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## Duodart approval

**GLAXOSMITHKLINE'S** Duodart (dutasteride/tamsulosin hydrochloride) has received Australian approval for use in men diagnosed with moderate to severe symptomatic benign prostatic hyperplasia.

## Deceitful pharmacies?

**PHARMACIES** across the nation of Fiji are being branded as deceitful, after a survey conducted by the Consumer Council of Fiji found a number of pharmacies selling generics at branded prices. "From the consumer perspective – because we are not knowledgeable in that area – we can not differentiate a generic from an originator brand so when we go to a pharmacy and they say you have to pay \$44 you will just give \$44 thinking that that is the price for the drug," said Council chief executive Premila Kumar.

"But when we did our analysis we found that in many cases most pharmacies were selling generic drug BUT they priced it at branded originator drug price which is more expensive," she added.

The Price and Practices Survey 2010 also listed further instances of unscrupulous behaviour which included tax evasion through doctored receipts.

In response to the findings, Fiji's Commerce Commission and its Health Ministry have taken steps to impose a series of set pricing controls on a number of medicines, whilst the Fijian Pharmacy and Poisons Board has also issued warning letters to community pharmacies across the nation.

The Board has also launched a raft of investigations into individual pharmacy breaches.

## PBS to change the industry?

**RECENT** changes to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme are set to dramatically alter the landscape of the Australian Pharmaceutical industry, according to research firm Datamonitor.

"As further statutory price cuts and 'expanded and accelerated' price disclosure is applied to substitutable medicines by the PBS, downward pricing pressures will affect everyone in the industry," said the company's Australian healthcare analyst, Erin Brady.

"Some however will suffer more than others," she added.

Dire predictions for the industry include the probable withdrawal of selected products, a reorganisation of the wholesaler sector, and troubles for generic manufacturers.

"The local generics sector will need to seek new efficiencies to continue competing in the Australian prescription pharmaceuticals market, and wholesalers must assess their strategic options in a changing market landscape," said Brady.

Unlike innovator companies who were involved in negotiating the Medicines Australia memorandum of understanding with the govt in relation to the reforms, generics companies were not included in the process, and were staunchly opposed to the bill.

"The generics sector claims that the price cuts and price disclosure requirements will greatly hinder their sector going forward," said Brady.

"Indeed, all the price reductions target medicines in F2, the formulary that generic medicines fall under.

"As a result, prices may become

too low for manufacturers to bear and some product withdrawals could be expected," Erin added.

There have already been major ructions within the wholesale sector, including the move by Pfizer to distribute direct to community pharmacies in conjunction with courier company DHL.

Datamonitor also warned of impacts on community pharmacy, saying: "While Australian patients should benefit as downward pressure is put on drug prices, pharmacists will suffer decreased margins as wholesalers cut discounting, putting pressure on revenue margins".

## Hospital heart delays

**MANY** Australians suffering acute coronary syndrome delay going to the hospital, according to a new study published in the *Emergency Medicine Australasia*.

The report looked at 140 coronary heart disease patients in Australia and NZ, and found the median delay from onset of symptoms to presentation in hospital was two and a half hours, whilst 12% arrived within one hour of onset, and 12% arrived more than 12 hours after the start of symptoms.

"These findings reinforce the continuing need to address the problem of delays in deciding to seek treatment after recognition of acute coronary syndrome symptoms, as well as recognition of symptoms as possible acute coronary syndrome," said professor of critical care nursing at University of Technology, and Sydney Royal North Shore Hospital, Sharon McKinley.

## Student competition

**THE** Pharmacy Guild of Australia has extended the deadline for team or individual registrations in the 2011 National Student Business Plan Competition from 28 February to 01 April.

## Consider your bowels

**BOWEL** Cancer Australia is urging Australians to take charge of their own bowel health, by purchasing a faecal occult blood test from a pharmacy or online, and taking part in the inaugural FOB Test Friday on 25 February.

"In the absence of any Government screening program for a cancer that claims one Australian life every two hours, we have no choice but to be proactive about our own health and organise a Faecal Occult Blood test," said Julien Wiggins, CEO of Bowel Cancer Australia.

"We had the promise of a more comprehensive screening program ...but instead, Australians have been left with nothing.

"For now, our health is in our own hands," he added.

To get involved call 02 9887 5335, or see [www.bowelcanceraustralia.org](http://www.bowelcanceraustralia.org).

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### Guild Update

This week's update from the Pharmacy Guild

#### APP is coming!

The 2011 Australian Pharmacy Professional Conference and Trade Exhibition (APP) is fast approaching and time is running out to ensure you don't miss the premier event on the community pharmacy calendar.

