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## Tas connectivity

**HEALTH** students at the University of Tasmania will soon have better access to clinical training following a \$478,000 funding windfall, which will be put towards building an IT support network for students between the Uni and Tas health care facilities.

## Zinc to heal a cold?

**ZINC** supplements may reduce the severity and duration of illness caused by the common cold, according to a new review published by the Cochrane Collaboration.

The review of fifteen clinical trials was aimed at determining the effect of zinc on common cold symptoms.

Trials included in the study were randomised, double blind and placebo controlled, using zinc for at least five consecutive days to treat or for at least five months to prevent the common cold.

Following a collation of results, the reviewers found that zinc administered within 24 hours of onset of symptoms reduces the severity and duration of the common cold in healthy people.

"When supplemented for at least five months, it reduces cold incidence, school absenteeism and prescription of antibiotics in children," the researchers concluded.

In addition, researchers said that because of the potential for zinc lozenges to produce side effects, as well as the differences in study populations, dosages, formulations and duration of treatment, "it is difficult to make firm recommendations about the dose, formulation and duration that should be used".

## More support for AHPRA

**ADDITIONAL** monitoring of the Australian Health Practitioners Regulatory Agency (AHPRA) is soon to be introduced, according to the latest Communique from the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council (AHWMC).

The communique, drawn from minutes of a meeting between

health ministers in the AHWMC this week, addressed the recent access and registration issues during the transition to the new national scheme.

Ministers agreed that action needed to be taken to address these concerns and "restore professional confidence in the new National Registration and Accreditation Scheme for health practitioners".

"It is important that health practitioners who wish to continue to practise and their patients not be disadvantaged," the Communique said.

To this end, the ministers agreed to provide AHPRA with additional support and expertise, with the Agency now required to report to future meetings of health ministers, as well as to provide regular reports to the AHWMC.

The AHMC Chair, WA Health Minister, and Dr Kim Hames will also commence "immediate frequent discussions" with the management team at AHPRA "to ensure registration processes are on track".

In addition, the Commonwealth will consider initiating ex-gratia or Act of Grace payment for a period of time so that patients will not be disadvantaged by their practitioners lapsed registration.

## NP's and promotions

**A RECENT** US study published in the American Journal of Managed Care has found that nurse practitioners (NPs) have "extensive contact" with the pharmaceutical industry promotional activities.

The study looked at 263 NPs from the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners with the aim of assessing their interactions with pharmaceutical industry promotional activities, as well as their perception of information reliability and self-reported prescribing behaviours.

The results of the study found that 96% of NPs had regular contact with pharmaceutical sales reps, 71% received new info on drugs directly from reps some or most of the time, and 66% regularly dispensed drug samples to patients.

In addition 73% of NPs said they believed drug samples were helpful in learning about new drugs, 81% said it was ethically acceptable to give out samples to anyone, and 90% said it was acceptable to attend a lunch or dinner sponsored by the pharmaceutical industry.

Interestingly, 48% of NPs also said they would be more likely to prescribe a drug that was highlighted at a lunch/dinner event.

## Banana Boat wins

**BANANA** Boat has joined the list of winners in this year's Product of the Year Awards, with its Banana Boat EveryDay SPF 30+ sunscreen taking out the POTY gong in the awards' sun-care category.

The EveryDay sunscreen features 30+ protection, as well as Vitamin E and aloe vera, and provides users with up to four hours water resistance.

## Bonjela heats up

**THE** debate over teething gels in Australia which contain salicylates has heated up, with a spokesperson from Bonjela refuting the claim that the TGA is re-evaluating the risk/benefit of teething gels containing salicylate (**PD** 16 Feb).

"The TGA has not contacted Bonjela to discuss this – which is usually the first step when a decision is made to review labeling on products," the spokesperson said.

"In fact, the TGA responded to this *MJA* study last week saying they didn't believe there were grounds for a review of the product at that stage," the spokesperson added.

Responding to **PD's** article on 16 Feb, the Bonjela spokesperson said that the alternative Bonjela product available in the UK (without salicylate salts) was not launched in Australia because it contains the anesthetic Lignocaine, which is not approved for teething gels in Australia.

In terms of TGA involvement in 2009, following the publication of an article linking topical oral salicylates and Reye's Syndrome in *BMJ*, the TGA investigated the possibility that the use of teething gels containing salicylates may be associated with Reye's syndrome.

The investigation found that the case described in the *BMJ* was more likely to be due to salicylate toxicity than Reye's Syndrome.

Over the past three years the TGA has received three reports of suspected adverse reactions to the salicylate teething gel Bonjela, one of which was due to excessive product usage.

Whilst not confirming the launch of an investigation into the risk/benefit of teething gels containing salicylate, a spokesperson for the TGA did tell **PD** that the agency "continues to monitor adverse events related to the use of salicylate containing teething gel and will look at additional warnings advising against overuse if required".

