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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.

Rosacea – Just a red rash?

With all due respect to my university professors, I must have skipped the day when they talked about rosacea.

It was only when I began practicing that I realised people who blush easily aren't always suffering from embarrassment but rather a common skin condition.

Whilst rosacea typically appears as a red rash on the face, little is known about the aetiology of the condition, which is more common than diabetes!

Rosacea mostly affects fair skinned women aged 30-40, however it can occur at any age.

It initially begins as a tendency to blush which becomes more frequent and more noticeable over time.

The facial areas affected are most commonly the nose and cheeks (the "butterfly" area) but it can also include the forehead and chin.

Pimples may also develop in areas affected.

Sufferers also tend to develop sensitive skin.

Due to the clinical presentation it can also be confused with and co-exist with conditions such as acne and dermatitis.

Whilst the underlying cause for Rosacea is not clearly understood, there are a number of things to consider when recommending products for inclusion in the daily skin care regimen.

Cleansers should be mild, pH balanced, fragrance-free, soap-free and alcohol-free.

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

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

As UV light can trigger flares, any moisturiser should also contain a high SPF.

For more information on rosacea, visit the Australasian College of Dermatologists "A-Z of skin" website at www.dermcoll.asn.au/.



Pharmacist prescriber push

THE expansion of the role of pharmacists and other health practitioners into prescribing may help to alleviate building pressures on Australia's healthcare system brought about by an ageing population, according to the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia.

Addressing the issue of pharmacist prescribers at its upcoming PAC10 conference, the PSA said "unless safe and effective alternatives can be found for the current system, the burden of an ever-increasing aging population will soon take its toll on the quality of life of all Australians".

Leading the 'Pharmacist Prescribing - Optometrists, Nurses and Podiatrists Are Doing It, So How Close Are we?' session at PAC10 will be University of Queensland Associate professor Lisa Nissen.

"Other countries including the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States have moved to address similar health system issues by expanding the roles for existing health professionals, including nurse practitioners, optometrists, podiatrists and pharmacists," Nissen said.

"This expansion has been particularly focused on providing access to prescription medicines," she added.

These overseas models of 'non-medical prescribing' have provided

a "system of change", that has according to Nissen, enabled citizens greater access to medications, and "a better utilisation of the skills and training of health professionals already working within the health system."

"There are many models of non-medical prescribing available and a number of health professional groups who have stepped up to the challenge," Nissen said.

Throughout her presentation Nissen will cover the current non-medical prescribing evidence and how it will be applied to the advancement of pharmacist prescribing in Australia.

For more information visit www.pac10.com.au.

J&J to buy Crucell?

JOHNSON and Johnson has today confirmed its plans to buy Dutch biotechnology company Crucell NV for \$2.29 billion.

According to reports, J&J is currently in the process of "advanced negotiations" with Crucell - in which it already holds a 17.9% stake following an early-stage collaboration agreement the pair entered into last year.

The shareholding deal, which netted Crucell around €20.67 per share, also effectively made the biotech company less attractive to other suitors including Wyeth, which in 2009 had also been in negotiations to buy the company.

The J&J buyout will see Crucell shares each snapped up at €24.75 (a 20% increase on J&J's 09 buy up).

Minister drops in for a script



THE ACT Minister for Health, Katy Gallagher, recently popped into ACT Branch Guild President Amanda Galbraith's pharmacy in Chisholm for a personal demonstration of eRx Script Exchange's electronic prescribing and medical management services.

"Electronic prescriptions have the potential to minimise adverse drug events by reducing dispensing errors and improving the safety of the patient's medication management," Gallagher said after viewing the system in practice.

"According to the Pharmacy Guild, there are over 250 million prescriptions dispensed each year and of these about 60 per cent are repeat prescriptions, so initiatives such as electronic prescriptions are tremendously important to medication management."

"These and other world class health technologies will transform our health system, making it possible for health care providers to focus on what they do best - caring for patients," she added.

Pictured above from left is Fred eHealth's General Manager David Freemantle with Minister Gallagher and Amanda Galbraith.

PD winner

CONGRATULATIONS to Michelle Jensen from Big Box Chemist, who is the lucky winner of Friday's **PD** Aromababy comp.

See page two for the first installment in this week's KeySun **PD** comp.



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Supplements slammed

A STUDY published last week in the *British Medical Journal* has found that glucosamine, chondroitin and their combination “do not reduce joint pain or have an impact on narrowing of joint space” when compared to placebo.

