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Interaction event

CLINICAL consultant pharmacists Debbie Rigby and Geraldine Moses will host a special seminar on drug interactions in Melbourne next month.

The special seminar costs \$275 including GST and includes a range of interactive lectures and case studies on drug-disease interactions, complementary medicine interactions, drug-gene interactions and much more.

It carries 12 Group 2 CPD credits and the first ten registrations will receive a free copy of Hansten & Horn's Top 100 Drug Interactions.

To register for the one day event on Sun 6th March at The Sebel Albert Park call 0418 772 877 or email drigby@bigpond.net.au.

New MS treatment

A **NEW** oral treatment for multiple sclerosis has just been approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration.

Gilenya (fingolimod) has been approved for the treatment of relapsing remitting multiple sclerosis and secondary progressive MS with superimposed relapses, to delay the progression of physical disability and reduce the frequency of relapse.

Gilenya is a member of the sphingosine-1-phosphate receptor modulators (S1PR) class of therapies, and works by retaining lymphocytes in the lymph nodes and thus preventing them from reaching the central nervous system where they can attack myelin.

It's an oral treatment taken as a capsule once per day, and is not listed on the PBS.

The safety and efficacy of Gilenya beyond two years is currently unknown.

Aussie lipid levels too high

CHOLESTEROL levels in Australian GP patients are still "sub-optimal" according to a survey of almost 200,000 GP records released this morning.

The research, conducted by the Baker IDI Heart and Diabetes Institute with the support of AstraZeneca, is "the largest contemporary study of lipid levels in primary care undertaken in Australia".

One in three primary care patients had less than desirable high density lipoprotein levels, while more than half had sub-optimal low density lipoprotein levels.

"If these data are a true indication of lipid levels in primary care patients, then many Australians remain at increased risk of preventable cardiovascular disease," said co-author Prof Simon Stewart, Head of Preventative Health at Baker IDI.

The report also found that despite these patients regularly visiting their

GP and having regular tests showing elevated lipid levels over a number of years, a significant number did not appear to be receiving any treatment.

"We urge all GPs to continue monitoring patients regularly and treating to lipid target to reduce cardiovascular risk," Stewart said.

Baker IDI urged patients to work with health professionals "to develop a long-term plan to treat and monitor your lipid levels in order to reach and maintain your individual, ideal targets".

Bonjela response

RECKITT Benckiser has issued a formal statement responding to a *Medical Journal of Australia* article which calls for a review of labelling on teething gel.

Earlier this month the MJA published the story which included details of two adverse reactions to teething gel due to excessive salicylate dosing, including one case where a toddler showed a gradual deterioration in weight over a 7 month period.

RB which makes Bonjela, noted that the report related to the "extreme overuse of teething gel over an extended period of time" and does not apply to general use of teething gels.

"Bonjela has been approved by the TGA...current product labelling meets all of the regulator's strict compliance guidelines," a statement from the company said.

"As with all medicines, those using these products to ease the discomfort of teething for their children should only use them according to the directions on the packaging," RB added.

Registration chase-ups

THE Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency has advised that it will contact health practitioners whose registration has lapsed because they didn't renew on time.

This year 4.7% of practitioners did not renew by the most recent 31 Jan deadline, which AHPRA said was similar to previous years.

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Guild Update

This week's update from the Pharmacy Guild Disaster Appeal

There has been a strong response to the Guild Members' Disaster Appeal launched earlier this month to assist community pharmacies severely affected by the recent floods across Eastern Australia.

The Guild is pleased to report that the running total of contributions has reached in excess of \$285,000 – made up of significant corporate contributions and some extraordinary efforts by individuals.

The response has been a credit to the industry, but the need remains strong to help pharmacy owners who have suffered major losses that threaten their ongoing viability.

At the APP Conference on the Gold Coast next month there will be a major fundraising drive which will include auction items of memorabilia, with all funds going to the Disaster Appeal.

The Guild thanks those who have already contributed, and renews its plea to members, and all those friends of community pharmacy in the broader industry, to contribute to this worthy cause.

Funds raised will be administered under the supervision of the National Council's Corporate Services Committee, which includes representatives from ACT, Victoria, NSW and Queensland. Please note that contributions to this appeal are not tax deductible.

