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Aussie FIP honour

PHARMACY Guild of Australia National Councillor, Paul Sinclair, was elected to the Community Pharmacy Section Executive Committee at the recent International Pharmaceutical Federation Congress in Lisbon.

Nominated alongside candidates from India, Hungary, Germany, Uruguay, Jordan, Switzerland, Portugal, the Netherlands, Canada and the United States, Sinclair took out the position and was joined on the committee by fellow nominee Karin Graf from Germany.

A total of six positions on the nine-person committee were up for grabs, with Sinclair and Graf taking two, and four members up for re-election filling the remaining four spots.

"FIP being an international organisation, it is important that the Asia Pacific has representation at this forum," said Sinclair.

"I look forward to the opportunity to contribute to FIP and, in particular, to the advancement of community pharmacy in developing marketplaces.

"Australia is clearly at the leading edge of community pharmacy practice and has much to offer on the world stage," he added.

Get in the pink!

THE Cancer Council is urging pharmacists to stock up on Pink Ribbon Day merchandise in the lead-up to Pink Ribbon Day on 25 October.

Aimed at raising funds for breast cancer research, prevention and support programs, merchandise this year includes silk ribbons, diamante pins and this year's collectible Penny Bear - call 1300 656 585 or see www.pinkribbonday.com.au.

R&D breaks through \$1b

FOR the first time ever, the Australian medicines industry research and development investment has topped the \$1 billion dollar mark.

Revealed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics as part of its annual R&D business figures release today, the 2008-09 investment numbers were up 10% or \$94 million on the previous year to a total of \$1.023 billion.

The release also showed that medicines R&D investment was the third largest by area of business expenditure in the country, falling just behind financial services and mining.

"These latest figures confirm Australia's reputation as a global hub for R&D excellence and send a powerful signal to policymakers that R&D is worth supporting," said Medicines Australia chief executive, Dr Brendan Shaw.

"Australia currently boasts some of the best research capability and infrastructure in the world.

"That is an advantage we must capitalise on," he added.

At present the medicines industry conducts around 800 clinical trials per annum, with more than 18,000 Australian patients taking part in trials last year.

Taking into account the importance of medicines R&D to the national economy, Shaw said that it was also important that Australia remain internationally competitive in order to stay at the forefront of medical research.

"The competition for R&D investment from countries such as China, India and Singapore is extremely fierce," Shaw said.

"However, with the right policy

settings we have a precious opportunity to grow our R&D industry and to keep innovative R&D in Australia.

"That would ensure we keep more of our top research scientists engaged in Australian R&D and attract greater investment to our universities and other research institutions," he added.

In terms of legislation Shaw said that it was "extremely important" that the government both releases and implements the findings of the Clinical Trials Action Group, as well as improving the regulatory environment for trials in Australia.

"We also need the R&D tax credit legislation to be passed by the Parliament at the earliest opportunity," Shaw said.

"The tax credit will make Australia more competitive because it effectively lowers the cost of conducting R&D by 10 per cent."

J&J strips now available

JOHNSON & Johnson Medical is reminding pharmacists that there is ready availability for the test strips for its new Onetouch Verio personal blood glucose monitoring system.

The new product is the subject of keen consumer interest since its release on 01 Sep, with J&J saying it's received a large volume of calls from consumers who say they're being told by pharmacists that the test strips aren't available.

The strips can be obtained from Diabetes Australia using the NDSS code 120 and from wholesalers: API - PDE: 324221; Sigma - PDE: 896415 and Symbion - PDE 472980.

For more info call Pharmabroker, or J&J Medical on 1800 252 194

Arthritis improvement

A PHASE II study of the new oral syk inhibitor, fostamatinib licensed by Rigel Pharmaceuticals has found the drug "significantly improved outcomes of patients with rheumatoid arthritis who responded inadequately to methotrexate treatment".

Published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, the six-month study found that 67% of patients taking fostamatinib 100mg twice daily achieved the primary efficacy endpoint (at six months), whilst 36% of patients were found to have a 20% reduction in pain levels, acute phase reactant, physical function and patient and physical global assessment after just seven days of treatment.

"In this study, we saw a significant clinical benefit in this rheumatoid arthritis population and a manageable safety profile," said Mark Genovese, Division of Rheumatology, Stanford University.

"Based on the data, further study of fostamatinib as an oral agent for the treatment of patients with rheumatoid arthritis is certainly warranted," he added.

FDA approval

THE FDA has approved Gilenya (fingolimod) 0.5 mg daily for the treatment of relapsing forms of MS.

The first oral treatment for patients with relapsing MS in the US, Gilenya was proven in the largest clinical trial program ever submitted to date to the FDA for a new MS drug, to reduce relapses by 52% at one year compared with interferon beta-1a IM.

"A new treatment option that offers significant efficacy in the convenience of a capsule is a welcome alternative to frequent injections for individuals living with this chronic disease," said Nicholas LaRocca, Vice President of Healthcare Delivery and Policy Research at the [US] National Multiple Sclerosis Society.

