

Pharmacy DAILY

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More smoking bans

THE South Australian Government is amending existing regulations to ban smoking under covered public transport areas, taxi stands, and within 10 metres of playgrounds.

The adjusted regulations will also allow councils and other bodies to apply to have their outdoor areas and events declared smoke free.

Cigarettes will also be banned from being displayed in shop and service station windows.

Elastin discoveries

LED by scientists from the University of Sydney, a team of researchers from the US, UK, and Europe, has discovered the main structural component of elastin, which is called Tropoelastin.

"Tropoelastin is a tiny protein 'nanospring' in the human body," said Professor Tony Weiss.

"Our bodies assemble these nanosprings to put elasticity into tissues such as skin, blood vessels and lungs," he added.

It is hoped the discovery will lead to major advances in treatment for burns victims and patients with damaged blood vessels.

Innovative national health

THIS week Medicines Australia Chairman, Will Delaat, took to arms against a rising tide of issues currently facing the industry.

Addressing a parliamentary dinner on Tuesday night, Delaat petitioned for the passing of the R&D tax credit introduced into Parliament last year, and which is currently awaiting debate in the Senate.

"The number of new clinical trials in Australia has fallen for two years in a row and may well continue to fall," Delaat said.

"This arrangement will effectively reduce by up to 10 per cent the cost of undertaking eligible R&D and will make Australia more globally competitive," he added.

Delaat also addressed what he called the "complex and cumbersome ethical review process for clinical trials", arguing that the process between different states and territories needs to be harmonised so that companies are not discouraged from investing in Australia because of "red tape".

"A simplified, streamlined system would mean keeping more of our top research scientists engaged in

Australian R&D and attracting greater investment to our universities and other research institutions," he said.

The recent deferral of seven new medicines on the PBS (despite advice from the PBAC) was also in Medicines Australia's firing line, with Delaat describing the decision as "alarming for patients and alarming for industry, because it has undermined patient access and business certainty.

"Medicines Australia's priority is to pursue a solution to this problem," Delaat said.

In addition, Medicines Australia also attacked the Government's ruling that all new submissions to the PBS require Cabinet approval, saying that "such changes do not provide the policy predictability and business certainty for the innovative medicines industry envisaged in the MoU.

"These changes were introduced without consultation with the industry and are particularly disappointing," Delaat said.

"With our industry having especially long lead times to bring innovative products to market, such short term policy changes are very difficult to deal with," he added.

MEANWHILE the Federal Member for Bennelong, John Alexander, came out yesterday in support of Medicines Australia saying he was strongly against the Gov't's decision to overrule recommendations by the PBAC.

"The established approval process provides certainty and stability in this important industry, and the Government's decision has caused significant damage and uncertainty," Alexander said.

Australia & vaccines

THE majority of Australians over the age of 65 were vaccinated against influenza in 2009, with 75% of the older population receiving a flu shot throughout the year, according to a new AIHW report.

55% of Australians aged over 65 were also vaccinated against pneumococcal disease, whilst 96% of those that received one or both of the vaccines did so free of charge under the National Influenza and National Pneumococcal Vaccination Programs for Older Australians.

The report, titled *2009 Adult Vaccination Survey*, looked at statistics from over 10,000 Australians, and also found that only 11% of Aussies aged 18 and over had received a whooping cough shot as an adult or teen.

"This is a concern given recent reports of increasing incidence of whooping cough in adults," said AIHW's Mark Cooper-Stanbury.

Meanwhile around 19% of Australians were vaccinated against H1N1 in 2009, the uptake of which was higher (26%) for health care providers and child care workers.

WIN

Pharmacy DAILY is giving Independent pharmacists the chance to WIN 1 of 10 Pharmacy Alliance Group memberships by answering this question:

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**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.

07 Mar 2011: Discussion Group: Ear, Nose & Throat; University of Tasmania, Sandy Bay, Tas; for details email - lorraine.norris@psa.org.au.