Contributions can be made by completing a form available on the Guild website at

www.guild.org.au/appeal or by Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT):

Bank: NAB

Account Name: Guild Members' Disaster Appeal

BSB: 082 902

Account Number: 19 167 0305

Please ensure to include either your Pharmacy or Proprietor Name when completing the transfer.



The Pharmacy
Guild of Australia

Mirixa set to launch MedScreen

PHARMACISTS across Australia will soon have access to a new way of delivering professional services, with the planned launch at APP of the MedScreen program suite by the Guild's Mirixa Australia offshoot.

The system is described as a "brief pharmacist check of quality use of medicines," and will launch with the inclusion of GlaxoSmithKline's Flixotide (fluticasone propionate).

Under the MedScreen clinical service, the pharmacist will discuss and assess whether the patient is using Flixotide in a "quality way," before recommending further actions if required.

Mirixa has warmly welcomed the support of GSK, saying the contribution "will act to strengthen the profession and further build the case to consistently deliver professional services in pharmacy".

Full details on the MedScreen program and how it can be implemented in pharmacies will be released shortly.

GSK Primary Care director, Mike Graham, said "the MedScreen

program represents a powerful patient engagement and professional service for pharmacies and we are proud to support the initiative.

"We believe it is a great opportunity and complements the excellent Compliance and New to Therapy programs currently available," he added.

Alexion MoCD move

ALEXION Pharmaceuticals has acquired patents and assets from German firm Orphatec relating to "an investigational therapy for patients with molybdenum cofactor deficiency (MoCD) type A".

MoCD is an ultra-rare genetic disorder which leads to severe brain damage and rapid death in newborn babies.

The deal also includes a research collaboration with key MoCD scientists to accelerate development of the treatment, dubbed cPMP Replacement therapy.

The company will seek regulatory approval to allow sufferers worldwide to obtain access to the drug.



DISPENSARY CORNER

THIS probably won't help with the global obesity crisis.

A McDonald's fast food restaurant has held the first so-called McWedding function, with a special Valentine's Day engagement party taking place in downtown Hong Kong yesterday.

The event included a pair of souvenir 'M' rings as well as a "cake" made from a stack of McDonald's Hot Apple Pies.

McDonald's launched the service in January, saying it's very appropriate for locals.

"They date here, they grow their love here, so when they have this important day they want to come here," said McDonald's Hong Kong md Shirley Chang.

The 'Warm and Sweet Wedding Package' costs HK\$9999 (about \$1500) and includes special pink Golden Arches invitation cards, Ronald and Hamburglar decor and of course lots of fries!

MALARIA is a nasty disease for humans, but even worse for other bugs according to scientists at Edinburgh University.

In a recently released *American Naturalist* paper they report that the malaria parasites appear to "battle other infections for survival" after they enter the bloodstream.

Typically malaria infections include multiple, competing strains of the parasite, and they apparently alter their plan of attack if under threat from others.

The "sophisticated strategy" sees them focus on replicating infection-causing cells quickly, rather than the types of cells which can be taken up by a feeding mosquito to spread the disease.

"We found that when parasites compete with each other, they respond with a sophisticated strategy to safeguard their long-term survival," said one of the researchers, Laura Pollitt.

"They opt to fight it out in the bloodstream rather than risk everything on the chance of infecting mosquitoes in the short term," she added.

WIN A REVITANAIL NAIL STRENGTHENER



Pharmacy Daily has teamed up with Revitanail this week and is giving 5 lucky readers the chance to win a Revitanail Nail Strengthener.

Revitanail Nail Strengthener has always been the first choice for women who want nails that are strong and long. This superior nailcare treatment is fortified with Calcium and helps promote stronger, longer and healthier looking nails. It also protects nails against dehydration caused by the use of harsh detergents and soapy water.

For your chance to win your very own Revitanail Nail Strengthener, simply send through the correct answer to the daily question below:

What ingredient is the Revitanail Nail Strengthener fortified with?

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

First correct entry received each day will win!

Hint: Visit: www.revitanail.com.au

Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner, Irene Nimorakiotakis from Pharmore Pharmacies, VIC.