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PHARMACY ALLIANCE
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Pharmacy weight loss

PHARMACY-based weight loss offerings were the least effective of all interventions in a study of slimming programs published in the *British Medical Journal* last week.

The 'Lighten Up' study compared programs such as Weight Watchers, Slimming World and Rosemary Conley with one-to-one counselling conducted by GPs and pharmacists, and found that those undergoing pharmacy treatments saw a one year BMI reduction of 0.31 - just a quarter of the 1.17 experienced by those in Weight Watchers.

470 people participated in the scheme, which also found that the commercial programs were much more cost effective for the UK government than pharmacy or GP weight loss schemes.

Almost a third of those studied in the Weight Watchers program achieved a clinically important 5% body weight reduction after a year.

Registration renewals loom

THE Pharmacy Board of Australia says two-thirds of pharmacists have still not applied for renewal of their registration, with the upcoming deadline of 30 Nov coming near.

The details were confirmed in a Board communique on Fri, with the organisation saying that the best way to minimise delays is to renew online - and ensure that all contact details including email addresses are up to date with the Board.

Students who are graduating soon should also lodge provisional registration application forms to enable commencement of internships on time, the Board said.

Other details in the communique include changes to the eligibility

criteria for written examinations for intern pharmacists.

Provisionally registered pharmacists will now be admitted to the written examination after completing at least 30% of approved supervised practice hours, with the Board saying the change "aligns the criteria with that set by some previous state and territory pharmacy boards".

The communique also confirms new labelling guidance in relation to Dose Administration Aids, saying that best practice is to include both active ingredient and brand name, but when circumstances necessitate, such as space limitations, the active ingredient/ Australian approved name should be used.

The Board has said it will amend its Guidelines on specialised supply arrangements to provide clarity on this issue.

The most recent Pharmacy Board meeting also directed the Australian Pharmacy Council to conduct a review against international standards of current Australian accreditation requirements for pharmacy education programs.

More on Savacol recall

COLGATE Palmolive has responded to the TGA recall of its Savacol mouth rinse (**PD** Fri) saying that it is only the Swiss made Alcohol Free variant that is affected, and that the green and blue variants of Savacol, which are made in Australia, are not impacted at all.

The company has advised pharmacies to return all supplies of the white bottle product to their wholesaler for a refund using their "standard process".

Colgate also said consumers with concerns or impacted stock should contact the hotline on 1800 636 551 to arrange for refunds.

Xarelto approval

THE US Food and Drug Administration has approved Bayer's Xarelto (rivaroxaban) to reduce the risk of stroke and systemic embolism in patients with non-valvular atrial fibrillation at a dose of 20mg once daily or 15mg for patients with moderate to severe renal impairment.

"Today's approval of rivaroxaban offers physicians a new option to reduce stroke risk in patients who are living with atrial fibrillation, and the continuous threat of serious strokes," said Gerald Naccarella, Professor of Medicine, Chief of Division of Cardiology, Pennsylvania State University College of Medicine.

Reduce Weight alert

THE TGA has confirmed the presence of therapeutic quantities of sibutramine and phenolphthalein in the product Reduce Weight Fruta Planta capsules (sold primarily over the internet).

Both active compounds are no longer available in Australia due to safety concerns, and consumers are advised to cease use of the weight-loss product immediately.

See www.tga.gov.au.

Mental Health App

A NEW Mental Health App designed for young men has been launched this month by the Minister for Health and Ageing, Mark Butler.

The Work Out App is the brainchild of the Inspire Foundation and the University of Sydney's Brain and Mind Research Institute to encourage young men to seek help for their mental health.

"About one in four young people aged between 16 and 24 experience a mental disorder, yet more than 80 per cent of young men do not seek the help they need, often because of stigma or they feel that asking for help is a sign of weakness," said Butler.

"It's important that young men can access treatment programs and reach out for help in a less intimidating way," he added.

The App allows young men to take part in a 'man-friendly' survey that assesses their mental fitness and then guides them through a process of setting themselves mental fitness goals.