The first in a new class of drugs called sphingosine 1-phosphate receptor (S1PR) modulator, Gilenya has also been proven to reduce disease activity as well as the risk of disability progression and brain lesion activity.

This US approval follows the TGA approval of MS tablet treatment Movelto (cladribine) earlier in the week (PD 20 Sep).

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Google sues rogues

INTERNET giant Google has lodged a US Federal Lawsuit against unauthorised online pharmacies who used its search engines and websites to advertise.

"Rogue pharmacies are bad for our users, for legitimate online pharmacies and for the entire e-commerce industry—so we are going to keep investing time and money to stop these kinds of harmful practices," said Google lawyer Michael Zwibelman.

The lawsuit alleges that 51 defendants circumvented its policy regarding pharmacy advertising which stipulates that companies must be National Association of Boards of Pharmacy verified.

It is expected that throughout the court case, Google will add more defendants to its list of targets.

"Litigation of this kind should act as a serious deterrent to anyone thinking about circumventing our policies to advertise illegally on Google," Zwibelman added.

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.

FRASER Island's **Kingfisher Bay Resort** is offering a spring special of \$158 per room, per night, including ferry transfers.

As part of the deal kids stay and eat for free.

The deal is available to book until 17 Dec; call 1800 072 555.

Beyond Travel is offering an 18-day 'Croatia and Slovenia by Land and by Sea' cruise/tour for \$4,800 per person, including a visit to Lake Bled, a stay in UNESCO-listed Plitvice Lakes, a five-day Dalmatian cruise, three-nights in Dubrovnik, and a trip to Kotor and Budva - call 1300 363 554.

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Tax cuts Aussie smoking

THE recent 25% tax increase on cigarettes has led to significant reductions in smokers daily intake, and around 300,000 successful quitters, according to the latest research commissioned by Pfizer.

According to the study findings around 1.2 million smokers tried to quit in the two months following the hike, representing a 9% increase in people trying to give up compared to the 3 months prior to the increase.

29% of Aussie smokers also said they had cut back their daily intake of cigarettes due to restrictive pricing, whilst 21% said that price concerns were the major factor in undertaking the decision to quit (compared to 45% who nominated health concerns as their number one reason to quit).

"The new tariff drew strong reactions and much debate from smokers, anti-smoking groups and smoking cessation experts from

across Australia when it took effect at midnight on April 29 this year," said Professor John Litt from the Department of General Practice at Flinders University.

"From this research it appears this move was the right one when it comes to trying to reduce smoking levels in this country," he added.

In making the decision to quit 58% of smokers told researchers they would consult a GP whilst 31% would seek the advice of their pharmacist.

"Pharmacists and their staff also have an important role to play in supporting smokers quit journeys," said Litt.

"On average, pharmacies handle up to 50 smoking cessation enquiries a month, with pharmacists fulfilling a number of roles in the smoking cessation process, from coach, to advisor, to providing that vital referral to a support program or network," Litt added.

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
- ✓ Suitable for sensitive skin
- ✓ 4 hours water resistance
- ✓ Broad Spectrum UVA & UVB protection
- ✓ 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:

KeySun Zinke Babies & Toddlers
is hours water resistant

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

First 2 correct entries received will win!

Hint: Visit: www.keysun.com.au

Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winners: Maria Gianfelici from Pharmabroker Sales and Caroline Ennis from Pulse Pharmacy Robertson Drive.

DISPENSARY CORNER

SPIN-cycle kitten.

A sweet seven-month old Siamese kitten, Suki, hailing from the suburban streets of Melbourn has narrowly escaped a watery grave after curling up inside her owner's front loading washing machine.

Suki was discovered cold, wet and limp after enduring the soak, wash, rinse and spin-dry cycles, and was rushed to the vet for emergency attention.

Despite dire predictions, Suki pulled through the ordeal, and is now back at home and expected to make a full recovery.

DON'T waste waste!

An environmentally friendly dog-park in Massachusetts is using doggie do-dos to power its lights as part of a campaign to get citizens to reconsider waste usage.

The poo-powered lanterns work when dog owners deposit their dog's droppings into two steel tanks and then turn an attached wheel which stirs the tank contents (waste and water) to produce methane - which is then fed to the lamp and ignited.

WHERE did i put those dentures?

A US fisherman, Frank Yarborough, got the shock of his life whilst fishing in South Carolina when he reeled in what he thought to be a catfish, which then latched onto his finger with human denture-like teeth.

The as-yet unidentified species was caught in Lake Wylie, and whilst samples of its flesh have been sent to various universities for testing, experts believe it is probably a *Colossoma macropomum* - a species which is native to the Amazon River.

Distantly related to the piranha, the *macropomum* species of fish are usually only able to survive in warm water, and it is thought this particular aquatic creature came to the lake via a private exotic fish tank, being dumped after it grew too big.

