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Weekly Comment

Welcome to **Pharmacy Daily's** weekly comment feature. This week's contributor is Corrin O'Brien, Medical and Regulatory Affairs Associate at Galderma Australia.

Acne - not just skin deep

Like the majority of people, I suffered from acne as a teenager. Fortunately, apart from a couple of so-so school photos, it was relatively mild and with medication had all but cleared up by my mid 20s.

Others are not so lucky. Recent studies show that acne can be associated with low self-esteem, depression and anxiety, emphasising that early and effective treatment can make a significant difference.

So what causes acne?

When you have a clogged hair follicle (a "comedone") and too much sebum (oil) production, it provides the perfect environment for bacteria, most commonly *P. acnes*, to rapidly multiply and cause swelling and redness of the follicle.

Regardless of the acne severity, its management relies on three key steps - Cleanse, Treat and Moisturise.

Cleansers should be gentle, pH balanced, fragrance-free, soap-free, alcohol-free and non-abrasive.

Ideally, they should cleanse without drying or irritating the skin.

Exfoliating scrubs should not be used as they can cause further irritation and inflammation.

Moisturisers should be pH balanced, light to apply and most importantly non-comedogenic.

Also, if the patient is using a treatment which increases photosensitivity, such as a retinoid, it should also contain a high SPF.

When it comes to treatment, most patients will use a topical OTC or prescription product.

However, regardless of the product used, it is important to emphasise to the patient to persist with the treatment for at least six weeks.

For more information on acne with a consumer focus, visit the 'All About Acne' website at www.acne.org.au.



Naturals could ease health

COMPLEMENTARY medicines could potentially save millions of dollars in healthcare costs without compromising patient health, according to the University of Western Sydney.

The statement comes on the back of research conducted by Access Economics for the National Institute of Complementary Medicine at the UWS, which examined the cost effectiveness of selected complementary medicines (incl. St John's work, fish oil, acupuncture and herbal anti-inflammatories) used to treat common ailments including, back pain, heart disease, arthritis and depression.

"The clinical evidence showing some complementary medicine can play a vital role in improving an individual's health has been clear for some time, now this

report shows complementary medicine could also improve the health of the healthcare system," said Professor Bensoussan, Director of the Centre for Complementary Medicine Research at UWS.

However despite the "substantial dollar savings" clocked for complementary medicines in the report, only direct healthcare costs were noted, with indirect costs such as loss of productivity excluded from its scope.

"The economic benefits of complementary medicine would be much larger than we report if the significant flow-on benefits of keeping people healthy, able to work and out of an already over stretched hospital system were included," said Lynne Pezzullo, Director of Access Economics.

The report took into account clinical trials which found that St John's wort was just as effective in treating mild to moderate depression as some pharmaceutical antidepressants, and surmised that a simple substitution could potentially save "nearly \$50 million a year", whilst taking fish oil supplements was a "highly cost effective intervention to prevent heart disease for those who had already had a myocardial infarction (heart attack)".

The report also surmised that acupuncture as a complement to standard care for lower back pain is "very cost effective" and that based on prior efficacy studies, the herbal preparation Phytodolor used in the treatment of osteoarthritis could save Australians \$178m a year if taken in place of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs.

Longer telomerase

RESEARCH printed in the Rejuvenation Research journal has found that the relatively new dietary supplement titled Temomerase Activator TA-65, may help to lengthen telomeres and help slow the ageing process.

Throughout the year-long (ongoing) study - sponsored by TA Sciences (makers of TA), 114 participants dosed with either 5mg or 10mg of TA-65 underwent blood tests at three month intervals which found that 'TA-65 activates telomerase roughly 2- to 3-fold'.

Telomerase is an enzyme which if activated helps to protect the longevity of telomeres, meaning it DNA is kept intact as cells divide.

"The key message in this study is that in individuals taking the novel telomerase activator supplement, after a one-year period, there was a reduction in production of cells with short telomeres," said study author Calvin Harley, ceo of Telome Health Inc.

The results have however been met with some skepticism with the chairman of the Department of Immunobiology and co-director of the Arizona Center on Aging at the University of Arizona commenting that "This study may be the basis for a fully controlled clinical trial", before adding that the study should not be considered as conclusive because it did not look at the bodies immune response.

Friday's PD winner

CONGRATULATIONS to Georgia Roach from High Tech Health who was the lucky winner of Friday's Designer Brands Mineral Eyeshadow competition.

See page two for this week's new Aromababy competition.

Sanofi ups the stakes

ACCORDING to reports Sanofi-Aventis has raised US\$10 billion dollars in borrowed funds, to boost its Genzyme takeover bid to US\$18.5 billion.

The move follows Genzyme's rejection of the French Drug manufacturer's original bid which came in at around US\$69 per share.

MEANWHILE Genzyme has begun to cull worldwide staff numbers, and in the process denying the cut-backs are related to the possible Sanofi takeover.

At present, Genzyme has refused to reveal the exact number of staffers it will cut, ignoring leaked reports published in the Boston Globe which suggested 1,000 of its 12,800 strong workforce will get the chop over the next 15 months.