APP 2011 will be held from 17 to 20 March at the Gold Coast Exhibition and Convention Centre in Queensland.

The conference once again features an extensive program that covers a diverse spectrum of issues and reflects the conference theme, "Community Pharmacy: Innovation in Health Care".

Topics will focus on a range of issues, including the Fifth Community Pharmacy Agreement.

Other professional, political and legislative issues will also be addressed, while practical workshops and education sessions will again be an important feature of the event.

At the event, the Guild will launch a comprehensive suite of tools and education materials to help employers and employees understand their obligations and entitlements under the Pharmacy Industry Awards 2010 (PIA).

The resource, which has been produced in collaboration with the Fair Work Ombudsman as part of the Shared Industry Assistance Projects, will be supported by an APP educational session at 12.30pm to 1pm on Sunday, 20 March, entitled "Workplace Relations – What every employer needs to know".

Guild representatives will also be available to answer questions, both immediately after the session and at the Guild's stand during the trade exhibition.

Another highlight is the conference social program, which is once again headed by the popular Gala Dinner.

Entertainment at this year's dinner will be provided by legendary Australian rock star Jimmy Barnes and a live cover band.

No matter what stage of your career, APP will help you stay abreast of the latest issues, technological advances and clinical updates within the industry.

For further information visit [www.appconference.com.au/](http://www.appconference.com.au/).



The Pharmacy Guild of Australia

## Herbal equivalence guide

THE fluctuation in availability of some herbal extracts, and the subsequent need for manufacturers to interchange ingredients in supplements, has led the TGA to issue a new 'Guidance on equivalence of herbal extracts in complementary medicines'.

"Given that different solvents, solvent concentrations and extraction methodology may result in ingredient preparations with different safety and efficacy profiles, the question arises as to what variation, if any, should be permitted for extracts of the same herbal substance," the TGA said.

Available to view on its website ([www.tga.gov.au](http://www.tga.gov.au)), the Guidance describes the "specific circumstances under which a herbal extract may be considered to

be 'equivalent' to an ingredient currently included in a therapeutic good, and which therefore may be used as a substitute for the ingredient, without the product being considered to be a separate and distinct good".

"Factors such as the natural variability of the herbal material, combined with the solvent system, extraction method and extraction conditions, can all have a significant impact on the quantity and composition of a herbal extract," the TGA said.

In addition to information about conversions, the Guidance also lays out other 'useful' (but not required) information which is desirable for sponsors/manufacturers to collect, record and consider when formulating products.



### DISPENSARY CORNER

DENTISTS dish up.

A survey of more than 300 dentists, undertaken by the Chicago Dental Society, has ranked the top ten strangest dental requests received by practitioners in the city.

10. "Can you extract my tooth without anesthesia?"

9. "Please wire my mouth shut to aid in my diet".

8. "Can you ID this set of dentures left in the bathroom of the bar I work at?"

7. "I will pay you or your hygienist to floss my teeth at my office every day."

6. "Pull all my teeth, and just give me dentures."

5. "I just broke off my engagement. Can you prepare my tooth so that I can keep the diamond in it?"

4. "Will you give me local anesthesia in my lips? I'm going in for permanent "lipstick" tattoos on my lips, and would like to avoid the pain."

3. "May I have an emergency cleaning visit? It's my high school reunion and I need a bright, white smile to face my old boyfriend."

2. "Can I keep the teeth you pull out of my mouth? I'd like to make a necklace out of them."

1. "Can you give my dog braces?"

HERE'S an idea...

Officials in the Central American nation of Honduras have ruled that smokers' family members may call the police on them if they smoke inside their home.

The new law is set to enforce a nationwide ban on smoking inside closed spaces, with smokers also not allowed to puff away within six feet of non-smokers in outside spaces.

### WIN A HISSYFIT PRIZE PACK



Every day this week, **PD** is giving away exciting prize packs, courtesy of **Hissyfit**.

Each pack is valued at \$59.90 and contains 2 Hissyfit products: Body Luxe and Body Bronze.

Hissyfit offers the ultimate in hybrid beauty, with an advanced range of multi-benefit products for the face, body, hands and lips, all designed to:

✓ PROTECT against harsh environmental elements

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For your chance to win this great prize pack, simply be the first person to send in the correct answer to the daily question below to: [comp@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:comp@pharmacydaily.com.au)

**How many shades are available of Hissyfit Saving Face Anti-Ageing Foundation with SPF 30+?**

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

Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner, **Christine Padfield** from **Symbion Pharmacy Services, VIC**.

  
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