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## FDA & EMA together

**THE** US Food and Drug Administration has joined forces with the European Medicines Agency to launch a pilot program which will allow parallel evaluation of relevant development and manufacturing data components of new drug marketing applications that are submitted to both agencies.

For details see [www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov).

## Japanese food warning

**FOOD** Standards Australia and NZ is halting the flow of certain food from Fukushima, Gunma, Ibaraki and Tochigi due to the risk of radionuclides exposure.

## No more cuts necessary!

**THE** problems facing the nation from expensive generics have been acknowledged and rectified, according to Medicines Australia chief executive, Dr Brendan Shaw.

The comments come in response to an article published in the *Australian Financial Review* by Professor Philip Clarke (**PD** yesterday) which pushed for further cuts to the prices of generic medications.

"I'm not sure if Professor Clarke has been asleep for the past four months but a major reform to the PBS was passed by the Parliament

in November and is already slashing the cost of off-patent medicines," Shaw said.

"The system of mandatory price disclosure was legislated last year as part of the Memorandum of Understanding between Medicines Australia and the Commonwealth precisely because of the need to drive savings through a competitive generics market and ensure the sustainability of the PBS," he added.

The reforms, he argued, now force companies to disclose the prices they are selling their drugs to pharmacies for, which allows the government to adjust its buying price to fit the price commanded by the marketplace.

"These reforms are achieving precisely what they were designed to do - to realise the kind of savings that other countries have been able to drive," he said.

"I'm not sure if the professor has been in a time warp while PBS reform was being delivered, but prices are falling dramatically and PBS expenditure growth is now at its lowest for 15 years," he added.

Shaw also countered Clarke's use of international price cutting examples, saying that comparisons with the Canadian healthcare system are not "apples for apples".

"In fact, Canada spends more on pharmaceuticals as a proportion of GDP than does Australia," he said.

A letter from Medicines Australia chairman Will Delaat has been published in today's *AFR* also rebutting Clark's claims.

## EU flu composition

**THE** European Medicines Agency is recommending that the 2011/12 influenza vaccines contain three virus strains: an A/California/7/2009 (H1N1)-like virus; an A/Perth/16/2009 (H3N2)-like virus; and a B/Brisbane/60/2008-like virus.

## Stress is not the cause

**A RECENT** Bupa Health breast cancer study has highlighted significant levels of misunderstanding surrounding the risk factors for the disease.

The study of 1,496 breast cancer survivors found that 43.5% of participants believed that there was a 'factor' which contributed to them getting the disease.

Of those factors, stress came out as the most commonly cited with 58.1% believing it contributed to their cancer, followed by 17% who said previous use of hormone replacement was a contributor and 9.8% citing family history.

Only 2% of respondents attributed their breast cancer to their lifestyle.

"It is concerning that only 2% of the women in the study attributed their breast cancer to lifestyle factors such as diet, exercise and alcohol consumption, when there is scientific evidence that being overweight, smoking and excessive alcohol consumption are risk factors," said Bupa's Dr Christine Bennett.

According to Bennett there is no scientific evidence which points to stress as a cause of cancer, and that people should rather look to maintaining good diet and exercise habits, and not smoking to help reduce the risk of cancer.

## Win a Chemconsult book

**SYDNEY** pharmacist and founder of the Health Information Pharmacy franchise group, Ken Lee, is offering five copies of his new book *How Safe is Your Prescription?* to **Pharmacy Daily** readers.

The book, which launched on the eve of APP (**PD** 17 Mar), summarises the findings of Lee's medication counselling system which has been used over 20,000 times in HIP pharmacies, finding a significant level of errors in scripts.

The book aims to highlight how prescription checks "could potentially halve the hospital admission rates caused by medicine related problems".

To win your copy, be one of the first five **PD** readers to answer the following question:



*What is the name of the medication counselling system developed by Ken Lee?*

Email your answer along with where you work in pharmacy and a postal address ASAP to [comp@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:comp@pharmacydaily.com.au).

Pictured above at the official launch are, from left: Ken Lee and HIP state manager Leah Dubbelman.

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Comedian Vince Sorrenti  
assisting with auction proceedings

## THANK YOU

to all pharmacists and industry colleagues who participated in our Auction at APP last week.

With your support we helped raise **\$40,800** for the Guild Members' Disaster Appeal.

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## Mass PPI response

ONE thousand pharmacists have already registered for the Guild's Pharmacy Practice Incentives following its launch last week.

"We want to see every eligible community pharmacy in Australia registered before the cut-off date of 30 June this year," said National President of the Guild, Kos Sclavos.

To be eligible, pharmacies must be approved Section 90 pharmacies, accredited by a pharmacy accreditation program, and agree to comply with, and display a patient service charter.

