

College wants input

PHARMACISTS who have issues they would like raised at next Monday's Australian Pharmacy Liaison Forum meeting should email them to Trent Twomey of the Australian College of Pharmacy (which is a member of the APLF) at trent.twomey@gmail.com.

The Forum is comprised of industry representatives including the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia, The Pharmacy Guild of Australia, SHPA and the Australian Pharmacy Council.

"We have the tools at hand to deal with the big issues," Twomey said.

New osteoporosis drugs

THE latest edition of Australian Prescriber discusses new treatments for osteoporosis which may offer advantages over oral bisphosphonates, particularly regarding adherence.

See www.australianprescriber.com.

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Strike hard at hypertension

THE importance of the role of pharmacists in supporting patients with high blood pressure and ensuring quality use of medications, has been reinforced by a new hypertension study according to Professor Simon Stewart, Head of Preventative Health at Baker IDI.

Speaking at a media launch of the results Stewart said the idea behind the Valsartan Intensified Primary Care Reduction of Blood Pressure Study, nicknamed VIPER, was to "strike hard and fast against high blood pressure".

As such, VIPER trialled an aggressive GP-led strategy to optimally manage hypertension and reduce patients risk of stroke and heart attack.

"For the first time in Australia, this study was able to analyse the efficacy of an aggressive new first-line management strategy for patients with high blood pressure," Stewart said.

Hypertension is the highest preventable contributor to disease and death in the world, with around one-in-three Australian adults affected by high blood pressure at any one time.

Interestingly hypertension is also the number one most common reason for Australian GP visits, and it is the largest contributor to cardiovascular (CVD) disease in Australia (with CVD being the leading cause of fatality in the country).

"Investigating new ways to manage and reduce the burden of high blood pressure is critical in the face of rising health costs and an ageing population," said Stewart.

"Without more effective blood pressure management, Australia faces a perfect storm of cardiovascular disease risk factors with a future health crisis of costly hospital admissions and premature deaths," he added.

The randomised clinical VIPER study recruited 2,300 newly diagnosed or currently treated hypertensive Australians being managed by more than 250 GPs across the nation, with the aim of finding out whether a more

intensive approach to hypertension management would help patients reach lower blood pressure targets quicker than with traditional methods.

Enrolled patients were divided into groups and received either standard GP care or the VIPER-BP strategy.

In the VIPER-BP group patients were given either one of three therapies: 160mg or 320mg valsartan monotherapy; 80mg valsartan combined with 12.5mg hydrochlorothiazide; or 80mg valsartan combined with 5mg amlodipine besylate, for a period of 26 weeks.

GPs with patients in the VIPER-BP groups were also given exclusive access to a new Baker IDI electronic management tool which was designed to calculate patients long-term CVD risk and direct more intensive disease management.

Patients in the standard GP care group received whatever medication their GP thought was best for hypertension over a 26 week period.

The results of the trial found 36% of VIPER-BP patients had reached their blood pressure target at 26 weeks, compared to 28% of usual care patients.

The study also found that overall VIPER-BP patients were also 25% more likely to achieve their ideal blood pressure goal compared to their usual care counterparts, whilst 63% of VIPER patients achieved the typical blood pressure target during the six month follow up period compared to 54% of usual care patients.

VIPER patients were also found to achieve a greater reduction in their risk of future heart attack or stroke (25%) compared to 16% of usual care patients.

"The study revealed a more intensive and structured approach - including more frequent GP visits and higher treatment doses - can control an individual's blood pressure more effectively than a more traditional regime using fewer adjustments to treatment and fewer GP visits," said Professor Stewart.

New female fellowship

THE National Health and Medical Research Council, has announced a new NHMRC Elizabeth Blackburn Fellowship.

The fellowship pays homage to the achievements of Australian Nobel Laureate Professor Elizabeth Blackburn, and will be awarded to top female Research Fellows.

"The fellowships will foster the career development of female scientists excelling in biomedical, clinical and public health research," said Health Minister Nicola Roxon.

The inaugural Fellowships were awarded to: Associate Professor Amanda Leach (Menzies School of Research), Associate Professor Christine Roberts (Sydney Uni), and Professor Carola Vinuesa (John Curtin School of Medical Research).

AIDS rates down in US

IN the lead-up to World AIDS week (28 Sep - 04 Dec), the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization has released a report which details the progress made by the collective countries of the Americas who committed to eliminating mother-to-child transmission of HIV and syphilis as public health problems by 2015.

The commitment included improving the quality of care for pregnant women and babies, including wider and timelier treatment for HIV and syphilis.

According to the report an estimated 5,000 children become infected with HIV in the Americas each year, most through mother-to-child transmission, whilst between 164,000 and 344,000 babies are born with congenital syphilis.

The report also found that Canada, Cuba, Antigua and Barbuda, the US and Anguilla have all reported reduced rates of mother-to-child transmission of HIV to less than 2% and have reduced pediatric HIV cases to no more than 0.3 per 1,000 live births.

