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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.

### Skin Cancer

Given Australia's climate, it isn't surprising that we have one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world.

However, what is surprising is that it is almost entirely preventable. Yet, it is the most common cancer in people aged 15-44 years and claims the lives of more than 1,700 Australians each year.

So, with summer fast approaching, the application of sunscreens and being smart when in the sun is more important than ever.

When recommending a sunscreen it is important to recognise that both UVA and UVB radiation contribute to melanoma and non-melanoma skin cancers.

So, not only should the product label have a high Sun Protection Factor (SPF), it should also be labelled 'broad-spectrum'.

Per the Australian standards, only products that filter UVA in addition to UVB can be labelled 'broad spectrum'.

It is also preferable that the product be fragrance-free, non-comedogenic and non-irritating.

Once you have recommended a product it is important to ensure it is properly used.

It should be applied liberally 20 minutes before going outdoors and then every two hours afterwards.

But what does "apply liberally" mean?

According to the Cancer Council it means 'at least a teaspoon for each limb, front and back of the body and half a teaspoon for the face, neck and ears'.

It is worth remembering that sunscreens should always be used in conjunction with other measures such as sunglasses, hats, sun-smart clothing and remaining in the shade where possible.

For more information on skin cancer and the National Skin

Cancer Action Week (21 to 27 November), visit the Cancer Council's website at:  
[www.cancer.org.au/cancersmartlifestyle/SunSmart.htm](http://www.cancer.org.au/cancersmartlifestyle/SunSmart.htm)



## GMiA benefits 'insignificant'

THE Generic Medicines Industry Association is continuing to resist the ACCC requirement that the GMiA code of conduct include provisions which would reveal the value of "benefits" such as incentive programs and entertainment to pharmacists.

In March the GMiA applied for ACCC authorisation of its code, which was in May amended with a second edition - which the ACCC authorised in August with a draft determination imposing significant additional conditions.

This included the extra requirement of disclosure of benefits provided to pharmacists - similar to provisions in the Medicines Australia code of conduct which forces manufacturers to reveal the value of benefits provided to doctors.

The ACCC is now considering its final ruling, with a deadline of 11 November, and has requested extra information from the GMiA.

In a submission published over the weekend, the GMiA said that "the current level of non-price benefits as a proportion of total benefits provided to pharmacy...is less than 1%.

"The monetary value of the non-price benefits is insignificant," the GMiA insisted.

The association pointed out that the code also requires members to take all reasonable steps to avoid conflicts of interest to ensure their actions and relationships with health professionals "do not bring discredit to the Generic Medicines Industry sector".

And the code also requires members to ensure that their behaviour doesn't interfere with or

impede the independence of healthcare professionals or their professional judgment, GMiA said.

"Non-price benefits provided by members of GMiA are of small financial value and directed at the enhancement of pharmacy services and/or building a business relationship between the supplier and the pharmacist.

"As such this is not a major factor in a pharmacy's decision to use a particular brand of product," the submission claims.

The association also concluded that the relationship between the supplier and the pharmacy "does not influence or change the type of generic medicine dispensed and therefore there is little or no impact on the patient".

One of the major incentive programs operated by GMiA members is the Sigma Rewards scheme, a loyalty program under which pharmacy owners earn points when they purchase Sigma generics and which are redeemable for items such as TVs or holidays.

### Cricket Scholarships

APPLICATIONS are now being accepted for the annual Pharmacy Cricket Scholarships.

This year two \$2,500 scholarships are up for grabs, and applications are open to pharmacy students in any year and attending any Australian University.

Scholarship criteria can be requested by emailing [hodsong@bigpond.com](mailto:hodsong@bigpond.com), and applications close on 18 Oct.

There is also no requirement for scholarship winners to play cricket.

For more information see [www.pharmacycricket.com.au](http://www.pharmacycricket.com.au).

## SHPA leadership

THE Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia has awarded the \$10,000 NW Naismith 2010 Baxter Leadership Grant to Sharon Goldsworthy, Manager of Pharmacy Services at The Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Adelaide.

With the grant, Goldsworthy, SHPA Federal Councillor and Chair of SHPA's Publications Reference Group, will now attend the Eighth annual 'What's Right in Healthcare' Conference in Dallas, Texas, as well as the ability to participate in a pre-conference study tour focusing in the Studer model of improving outcomes for patients and healthcare providers.

The grant will also provide Goldsworthy with coaching support whilst she implements the model at her workplace.

"The SHPA Baxter NW Naismith Leadership Grant represents a unique opportunity for a hospital pharmacist to develop or strengthen their leadership skills," said Anna McClure, Chair of the SHPA Grants Program.

"Congratulations to Sharon for identifying this opportunity and we wish her well on her return as she undertakes to implement new ideas," she added.

## FDA approval

THE US Food and Drug Administration has approved a new combined oestrogen/progestin oral contraceptive pill, Beyaz, which also contains folate (levomefolate calcium 0.451 mg).

The manufacturer added folate for the purpose of reducing the risk of neural tube defect in a pregnancy conceived whilst taking Beyaz, or shortly after its discontinuation.

Beyaz is based on YAZ and contains the same levels of estrogen and progestin, and is approved for the prevention of pregnancy, the treatment of premenstrual dysphoric disorder (for women who choose an oral contraceptive), the treatment of moderate acne vulgaris in women at least 14 years of age and who chose an oral contraceptive for birth control, and to raise folate levels in women on the pill.