The meta-analysis of 10 trials in 3803 patients looked at the effects of the supplements on joint pain and on radiological progression of disease in osteoarthritis of the hip or knee.

The scientists from the Institute of Social and Preventive Medicine at Switzerland’s University of Bern concluded that “health authorities and health insurers should not cover the costs of these preparations, and new prescriptions to patients who have not received treatment should be discouraged”.

However they said that the supplements are not dangerous, meaning there was no reason for patients to stop taking them “if they perceive a benefit and cover the cost of treatment themselves”.

MS drug breakthrough

THE first-ever tablet treatment for people living with multiple sclerosis, Movectro (cladribine), has received Therapeutic Goods Administration approval.

Indicated for use in the treatment of relapsing-remitting MS for a maximum duration of two years, Movectro is the world’s first short course MS treatment, and as such patients need only to take the drug for around two weeks each year.

This short course treatment could potentially see many patients switch from regular infusions and daily treatment injections.

Movectro’s approval follows the release of results from a 96 week randomised, double-blind, placebo controlled, international study which assessed the safety and clinical efficacy of the cladribine tablets in 1,326 relapsing-remitting MS patients in comparison to a placebo.

The Phase III trial was the largest of its kind to date and involved

participants from 155 centres across 32 countries.

Results of the trial found that a two-week course of Movectro per annum provided “a significant benefit for patients with relapsing-remitting multiple sclerosis with respect to the rate of relapse, disability progression, and MRI measures of disease activity”.

“It is exciting that not only have we had successful phase three trials for the first two oral treatments of MS, of which Movectro is one, but that the first of the regulatory steps to make these medications available to people with MS has been passed by Movectro,” said Professor Bill Carroll, Chair of MS Research Australia.

“Movectro adds to the range of choices available for the treatment of multiple sclerosis, which is essential as there are a number of types of MS and people are in different stages of the disease needing new treatment options,” Carroll added.

At present the drug’s manufacturer, Merck Serono, is working with reimbursement authorities in a bid to get Movectro listed on the PBS, and has said that it will release details around private market access in Australia “when necessary administrative and regulatory steps have concluded”.



DISPENSARY CORNER

A US woman is suing a hospital for assault after one of its doctors accidentally circumcised her baby boy without her consent.

Mario Viera was eight days old when the procedure was undertaken, while he was in intensive care due to an infection.

His mother was visiting him and asked why the baby was receiving a particular medication, with a nurse telling her it was a “painkiller given for his circumcision”.

The hospital says the error was “an unfortunate mistake caused by a misread consent form”.

The mother has filed a lawsuit and also reported the doctor to police for assault.

“It’s a big deal,” she said.

“In the future he’s going to ask why his dad is one way and he’s different,” she said.

PARENTING to the max!

In order to combat the yearly influx of thousands of parents who come to live in their children’s dorms during the first year of their university lives, China’s Wuhan University is offering up special beds in its sports hall.

According to reports, the overprotective parents stay in the dorms often for weeks to cook, clean and help their children settle into uni life.

“They often can’t accept that their children have now left home and come to university,” said a university spokesperson.

“We decided to act after finding some of the parents arranged to sleep in their children’s dormitory with them which of course is unacceptable.

“We now give them a blanket and a place to wash and eat free of charge,” the spokesperson added.



Anxious parents settle in to uni life

IT'S NEVER TOO EARLY TO THINK ZINKE

Every day this week, *Pharmacy Daily* is giving 2 lucky readers the chance to win a Key Sun Zinke Pack, courtesy of Key Sun.

Each pack is valued at \$26.93 and contains 3 products for babies and toddlers: Clear Zinke Roll on, Stick & Lotion.



The NEW Clear Zinke for Babies and Toddlers by Key Sun is:

- ✓ Dermatologically tested
- ✓ Fragrance free
- ✓ Non irritating, gentle formula
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- ✓ Very high sun protection SPF 30+
- ✓ Formulated by Australians, specifically for the Australian sun

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

Zinke Babies & Toddlers is made by which Australian owned company?

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

First 2 correct entries received will win!

Hint: Visit: www.keysun.com.au

RU OK Day

NPS is urging the health sector to get involved with the upcoming R U OK Day on 07 Oct, with information packs on depression to be sent out to GPs and more info at www.ruokday.com.au.

Pharmacy Daily Pharmacy Job of the Day!

Jobs4Careers is Australia’s leading source for pharmacy jobs ... click here to find out more and see the Pharmacy Daily Job of the Day ...

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