"We feel the right thing to do is to take a couple of days to speak to employees before making a public announcement," a spokesperson for the company said.

New AusPAR

THE Department of Health and Ageing has published a new Australian Public Assessment Report (AusPAR) for GlaxoSmithKline's Pazopanib hydrochloride (Votrient).

The film coated tablets are approved for advanced and/or metastatic renal cell carcinoma, see www.tga.gov.au.



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Parkinson's & Vit D

THE Archives of Neurology has published a new study from the Finnish National Institute for Health and Welfare, which links low levels of Vitamin D with a higher risk of developing Parkinson's Disease.

The study looked at blood samples from 3,000 participants over a 30 year period and found that those with the lowest levels of Vitamin D were three times more likely to develop Parkinson's than those who clocked the highest levels.

Weighty impressions

A NEW US study has found that around 30% of overweight respondents believed they fell into the healthy weight range category.

Involving 2,418 adults the study also found that 70% of respondents classified as 'obese' believed they were just 'overweight', and 60% of those who were morbidly obese saw themselves as simply 'obese' and 39% felt they were only 'overweight'.

"While there are some people who have body images in line with their actual BMI, for many people they are not, and this may be where part of the problem lies," said Regina Corso, vice president of Harris Poll Solutions.

"If they do not recognise the problem or don't recognise the severity of the problem, they are less likely to do something about it," she added.

Laziness, as opposed to unhealthy eating habits, was also tipped by the majority of those surveyed as the reason for being overweight.

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Australian natural health

FLORDIS Natural Medicines (who recently received the first TGA "AUST R" approval for its herbal medicine, Iberogast) and Indonesian pharmaceutical company, the SOHO Group, have collaborated to create a new Australian healthcare company, Soho Flordis International (SFI)

Designed as an outlet to develop natural medicine products with 'high specific evidence' SFI is a strong advocate of 'seed to patient control' meaning that it will implement procedures that ensure 'traceability, sustainability and quality of all the steps involved in natural health medicine continuum, from plantation to harvesting, extraction and manufacture'.

In addition the company purports that it will place great importance on backing up its natural medicines with evidence.

"Patients increasingly expect natural medicine products to deliver proven results," said Nigel Pollard, ceo of SFI.

"Finding such products is now achievable with the increasing availability of published clinical

results, independent experts explaining how to select products and the easy access to this information through the internet and better trained health professionals".

As part of its mandate SFI has locked into a partnership with the University of Western Sydney to 'enhance the specific evidence behind *Curcuma xanthorrhiza*, an Indonesian herb known as Temulawak', which is used to treat digestive system complaints.

"SFI is already making a significant contribution toward improving the standard of natural health products and we also are looking forward to working with our partners and the global community to acknowledge, reward and translate traditional knowledge on natural medicine," said Executive chairman of SFI, Eng Liang Tan.

FDA approval

THE US FDA expanded its Protopam Chloride (pralidoxime chloride) approval to include pediatric treatment of poisoning by organophosphate pesticides and chemicals.

WIN AN AROMABABY ORGANIC PACK



Every day this week, *Pharmacy Daily* is giving readers the chance to win a pack filled with organic treats valued at \$58 rrp, courtesy of leaders in luxe mother & baby care, Aromababy.

Win one of 5 Organic Aromabath Powders, enriched with soothing oats and soy. Ideal for a super-milky bath yet without any dairy/milk content. Added pure essential oils help you dream away your worries as you soak.

Suitable for baby and daddy too! Teamed with Organic Back on Track Massage Oil, for weary parents and a luxe Pure Love labour/post natal bath and body oil, also doubles as a super mood-lifter! For more details visit www.aromababy.com/aromababy_skincare.

For a chance to win this great organic pack, simply send through the correct answer to the daily question below:

What two main organic ingredients can be found in the Aromabath Powder?

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

The first correct entry received will win!

Hint: Visit: www.aromababy.com



DISPENSARY CORNER

DODGY dead numbers.

In a country famed for its long living citizens, it appears Japan may have got their their centurion wrong.

In fact around 230,000 people thought to be aged 100-years or over have in the last few years having been discovered to in fact have been dead, in many cases for over a decade.

The discovery comes after the Government ordered an audit of its family registry.

In their search auditors also turned up records for around 1,000 citizens who were listed as aged over 150 years.

STRANGE beauty.

Organisers of the latest beauty pageant may need to have an ambulance and medic team on hand, as well as a police escort come finals night, after it was decided girls could only enter if they had been convicted of a Mafia-related crime.

To go into the running, the beauties need to submit both their official mugshot as well as their modelling shots to the event's website for judging.

Finalists will strut their stuff at a pageant held in a bar that was once the site of an infamous Mafia shoot out.

WHAT the!

A ten-year old Serbian girl, Jelena Momcilov, has shocked medical professionals with her so called "magnetic hands".

Currently under investigation, Jelena began to discover her magnetic abilities when she was five years old, being able to pick up metal objects in her family home by simply touching, not gripping them.

"I'd say this is a kind of unknown bio-magnetism," said head researcher, Pavle Premovi, at Nis University.