See www.workoutapp.com.au.

new

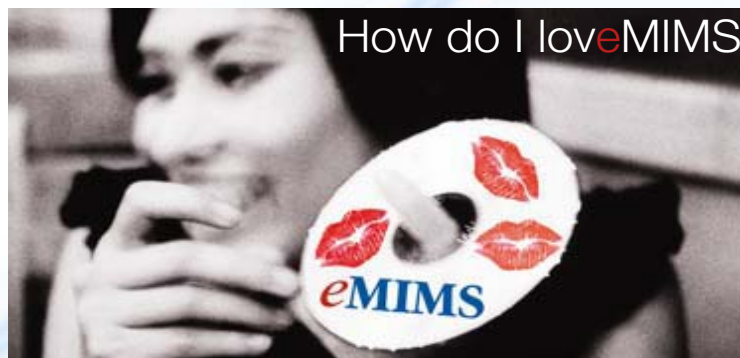
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Weekly Comment

Welcome to **Pharmacy Daily's** weekly comment feature.

This week's contributor is **Jeff Jones** from

Pharmacy Alliance.



Merchandising and Retail Skills

The economic environment and pharmacy competition is driving the need for independent pharmacy teams to have solid merchandising and retail skills.

With competition from discounters and supermarkets products need to be strategically placed in the right areas of the stores so that customers are able to find what they need, which in turn will increase sales.

Pharmacy Alliance has developed the Merchandising and Retail Skills Program specifically for retail managers and store teams of their 380 independent member pharmacies.

This program allows the participants to leverage the tools provided with their Pharmacy Alliance membership plus understand how to practically apply merchandising principles.

The full-day session covers developing category adjacencies and best stock placement, through to managing optimum stock holdings. "With impending PBS reforms the front of shop will play an even greater role in a pharmacy's ongoing profitability," comments Jeff Jones, Pharmacy Alliance Merchandise Manager and program co-ordinator.

Although the retail tools are readily available via the Pharmacy Alliance website for all members to use it is also important that our members understand merchandising principles well so that they are able to apply them well to their pharmacy.

The program is very practical in nature. It relies on the participants' experience and is fully interactive,' he said.

The Merchandising and Retail Skills program is being held in Melbourne and Sydney next week, with more sessions to be scheduled next year.

Medication safety week

PHARMACISTS are being urged to take part in an incident reporting project as part of the inaugural National Medication Safety Week which kicks off today.

Various groups are encouraging participation including the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia and NPS Australia, which said the initiative is an "opportunity for pharmacists to contribute to improving the safety of patients in the primary health care environment".

The project is the brainchild of the University of Sydney's Faculty of Pharmacy (**PD** 03 Nov), with NPS ceo Lynn Weekes saying that "Patient safety is paramount when it comes to medicines, especially given the 190,000 medicine-related hospital admissions that happen in Australia every year.

"Pharmacists are well placed to identify when medicines safety issues arise and to ask why they happened," Weekes said, urging participation by reporting

medication safety incidents and near misses to help build the body of knowledge in this area.

PSA President Grant Kardachi said reports can be made anonymously, adding that with up to 73% of adverse drug events estimated to be preventable, "projects like Medication Safety Week are fundamental to help reduce the incidence" of such problems.

He said community pharmacists would be helping highlight patient safety issues in the Australian primary health care environment.

To learn more about participation in the National Medication Safety Week reporting project, as well as access to the online reporting tool for community pharmacists, visit www.australianpharmsafety.org.

MEANWHILE NPS is also urging consumers to report and discuss side effects related to their medicines via the Adverse Medicines Events hotline on 1300 134 237.

Side effect details reported by callers will be passed onto the TGA.



DISPENSARY CORNER

WEIRD science.

A final year university student, Jake Tyler, in Birmingham UK has made world headlines after his final year project caught the attention of international technology company Vax.

The project saw the young inventor create an eco-friendly vacuum cleaner out of sustainable resources including cardboard and recycled junk taken from landfill.

The vacuum, titled Vax ev, is due to hit stores soon and is made from flame-retarded and water-proofed corrugated cardboard panels which come as part of the packaging, as well as recyclable nylon plastic parts.

Proud Vax ev owners are also encouraged to personalise their vacuum by drawing a picture on its cardboard body.

DISASTER averted.

Holidaymakers at the Porthkerry Leisure Park in South Wales had a very near brush with death after part of the park's cliff collapsed leaving 15 caravans teetering about 30m above a beach.

According to reports the caravans were about four metres from the edge before the landslide occurred.

Fortunately holidaymakers had been unable to access the caravans for a few weeks due to safety alerts after the appearance of cracks on the cliff edge.

Subsequent visits by seismologists predicted the collapse but did not give a timeframe in which it would occur.

Most of the precariously perched vans have now been recovered, however many of those with a van close to the edge facing the ocean are now reconsidering their "top-spot" position.



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