08 Mar 2011: iNova Site Tour, Thornleigh NSW 12-3.30pm; for details visit - www.psa.org.au.

08 Mar 2011: iOpioid Dependency Treatment; University of Canberra; 7 - 8.45pm; for details call - 02 6120 2808.

08 Mar 2011: Drugs & Diseases 2: Fibromyalgia & Chronic Fatigue Syndrome; PSA Office, Greenhill Road, South Australia; for details see - www.psa.org.au.

NZ pharmacy gout move

PHARMACISTS looking for potential avenues to expand their patient care services should look into the area of gout management and prevention, according to the Pharmacy Guild of New Zealand.

Around 2.5% of NZ citizens suffer from the condition, a figure which according to the NZ Guild, provides "significant potential for community pharmacists to help their patients manage the medicines for this condition and demonstrate the value of pharmacy interventions".

Gout, a form of arthritis which occurs due to a build-up of uric acid in the joints causing inflammation, pain and swelling, is also estimated to affect around 70,000 Australians.

According to the NZ Guild, numbers of gout sufferers have been, and are continuing to rise worldwide, due to increasing levels of sugar consumption and obesity.

As such, the NZ Guild, in consultation with key health organisations, is launching a pilot program in NZ pharmacies next week which will see pharmacists

and pharmacy staffers take a more active role in helping patients manage their condition.

"The Guild believes it is vital for the future of community pharmacy that we raise awareness with our stakeholders, particularly Government officials and politicians, of the value of the pharmacist's role in managing conditions like gout," said Annabel Young, NZ Guild Chief Executive.

The six week pilot program, which will kick off in pharmacies across Country Manuku (because of the extreme incidence of gout within the area), has been developed to identify and fill gaps in existing programs, without duplicating current efforts.

"This gout project should lead to doctors, nurses, pharmacists and patients combining their knowledge to promote behaviours that will reduce the burden of this terrible disease on the sufferers and their families," said Peter Gow, Associate Professor of Rheumatology at Counties Manukau District Health Board.

DISPENSARY CORNER

ENGINEERING -aliens.

Newly released documents from the UK National Archives have revealed a student hoax which led to the mobilisation of Britain's army.

According to the reports, the furor occurred in 1950 when a group of engineering students from Farnborough Technical College constructed a cache of 'UFOs' and placed them around the town of Aldermaston.

The stunt was designed to raise money for charity, but backfired when terrified residents called police about an alien invasion.

From there the military were called in to ward off an invasion, before the students finally fessed up. **FOOD poisoning.**

A US pizza shop owner, Nickolas Galiatsatos, is facing the wrath of health and legal authorities after he was discovered depositing bags of mice into his competitors pizza shops.

"I've been at this for 47 years, and I've never seen mice used as a criminal tool," said one police officer.

February MIMS Monthly Medicine Update

NEW PRODUCTS

Galvumet (**vildagliptin/metformin hydrochloride**) combines two antihyperglycaemic agents with different mechanisms of action to improve glycaemic control in patients with type 2 diabetes (T2D). It is indicated as an adjunct to diet and exercise to improve glycaemic control in patients with type 2 diabetes whose diabetes is not adequately controlled on metformin hydrochloride alone or who are already treated with the combination of vildagliptin and metformin hydrochloride, as separate tablets. Treatment of type 2 diabetes should not be initiated with this fixed-dose combination. Galvumet is available as Galvumet 50 mg/500 mg, containing vildagliptin 50 mg and metformin hydrochloride 500 mg; Galvumet 50 mg/850 mg, containing vildagliptin 50 mg and metformin hydrochloride 850 mg; Galvumet 50 mg/1,000 mg, containing vildagliptin 50 mg and metformin hydrochloride 1,000 mg in packs of 60's.