Cases of congenital syphilis are also down to no more than 0.5 per 1,000 births.

These levels are considered low enough to no longer constitute public health problems.



Monash Uni winner

PROFESSOR William Charman, Dean of the Faculty of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences and Director, Monash Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Monash University, has been awarded a prestigious Doctor of Science degree (*honoris causa*) by The School of Pharmacy, University of London.

Charman has also been appointed as a Sir John Monash Distinguished Professor at Monash University.

Both awards are in recognition of Charman's leadership in the field of pharmaceutical science and drug discovery, and his role in the strategic development of both the Monash Faculty of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences and the Monash Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences.

Record hospital use

NEW data added to the MyHospitals website shows that hospitals have delivered more than 130,000 extra operations since 2007.

Waiting times at the nation's emergency departments also remained stable while the number of emergency presentations tipped over the 6m mark for the first time. See www.myhospitals.gov.au.

Events Calendar

WELCOME to *Pharmacy Daily's* Continuing Professional Development Calendar, featuring upcoming events and opportunities to earn CPE and CPD points.

If you have an upcoming event you'd like us to feature, email info@pharmacydaily.com.au.

04 Dec: First Aid Certificate, 9.30am-4.30pm, Hobart, Tasmania, email - lorraine.norris@psa.org.au.

04 Dec: First Aid, Taree, email - support@healthlinks.net.au.

24-26 Feb: Guild Pharmacy Academy, NSW Convention; Novotel Manly Pacific- for info call Rob 02 9467 7100.

Australia's heart burden

THE number the number of Australians dying from repeat heart attack will rise by over 40% by 2020 according to the latest Access Economics report released by Heart Support Australia.

The ACS in Perspective: The importance of secondary prevention report found that at present the cost of repeat events (including Acute Coronary Syndromes, heart attack and unstable angina) costs the country \$8.4 billion per annum.

According to the report, whilst women are at a lower risk of having a heart attack than their male counterparts, they are much more likely to die from both initial and repeat events.

"Already the risk of death from a repeat heart attack for women (20.7%) is higher than men (13.7%), and over the next ten years as the large number of baby boomer women enter high risk age groups, we are likely to see a significant increase in this risk," said report author, Lynne Pezzullo.

"Overall by 2020 repeat heart attacks are expected to demand an additional 9,000 hospital beds and claim the lives of over 7,500 Australians each year," she added.

In response to the report the HSA has issued five key points to reduce the risk and burden of repeat heart attacks, and to protect heart survivors in the short and long term.

The first point highlights the need for a structured framework for patients post hospital discharge, whilst the second recommends 100% referral to rehab programs with active post discharge follow-up.

The third point pushes for high quality ongoing maintenance programs to support lifestyle changes, whilst the fourth recommends access for patients to counselling and psychological support services post event, and the last urges that patients and their families have access to "high quality" information to support sound decision making.

WIN THE PERFECT EYE PACK

This week *Pharmacy Daily* is giving readers the chance to win the Perfect Eye Pack valued at \$45.80, courtesy of Australis.

Create multidimensional eye looks with Australis Double Decker Eye Duos containing loose and cream eyeshadow combined.

These amazingly pigmented and intense shadows are available in five hot shades including; Cosmic Rays, Moon Rocker, Give Me Some Space, Greenhouse Effect and Supernova Casanova. Compliment the eyes with a simple line above the eye with Australis IntensifEYE Liquid Eyeliner and finish with Australis Killer Curves Mascara that has a special 'wash-off' formulation for dangerous curls!

Visit www.australiscosmetics.com.au for more information and Become a FAN on Facebook www.facebook.com/loveaustralis.

To win, simply be the first person to send the correct answer to the question below to: comp@pharmacydaily.com.au

How many shades does the new Australis eyeshadow range come in?

Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner, Robyn Kirkby from Powrgard Australia.

DISPENSARY CORNER

THE Eiffel Tower goes green.

A new plan to turn the iconic Eiffel Tower into the world's most ecologically correct tourist attraction is stirring up mountains of controversy in its home country of France.

According to reports the £65m plan would cover the Tower in 600,000 plants as well as a state of the art irrigation system comprised of 12 tonnes of rubber tubing.

The engineering team pushing for the conversion says the project could be completed in under two years, and would see the Tower become the "green lung" of Paris.

Should the conversion go ahead the Tower would give off 84.2 tonnes of CO2 and absorb 87.8 tonnes, making it "carbon positive".

EMERGENCY rescue.

Kind hearted villagers in the UK spent three days trying to free a missing pregnant cat from a recycling bin only to discover the meowing was coming from a toy cat out of the children's film The Aristocats.

Sensaslim cancelled

THE listing of Sensaslim Solution has been cancelled from the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods, effective immediately.

Pharmacist audits

AUSTRALIAN pharmacists will soon be randomly selected for an upcoming Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency audit.

Pharmacists who are selected will be notified that they are being audited by a letter, which will also provide details of what they need to do to comply.

According to the Board the audit will be a pilot for other health professions and will identify any areas where changes are necessary in the system.