremely low concentrations.

With H1N1 already becoming resistant to some other antiviral agents, we believe that Maritech926 offers a potent, natural alternative which supports the immune system against viral attacks," she added.

## New auto-injector

**A NEW** adrenaline auto-injector device 'Anapen' is now available for the treatment of severe allergic shock or anaphylaxis.

The Anapen® (adrenaline 300µg/0.3mL) and the Anapen® Junior (adrenaline 150µg/0.3mL) are the first new devices for the treatment of allergic shocks and anaphylaxis in around 15 years.

Due to the fact that Anapen's mechanism for action differs from the EpiPen, a series of educational and training programs have been set up to educate healthcare professionals, carers and patients on how to use the device, with additional literature currently being distributed through schools and childcare centres.

Further education, training and action plans are available on the Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy website at [www.allergy.org.au](http://www.allergy.org.au), and additional electronic training resources for healthcare professionals are available on LINK Pharmaceuticals website at [www.ANALert.com.au](http://www.ANALert.com.au).

## Fish oil confusion

**PHARMACISTS** and pharmacy assistants can play an important role in educating patients about the correct dosages of Omega-3 fatty acids, according to Blackmores.

The statement comes on the back of a recent Omega-3 study, which found that most Australians are not consuming enough Omega-3 to reap its health rewards.

"While consumers are recognising that Omega-3s are the key active ingredients in fish oil they may not be aware that 1000 mg of fish oil does not contain 1000 mg of Omega-3s," said Blackmores' director of education, Pam Stone.

According to the study's findings around 40% of all patients taking fish oil supplements are only taking between 50-70% of the National Health and Medical Research Council's recommend daily dosages (610 mg for men and 430 mg for women).

"One of the positives that came out of this research is that 50 per cent of customers are making a conscious decision themselves to take a fish oil supplement rather than having it recommended," said Stone.

"It is reassuring to see that Australians are taking responsibility for their health.

"Now they need to take that next step in getting the right amount," she added.

In light of the findings Blackmores is reminding pharmacists and pharmacy assistants of its range of omega-3 training options which include an online Nutritional Oils module as well as evening seminars and in-store training.

The training sessions cover the benefits of omega-3 and fish oil, matching consumer needs to product and assessing the right dosages to meet customers' health concerns.

For more information on Blackmores training options contact your local consumer business manager, and to register for the online module go to [www.education.blackmores.com.au](http://www.education.blackmores.com.au) and follow the prompts.

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[www.pharmacyexpo.com.au](http://www.pharmacyexpo.com.au)

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## Melanoma webinar

**PHARMACISTS** are being invited to participate in a live online webinar 'Melanoma: are we at the start of a new era?' sponsored by Novartis Oncology Australia.

It's aimed as an educational tool as well as a vehicle to discuss and debate the latest clinical data, medicines, advances and challenges surrounding melanoma cancers.

The webinar will take place on 22 May between 6.30pm and 8.30pm-[www.2020oncologistforum.com.au](http://www.2020oncologistforum.com.au)

## 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.

**CLUB MED** Lindeman Island is offering an all-inclusive six night family package (incl airfare, all meals, accom, snacks, transfers, sports, entertainment and kids club) from just \$2030 per adult and \$75 for each accompanying child.

The package is for sale until 30 June for travel until 31 Oct. For info call 1800 258 263.

**LORD Howe Island Tourism** Association is offering five night packages at the world heritage listed Island staying in a self contained apartment across a range of its traditional guest houses and luxury lodges, including a discount on flights from QantasLink and island transfers from just \$719 - details at [www.visitnsw.com](http://www.visitnsw.com).

**HOTELS.COM** has slashed the price of some Queensland accommodation by 50%, with prices for the 5-star RACV Royal Pines Resort starting from just \$125 per night (some blackout dates apply).

For info see [www.hotels.com](http://www.hotels.com).