Ilaris (**canakinumab**) is a high-affinity fully human anti-human-IL-1 β monoclonal antibody that belongs to the IgG1 κ isotype subclass. Canakinumab binds with high affinity to human IL-1 β and neutralises the biological

activity of human IL-1 β by blocking its interaction with IL-1 receptors, thereby preventing IL-1 β -induced gene activation and the production of inflammatory mediators such as interleukin-6 or cyclooxygenase-2. Canakinumab is therefore suited to treat diseases and pathologies characterised by local or systemic overproduction of IL-1 β . Ilaris is indicated for the treatment of Cryopyrin-associated periodic syndromes (CAPS), in adults and children aged 4 years and older including Familial cold autoinflammatory syndrome (FCAS) / Familial cold urticaria (FCU), Muckle-Wells syndrome (MWS) and Neonatal-onset multisystem inflammatory disease (NOMID) / Chronic infantile neurological, cutaneous, articular syndrome (CINCA). Ilaris is available as a sterile single use subcutaneous injection in packs of 1's or 4's.

Movectro (**cladribine or -chlorodeoxyadenosine**) is a chlorinated purine analogue resistant to the action of adenosine deaminase. Cladribine has been shown to exert a sustained anti-inflammatory effect and to suppress lymphocytes, the immune cells implicated in the autoimmune processes involved in the pathophysiology of multiple sclerosis. Movectro is indicated for

the treatment of relapsing-remitting multiple sclerosis for a maximum duration of two years. Movectro is contraindicated in patients with acute or chronic infections, including active or latent tuberculosis, or viral hepatitis; within 3 months after vaccination with live or attenuated live vaccines; immunocompromised patients; patients receiving immunosuppressive or myelosuppressive therapy with agents such as cyclosporin, methotrexate, mitozantrone, azathioprine, natalizumab, or chronic use of corticosteroids; patients with moderate or severe renal impairment (creatinine clearance < 50 mL/min) or moderate or severe hepatic impairment (Child-Pugh score > 6); pregnancy and lactation. Movectro therapy is administered in treatment courses. A course consists of daily oral administration of one or two 10 mg tablets given for the first 4 or 5 days of a 28-day period. Treatment is initiated with 2 consecutive courses at a 28-day interval at the beginning of a first 48-week period. Movectro is available as 10 mg tablets in blister packs of 4's, 5's, 6's, 7's, 8's, 9's or 10's.

Revolade (**eltrombopag olamine**) is an oral small molecule, thrombopoietin receptor (TPO-R) agonist. Eltrombopag interacts with the transmembrane domain of the human TPO-R and

initiates signaling cascades similar but not identical to that of endogenous thrombopoietin (TPO), inducing proliferation and differentiation of megakaryocytes from bone marrow progenitor cells. Revolade is indicated for the treatment of adult patients with chronic immune (idiopathic) thrombocytopenic purpura (ITP) who have had an inadequate response or are intolerant to corticosteroids and immunoglobulins. The recommended starting dose of Revolade is 50 mg once daily. Revolade is available in 25 mg and 50 mg tablets in packs of 28's.

NEW INDICATIONS

Avodart (**dutasteride**) is now indicated as monotherapy for the management of symptomatic benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH) or as combination therapy with an alpha-blocker which is approved for use in BPH and which has been dose titrated in accordance with the relevant recommendations in the product information for that alpha-blocker. Avodart 500 microgram capsules 30's are PBS listed (streamlined authority required) for treatment, in combination with an alpha-antagonist, of lower urinary tract symptoms due to benign prostatic hyperplasia where treatment is initiated by a urologist.

NEW FORMULATIONS

Exforge (**amlodipine besylate/valsartan**) is now available as Exforge 5/320 containing 5 mg amlodipine and 320 mg valsartan, and Exforge 10/320 containing 10 mg amlodipine and 320 mg valsartan in blister packs of 28's.

Invega Sustenna (**paliperidone palmitate**) is indicated for the acute and maintenance treatment of schizophrenia in adults. It is contraindicated in those with a known hypersensitivity to risperidone. Invega Sustenna is available as a single use intramuscular injection in 25 mg, 50 mg, 75 mg, 100 mg and 150 mg strengths.

Omnitrope (**somatropin (rbe)) (recombinant human growth hormone)** is now available as a 10 mg/1.5 mL solution for injection (cartridge).

SAFETY RELATED CHANGES

Avodart (**dutasteride**) is contraindicated in patients with severe hepatic impairment.

This list is a summary of only some of the changes that have occurred over the last month. Before prescribing always refer to the full Product Information.