MEANWHILE the FDA has also published a complete list of products recalled as part of the Abbott instant formula recall in Sep, see [www.fda.gov.au](http://www.fda.gov.au).



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## Friday's winner

**CONGRATULATIONS** to Karl Hansen of Ascent Pharmaceuticals who was the lucky winner of last Friday's KeySun Zinke competition.

## CPD Sydney Session

**CONSULTANT** pharmacists Debbie Rigby and Dr Geraldine Moses have announced they will host a new clinical update seminar in Sydney next month, to provide attendees with an update on current therapeutics and drug safety issues.

Covering the new RACF guidelines and safety issues regarding osteoporosis, dry eyes, interpreting common laboratory results, polymyalgia rheumatica, statin-induced myopathy, dizziness and current drug safety issues, the program is worth twelve Group 2 CPD credits.

The lecture series will take place on 17 Oct at the Holiday Inn, Sydney Airport, and is priced at \$275.

For information, or to register email [drigby@bigpond.net.au](mailto:drigby@bigpond.net.au).

## PBAC compliance report

A **SPECIAL** committee commissioned by the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee to look into medicines compliance has delivered its report, and is inviting comments by the end of October.

The Compliance to Medicines Working Group (CMWG) was set up in Dec 2008, aiming to gather info on methods for "evaluating and interpreting evidence used to support claims that combination products improve consumer compliance and health outcomes".

The report, which is now online at [www.pbs.gov.au](http://www.pbs.gov.au), identifies various advantages and disadvantages of compliance measurement methods, including data on prescription refills as implemented with the Pharmacy Guild's *MedsIndex* system.

"The major limitation of all such observational studies is that, because subjects are not randomised, considerable potential exists for bias due to unknown confounders," the report warns.

However the committee also

highlights the complexity of measuring compliance, and suggests that improved access to PBS data that can be "linked to other health datasets" would help.

The report also gives an overview of relevant literature highlighting the "complex and multifactorial" relationship between compliance and health outcomes."

## MATES heart brochure

**THE** Department of Veterans' Affairs has published a new brochure titled Acute Coronary Syndromes.

Designed to help patients understand their heart medicines, the brochure provides info for veterans about their heart medications, and encourages them to talk to their GP and pharmacist about their meds.

To see or download the brochure go to [www.veteransmates.net.au](http://www.veteransmates.net.au).

## PAC10 sessions

**THE** Pharmaceutical Society of Australia has again released details of one of its PAC10 presentations which provides a critical appraisal of drug company promotional techniques.

Led by Dr Ken Harvey of the School of Public Health, La Trobe University, the session will look into the inherent conflict between the legitimate business goal of drug companies to maximise profit and the medical/social/economic needs of the health care professions, as well as governments and consumers.

For more information visit [www.pac10.com.au](http://www.pac10.com.au).



**IPHONE** users can now get fit anywhere in the world.

A new iPhone app 'The Fun Run Trainer' is purporting to allow users to 'virtually' run, jog or walk anywhere in the world whilst on their own treadmill.

The app basically downloads real-time video maps and precise inclination settings, to allow users to adjust their treadmill settings to coincide with the route that they have selected.

In addition to the 'create your own route' function, the app also includes over 200 of the world's most popular running events, including Sydney's City to Surf, and the Boston Marathon, so users can train whilst watching their iPod in their own home.

**SPECIAL** kiwi deodorant needed.

Scientists in NZ are currently in the midst of developing a deodorant for native NZ birds to protect them from introduced predators.

According to the researchers, because birds native to NZ developed without native land mammals, they freely emit body odours, which makes them easier targets for introduced predators, which over the last century have decimated their numbers.

As such, Canterbury University researcher Jim Briskie and his team will spend the next three years studying native bird odours (apparently kiwis smell like mushrooms and the kakapo parrot smells like a musty violin case), in order to develop measures including possible deodorants to protect them from attack.

**BEWARE** the burnt toast!

New Zealand's Wairapa Hospital has had to replace four of its staff toasters with sandwich presses, after smoke alarms set off by the machines cost it thousands of dollars in fire service call out fees.

According to reports the toasters set off the alarms four times this year, causing firefighters to rush to the scene (NZ only allows two free call outs per year), costing the health service NZ\$2,634 in fees.

## WIN AN ORGANIC HAND WASH



Certified Organics at a low price for FAST sell through!

This week *Pharmacy Daily* is giving readers the chance to win an Aloe Leaf Hand Wash from Designer Brands NEW Organic Collection.

Designer Brands Organics provides intense

moisturising protection for hair and skin, leaving it soft and supple for complete head to toe hydration. With the launch of Designer Brands Organics, certified organic skin care no longer means having to pay the price for purity. This paraben-free, urea-free, SLS-free, artificial colour-free range is certified organic, dermatologist tested and is biodegradable. Good for you and the planet!

Based on the healing and nurturing power of organic Aloe Leaf Juice, this is beauty without boundaries when it comes to skin and hair loving benefits and affordability.

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

How many products are there in the range?

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

The first correct entry received will win!

Hint: Visit [www.dbcosmetics.com.au](http://www.dbcosmetics.com.au)

## Pharmacy Daily Pharmacy Job of the Day!

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[jobs4careers.com.au](http://jobs4careers.com.au)