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## HIP scores new investment

**THE** parent company of the Health Information Pharmacy group, Health Corporation Limited, has announced a heavily discounted capital raising which will see it raise \$52,050 in working capital by issuing about 7 million shares at 0.75 cents each.

A further \$199,750 will be raised via a non-renounceable rights issue of one new share for two existing shares at the same 0.75c price, and the company said it had received a "firm commitment (subject to conditions) for the rights issue to be fully underwritten."

Health Corporation said the funds raised would be prioritised for the continued development of the Chemconsult pharmacy medication consulting business, evaluation of new business opportunities and for general working capital.

The company said the deal on funding arrangements had been reached with a "new strategic investor group" and would also see two of the existing directors

replaced by nominees of the investment group.

Health Corporation said it was continuing active cost-cutting measures to improve its trading conditions, and had reached six month standstill undertakings from three major financiers to reduce its interest bill.

A further financing agreement has been entered into with director Ken Lee under which he will provide funding to some of the firm's subsidiaries for a period of six months, the company said.

A statement to the Australian Stock Exchange said that the future strategic direction of the company would focus on the Chemconsult system, and all operations would be subject to review by the new board.

"Furthermore, with the help of its new shareholders, the company will actively review other complementary opportunities to create shareholder value," the company said, thanking investors for their support "through this difficult time".



## DISPENSARY CORNER

**AND DNA** set him free!

A US man who has been imprisoned for nearly 30 years has been set free after DNA evidence proved he was not responsible for the crime that he allegedly committed.

The 52-year old man, Raymond Towler, was convicted of sex crimes committed in a Cleveland park in 1981 after a sketch of the assailant which resembled Towler caused a traffic officer to arrest him.

The DNA evidence submitted by the Innocence Project (which uses DNA to clear people incarcerated for crimes they did not commit), was submitted only days ago - prompting prosecutors to call for his immediate release.

In exonerating Towler, the judge said he had an absolute legal recourse to sue the police.

The magistrate then stepped down from the bench, shook his hand and offered him a traditional Irish blessing.

When asked how he would adjust to his release Towler told reporters that for now he would "take a deep breath and just enjoy life right now".

**SUGGESTION:** Put the game away.

A 16-year old reporting to doctors with a strange reddish brown pigment and lesions over his fingers, similar to those seen in patients with lentiginous melanoma, has been diagnosed with subcorneal haematoma caused by the friction between his hands and the vibrating game controller of a PlayStation 3.

The diagnosis was made after doctors discovered the teenager spent upwards of three hours a day playing games on his PlayStation.

"Once we were able to visualise the controller ourselves, it was immediately apparent that the distribution of the pigmentation corresponded very clearly with the points of contact of the controller with each index finger," said the boy's doctor Sue Robertson.

Since diagnosis the boy has stopped playing the game and his pigment has subsequently cleared!

## WIN AUSTRALIS EYESHADOWS



Australis has teamed up with *Pharmacy Daily* this week, giving readers the chance to win Australis Intensifeye Wet/Dry eyeshadows.

Look out lids, you're in for an eye brightening

experience! Colour intense pressed eyeshadows that are high in pigment content for an extreme colour payoff when used both wet and dry. Use wet to intensify the colour pigments and gain longer-lasting colour. The high-end quality, silky-smooth formulation is long-lasting, smudge and crease proof. In a range of perfectly chosen shades for contouring, shading and highlighting in a variety of trios and quads, show-stopping, unforgettable eyes are just a brush away.

For a chance to win your very own Australis Intensifeye Wet/Dry eyeshadows, simply send through the correct answer to the following question below:

**Intensifeye eyeshadows are more intense when applied wet or dry?**

Email your answer to: [comp@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:comp@pharmacydaily.com.au)

The first correct entry received will win!

Hint: Visit the Australis website: [www.australiscosmetics.com.au](http://www.australiscosmetics.com.au).

**Congratulations** to yesterday's lucky winner: **Naglaa Sourour** from **API**. The correct answer was: Pigment.