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## Melbourne's disease

MELBOURNE has won the right to host the Western Pacific Congress on Chemotherapy and Infectious Diseases in 2016.

It is expected the event will attract around 1,000 delegates including physicians, clinical microbiologists, pharmacists, veterinarians and laboratory scientists, and will allow Victoria to showcase its homegrown work and research into infectious disease control.

"The Congress will provide Victorians with an invaluable opportunity to meet and share knowledge with global experts in their fields," said Leigh Harry, Chief Executive of the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre.

## CPD 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](mailto:info@pharmacydaily.com.au).

**20 Feb 2011:** First Aid Certificate Course; Chatswood Club, Sydney - (02) 9431 1120.

**22 Feb 2011:** First Aid Training Level 2; Pharmacy Skills Centre, Hawthorn, Victoria - (03) 9810 9988.

**23 Feb 2011:** PSA Roadshow- Kick Start Your CPD for 2011; Country Comfort Hotel, Port Macquarie, NSW - (02) 9431 1100.

**23 Feb 2011:** Multiple Sclerosis- Current Treatments and the Horizon; Lecture Theatre Five, Monash University, Victoria - (03) 9389 4007.

**24 Feb 2011:** ECP MMR Discussion Group- Constipation; Pharmacy Practice Room 1, University of Tasmania - [lorraine.norris@psa.org.au](mailto:lorraine.norris@psa.org.au).

**26 Feb 2011:** Re-Entry Course; AMA Conference Room & Roseberry St Leonards / Roseberry, NSW - (02) 9431 1120.

## Allergy cops a bad reaction

NATROPATHIC allergy clinic, Allergy Pathway (formerly known as Advanced Allergy Elimination), and its Director, Paul Keir, have been found in contempt of court and each fined \$7,500, for allowing false and misleading posts to remain on the company's Facebook page.

According to reports, the positive testimonials posted by Allergy Pathway Facebook 'fans' claimed the clinic's programs could virtually eliminate all allergies.

"While it cannot be said that Allergy Pathway was responsible for the initial publication of testimonials it is appropriate to conclude that Allergy Pathway accepted responsibility for the publications when it knew of them and decided not to remove them," said Justice Finkelstein.

"Hence it became the publisher of the testimonials," he added.

The Contempt of Court charge against Allergy Pathway and Keir was laid as a result of a 2009 Federal Court ruling that Allergy Pathway had engaged in false,

misleading and deceptive conduct in making certain representations made about its allergy treatments.

As such, both the company and Keir were banned from claiming that Allergy Pathway could accurately test for allergen's which cause reactions in an individual; or that it can cure, treat, or eliminate allergic reactions; that its treatments are safe/low risk; and that following treatment that a person may safely have contact with the allergen.

According to ACCC Chairman, Graeme Samuel, the latest Court Judgement is a message to businesses to "be careful if you're going to host a website, be it Facebook or Twitter or your own separate address that permits third parties to publish representations or comments in relation to your business which are misleading and deceptive".

"As the host of the website, you become responsible for them so you must take steps to have them removed," he 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 are the names of the 3 new shades in the Summer 2010/11 colour collection?

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

First correct entry received each day will win!

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

Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner, **Laura Brazier** from **Warwick Friendly Societies Association, QLD**.



## DISPENSARY CORNER

LET'S hope they're taking zinc!

Firefighters in Germany risked life and limb to rescue a black swan frozen in an ice lake, only to find that the creature was in fact made of plastic.

According to local newspaper reports, 25 eager firefighters leapt to the rescue of the bird after receiving several calls about the swan from worried citizens.

"It was quite a dangerous rescue," said one firefighter.

"But when we got there we found a plastic swan and not a real swan which had been put on the lake to scare birds from coming to try and eat the fish.

"Thankfully no one was injured and at least we got a bit of training in," he added.

**MENTAL** health tester.

A 25-year old English woman, Shanna Sexton, has told reporters that she was almost driven mad by an alarm sound that rang constantly for seven days.

According to Sexton, she scoured her house for the source of the noise, even pulling her washing machine out of the wall, and calling workmen in to locate it.

After seven days, Sexton finally looked outside her window and matched the sound to an escaped Congo Parrot named Sammi.

Three year old Sammi had escaped a week earlier from Sexton's neighbours apartment, and had spent the week having a great time in Sexton's yard imitating a smoke alarm.

**CHEFING** will never be the same.

A restaurateur in China who was sick of slaving away all day hand making noodles beside a hot pot of water, has come up with a novel solution- a noodle robot.

Cui Runquan was 15 when he left school, but at 35 his robot, Chef Cui, may go into mass production pending the results of discussions with manufacturers.

The robot basically works like a windscreen wiper, shaving noodles to shape in up and down strokes.

"The design of the blades integrates the best angle and positions of a human chef," he said.