

5-ALA rescheduled

THE TGA has re-scheduled 5-aminolevulinic acid (5-ALA) as a prescription-only medication effective from 1 January 2012.

Traditionally 5-ALA has been used as a photo-sensitising agent during photo-dynamic therapy to treat pre-cancerous and cancerous skin lesions, and its reclassification has been driven by recent trends in the beauty industry.

The news has been welcomed by the Cosmetic Physicians Society of Australasia (CPSA), who have for some time been partitioning the TGA to have 5-ALA reclassified.

According to CPSA, in recent years, more and more non-medically trained beauty therapists have been using 5-ALA to treat skin conditions including acne and rosacea.

"Beauty therapy training does not provide the skills or knowledge required to be able to correctly examine, diagnose or treat advanced sun-damaged skin," a CPSA statement said.

"The ability to biopsy suspicious lesions before prescribing the appropriate treatment is not within the beauty therapy skill base," the statement added.

MEANWHILE the minutes of the Jan meeting of the TGA's Advisory Committee on Medicines Scheduling (ACMS) also show the Committee has recommended that all advertising of products containing pseudoephedrine be banned.

The Committee also recommended additional label requirements for products containing more than 5% laureth carboxylic acids, with warnings to state "if in eyes wash out immediately with water" and "if skin or hair contact occurs, remove contaminated clothing and flush skin and hair with running water".

Guild's PBS price warning

PHARMACIES which offer discounts on PBS prescriptions are breaching the National Health Act 1953, and may face severe penalties, the Pharmacy Guild of Australia has warned.

The cautioning comes on the back of several reports of pharmacies advertising "limited offer" discount pricing on PBS prescription medicines.

"Given the seriousness of any breach of the National Health Act I ask that Guild Members address this issue urgently in your pharmacy," a statement Guild President Kos Sclavos said.

"If pharmacy owners advertise and/or dispense PBS medicines according to the recent advertisements they breach the Act and the penalties could lead to the suspension or revocation of that person's approval to supply pharmaceutical benefits," Sclavos added.

The Health Act 1953 states that pharmacists do not have the right to advertise or charge an amount which is less than the co-payment (general or concessional).

Irish landmark

THE Irish Medicines Board has approved one brand of emergency hormonal contraception (morning after pill), NorLevo, for over-the-counter sale in pharmacies.

The Irish Pharmacy Union has welcomed the decision saying "this is a landmark decision for women and an important one for Irish pharmacy as a profession".

MEANWHILE a US bill has been put forward which, if passed, would allow pharmacists in Washington DC to dispense oral contraceptives to patients without a prescription.

Pharmacists can however charge the co-payment where the Commonwealth price is higher than the co-payment.

In addition to being law, the provisions are reiterated within the Fifth Community Pharmacy Agreement, and are consistent with Medicare Australia's website advice which states that "If a pharmacy wishes to discount a medicine that normally attracts a government subsidy, the supply must occur as non-PBS (private)."

The Guild also advised pharmacists that they should not rely on any references to Regulation 9A(5) of the Pharmaceuticals Benefits Regulations, because it may be, in part, inconsistent with the Act, and that the Act overrides it.

"The amount that can be charged is specific in the Act," Sclavos said.

"Therefore prescription record form (PRF) information, or PRF stickers, can only be generated if the prescription is supplied as a PBS prescription and complies with the National Health Act," Sclavos added.

Pharmacists may charge whatever they like for private prescriptions, however no PRF stickers can be generated for these items and pharmacists cannot unilaterally treat any repeats as PBS medicines nor can PRF info be recorded.

Sclavos also warned that "that it is not considered a defense to state that the reason a legal requirement was not observed was because the marketing group promoted a medicine a certain way, or that they were 'following store policy'".

For PBS info, visit www.pbs.gov.au.

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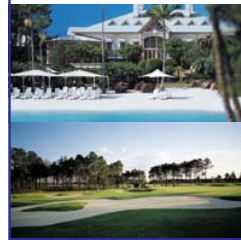
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TADIM approval

AUSTRALIAN pharmaceutical manufacturer, Phebra, has received marketing approval for its cystic fibrosis sufferer lung infection treatment TADIM (colistimethate sodium powder for nebuliser solution).

TADIM was granted orphan drug designation in 2008 by the Australian Therapeutic Goods Administration for the treatment of Pseudomonas aeruginosa infections in patients with cystic fibrosis.

In light of the new marketing approval, CEO of Phebra, Dr Mal Eutick, confirmed that the company is "working on reimbursement for TADIM from the Australian Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme and hope we can gain funding for this much needed treatment".

Tomeo and Mirixa

THE Tomeo and Laslett Group of pharmacies in South Australia have signed with the expanded Mirixa Australia programs.

As part of the new programs, the Group's pharmacies will deliver blood pressure recordings, weight recording, and also detect patients for their Dose Administration Aid Service, in addition to the Compliance and New to Therapy programs already implemented.