Eligible sign-ups before 30 June will receive a one-off start up payment as well as ongoing payments for their contribution to delivering quality health services.

Visit [www.5cpa.com.au](http://www.5cpa.com.au).

## 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).

**30 Mar 2011:** Understanding the Issues Surrounding Infant Nutrition; Clarion Hotel, Mackay Marina, Qld; for details call - 07 3896 1900.

**03 Apr 2011:** Building Blocks For the Delivery of Professional Services; PSA National Office, Deakin ACT; for details email - [act.branch@psa.org.au](mailto:act.branch@psa.org.au).

**03 Apr 2011:** First Aid Certificate Course; Chatswood Club, NSW; for details email - [melenyhui@psansw.org.au](mailto:melenyhui@psansw.org.au).

**04 Apr 2011:** PSA Road Show - Kick Start Your CPD For 2011; Goulburn NSW; for details email - [beryl.park@psa.org.au](mailto:beryl.park@psa.org.au).

**05 Apr 2011:** Individualised Medicine: A Focus On Pharmacogenomic; Lecture Theatre 1, Monash University, VIC; for details call - 03 9389 4013.

## Senate to investigate AHPRA

**YESTERDAY** the Senate approved a wide ranging investigation of the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA), which will be spearheaded by the Finance and Public Administration References Committee.

The scope of the investigation will include whether AHPRA has the "capacity and ability" to administer the national registration of health practitioners including pharmacists, with terms of reference also including the possible compensation of health professionals, patients and service providers for any economic loss which may have occurred as a result of the revised registration process.

The Committee will look into AHPRA's performance in administering registrations, as well as the impact that its new processes had on health practitioners, patients, hospitals and service providers.

The move follows chaos earlier

in the year as the agency struggled to cope with demand for national registration renewals for the first time, with some practitioners reportedly unable to practice because their rego lapsed.

Response times to individual registration enquiries will also be reviewed, as will AHPRA's complaints handling process and budget and financial viability.

A May deadline has been set for the probe to report its findings.

## Lose sleep, gain fat

A COLUMBIA University study into the effects of sleep deprivation on calorie consumption has found that people who sleep less eat more.

26 people took part in the study, alternating sleeping 4-6 hours a night for six nights, with six nights of 9 hour sleeps.

On average female participants ate 329 calories extra per day when they slept 4-6hrs, whilst men ate around 263 more calories.

## DISPENSARY CORNER

**NEW** uni recruiting technique?

A University of Lincoln (UK) student, Tom Ridgewell, has stirred up a remarkable amount of interest at his academic institution, after releasing a series of unofficial ads on Youtube.

The online commercials start off with students in class or on campus, then around the midway point see Ridgewell break out to battle dinosaurs and zombies.

"The public response has been fantastic," Ridgewell said.

"The amount of people claiming that Lincoln is now their number one choice just makes me want to lead a conga line through the university's marketing department," he added.

**ALCOHOL** and cars just don't mix!

A taxi driver in China's Fujian province has landed in some hot water after listening to a very drunk passenger, and taking a shortcut down a flight of stairs.

"He said his home was down there," the driver told local media authorities.

Half way down the steep stairs the cabbie's car got wedged and despite the best efforts of local residents who used jacks and bricks to try to free it, it took a lift and a crane to release it from the narrow passageway's vice-like Kung Fu grip.

To add insult to injury, the drunk passenger abandoned the cab when it got stuck - but not before abusing the cabbie for not taking him to his destination, and then stealing the cabbie's night takings.

**PETS** can apparently be bad for your health.

A frisksix-year old pet tortoise, Giovanni, is being blamed for starting a fire in his owner's New York apartment after the reptile knocked over his tank and a heat-lamp - igniting some art supplies including paint thinner.

Fortunately firefighters managed to rescue the turtle, but the home was destroyed.

## WIN A NICOLE BY OPI PACK



This week *Pharmacy Daily* is giving pharmacists the chance to win a 'Glee' Lacquer Pack valued at \$105, courtesy of Nicole by OPI.

Nicole by OPI is a new range of fashion forward nail lacquers designed for the young fashionistas brought to you by OPI.

Nicole by OPI nail lacquers contain no DBP, Toluene, or Formaldehyde. NO NASTIES! Nicole by OPI is available at Terry White Chemists and leading pharmacies. For stockists contact 1800 358 999 or visit [www.nicolebyopi.com](http://www.nicolebyopi.com).

For your chance to win this great pack, simply send in an answer to the daily question below:

**Which famous teenage singer has his own range of Nicole by OPI lacquer shades?**

The first correct entry received wins!

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

Hint! Visit [www.nicolebyopi.com](http://www.nicolebyopi.com)

Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner, Meagan Hocking from Better Health Pharmacy Murray Bridge.