Dr Cabot launch

DR Sandra Cabot has written a new book 'Infertility: The Hidden Causes, How To Overcome Them Naturally', which will RRP at \$24.95 and be available for sale from April.

My Baby & Me

PHILIPS AVENT's new My Baby & Me iPhone App (PD yesterday) is available to download for free from the Apple iTunes store and at www.avent.com/mybabyandme/.

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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.

ADVENTURE World is offering a four-day 'Uncovered Rangoon' tour from \$362pp.

The deal includes three nights accommodation at the four-star Chatrium Hotel (Rangoon), breakfast daily, sightseeing with a local English speaking guide and return airport transfers.

For details call 1 300 320 795 or visit www.adventureworld.com.au.

TEMPO Holidays has launched a special on its eight-day English and Scottish Discovery coach tour.

The adventure takes guests through London, Liverpool, the Lakes District, Edinburgh, Glencoe and Glasgow, and is priced from \$1566 per person, twin share.

Tour highlights include a visits to London's Hampton Court Palace, the Cotswolds (including Shakespeare's town of Stratford-upon-Avon), the famous Royal Mile and grand Stirling Castle in Edinburgh, the scenic Trossachs region and a cruise on Loch Lomond.

For details call 1 300 362 844.

THE Best Western Grand Country Lodge in Mittagong (NSW) has released a Miss Saigon musical package.

Priced at \$250 per couple, the package includes one night's accom at the Best Western Grand Country Lodge, continental breakfast, a two-course pre- or post-show dinner at Vin Santo's with a carafe of wine and tickets to Miss Saigon (performed by the Highlands Theatre Group) at Clubbe hall on 11 March (or \$278 for performances on 12, 19, 25 and 26 March).

Call 02 4871 3277.

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Corum back in the black

PHARMACY software supplier Corum yesterday reported its figures for the six months leading up to 31 December which saw the company bank a healthy operating profit of \$1,245,000.

The result is a major turnaround for the same period last year, which saw the company clock a loss of \$102,000.

Corum is attributing the half year success to structural adjustments undertaken in the previous year within its eCommerce division which now "continues to contribute to Group profitability".

The performance of Corum's Health Services sector, which supplies dispensary software, was down slightly, with a \$484,000 operating profit on revenues of \$7m.

Last year's half year turnover result was a \$508,000 profit on turnover of \$7.2 million.

The big performer for the period was Corum eCommerce which contributed a profit of \$834,000 on revenues of \$4,135,000 up from the same period in 2009 which saw

the sector take a loss of \$346,000 on revenues of \$4,201,000.

In its half yearly report Corum also said it is continuing negotiations with Westpac after it breached its loan covenants in previous years.

Corum said it is confident that the dispute will be "satisfactorily resolved" - however in the event that the covenant breach continues to be a problem, the company's report warns that there is "material uncertainty which may cast significant doubt about the Company's and Consolidated Entity's abilities to continue as ongoing concerns".

Sanofi and Genzyme

SANOFI Aventis has entered into an agreement with Genzyme to acquire the company for US\$74 per share (or approximately US\$20.1b).

In addition to the initial cash payment, Genzyme shareholders will receive additional payments if specified milestones relating to Lemtrada are met.



DISPENSARY CORNER

VIDEO games are good for you.

Researchers from East Carolina University have determined that casual non-violent video games aid in reducing clinical depression and anxiety.

The year-long randomised controlled study looked at the efficacy of "casual video games" (family-friendly, non-violent puzzle games) in a group of 60 subjects with clinical depression.

To measure the response, participants were subjected to a range of psycho-physiological, biochemical and psychological measurements, with results showing that subjects in the video-game group had a 57% reduction in depressive symptoms.

"The results of this study clearly demonstrate the intrinsic value of certain casual games in terms of significant, positive effects on the moods and anxiety levels," said Dr. Carmen Russoniello of East Carolina University.

OUCH!

A man in China, Li Fu, has confounded doctors after x-rays found a four inch blade lodged in his brain.

According to reports, Fu went to hospital complaining of reoccurring headaches and a bad taste in his mouth.

Further examination of Fu revealed the knife, which it was discovered had been nestled inside his head for four years as a result of a knife point robbery.

"The wound healed up gradually and I didn't have any other symptoms, so I didn't think of having further checkups," said Fu.

The blade, lodged in Fu's tongue root, muscles and brain, was removed successfully via a four hour operation.

WHOOFS.

A Romanian man, Florin, has failed in his bid to regain his license after losing it for drink driving, when he turned up for the test drunk.

According to local police, Florin said he was nervous before the exam and "needed something to boost his confidence."

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:

The extracts of what precious material can be found in the Revitanail Hand & Nail Cream?

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, **Elizabeth Treble** from **Plunketts, NSW**.