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Improved platelets

THE PBS listing of Revolade (eltrombopag olamine) tablets is "a welcome step forward" in the treatment of chronic immune (idiopathic) thrombocytopenic purpura (ITP), according to Professor Beng Chong, Director of Haematology at the St. George and Sutherland Hospitals.

Revolade, a thrombopoietin receptor agonist is indicated in Australia for the treatment of reduced platelet count in adults with chronic ITP who have had an inadequate response or are intolerant to corticosteroids and immunoglobulins.

"The PBS listing of this prescribed drug is another excellent example of where I believe that GSK continues to research and develop compounds to meet unmet patients' needs," said Dr Chong.

Pharmacists and literacy

A HEALTH literacy project funded under the Fifth Community Pharmacy Agreement Research and Development Program, is now set to commence.

The aim of the project is to discover what role community pharmacy can play in improving consumer understanding of health information.

The project will see the development, piloting and refinement of an educational package for pharmacists and pharmacy assistants around health literacy to enable them to communicate information to consumers better.

The research will be headed up by Gregory Duncan from Monash University, and will include input from a multi-disciplinary consortium including the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia, the University of Queensland, Sydney University and Curtin University.

The importance of the research, according to the PSA, lies in the fact that there is a proven link between low literacy and poor health.

"Health literacy is important and it is fundamental for consumers to be able to find, understand and use health information in order to make decisions about their own health and wellbeing," said National President of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, Kos Sclavos.

"Community pharmacies are often the first point of contact for consumers to gather information about medicines and other health information, which is why the health literacy project is so important," he added.

It is hoped that the project will be completed around mid 2014.

News in today's PD

TODAY'S *Pharmacy Daily* issue features two pages of news, plus a third page from Biorevive which provides details of its Nasodren sinusitis treatment which has undergone 15 trials- see p3.

Pfizer in hot water

PHARMACISTS in the United States are suing Pfizer and New Delhi based Ranbaxy Laboratories for an alleged "unlawful agreement".

According to their allegations, Pfizer and Ranbaxy agreed to delay the release of Ranbaxy's generic version of Lipitor in the US, which could have been sold as early as March last year, in a move which netted Pfizer US\$18b.

The alleged "unlawful agreement" saw Ranbaxy repaid for its delay with the ability to distribute its generic Lipitor earlier in foreign markets than it otherwise would have been able to.

"The agreement by defendants denies purchasers' access to a generic substitute to Lipitor in the United States for up to 20 months after the expiration of the active ingredient patent for Lipitor," the pharmacists' lawsuit says.

"Lipitor's current price exceeds \$4 a day, while a generic version will sell for between \$0.25-\$0.35 and even as low as \$0.10.

"Consequently, Lipitor purchasers in the United States are paying now, and will continue to pay, inflated prices for this life-saving pharmaceutical at least through May of 2012," the lawsuit added.

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Merck's new partner

MERCK Serono has partnered with biopharmaceutical company, Ablynx to co-discover and co-develop Nanobodies(R) against two targets in osteoarthritis.

This is the third agreement between the pair, and will see them exploit the unique nanobody features and develop multi-specific products, with extended half-lives.

EU hepatitis approval

THE European Union has approved Abbott's new highly sensitive diagnostic test for detection of hepatitis B surface antigen (HBsAg).

The ARCHITECT HBsAg Qualitative II assay is intended to be used as an aid in the diagnosis of HBV infection and as a screening test for donated blood and plasma using Abbott's ARCHITECT immunochemistry system.

The test provides qualitative detection of HBsAg, which is the first serological marker after infection with HBV and appears in the blood between one to 10 weeks after exposure to the virus.

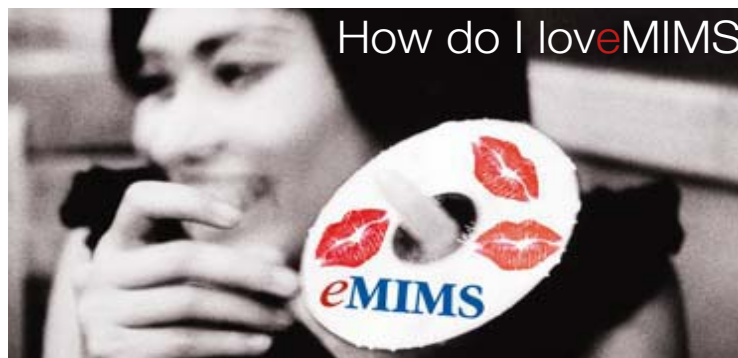
Women get their shots

A RECENT US survey found women are more likely than men to get a flu shot, with 46% of women saying they would get a shot, compared with 38% of males.

Botox competitor

AN alternative to Botox, Xeomin, has been approved by the US Food and Drug Administration to treat severe frown lines or 11's between the eyebrows.

Manufactured by Merz Aesthetics, Xeoman is different from Botox in that it has no other additives other than botulinum toxin type A to block the signals from the nerves to the muscles.



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Health insurance boom

RECORD numbers of health insurance memberships coupled with record profits show that the private health insurance sector is booming, according to the Minister for Health and Ageing Nicola Roxon.

"Record numbers of consumers are taking out private health cover with 45.3 per cent of the population, more than 10.3 million Australians, now covered by private health insurance," she said.

In light of this trend, the Govt has launched a new series of tools on its Private Health website, www.privatehealth.gov.au, including online tutorials which help consumers navigate through 20,000 health insurance products.

Travel Specials

WELCOME to *Pharmacy Daily's* travel feature. Each week we highlight a couple of great travel deals for the pharmacy industry.

CHINA Southern airlines is celebrating the launch of its newest Perth to mainland China route by offering return business class fares from Perth to Guangzhou from \$3,388 and return economy fares from \$738.

For reservations call 1300 889 628.

IF you have ever wanted to explore the magnificent Croatian coastline, now may be your chance, with Beyond Travel's offer of a \$250 Discover More travel credit with any eight-day Adriatic Explorer cruise departing from Split and calling in Brac, Markasa, Korcula, Dubrovnik, Mljet and Hvar, priced from \$930pp.

The offer is valid for all departures in 2012 if booked and paid in full by 19 December 2011. Call 1300-363-554 for details.

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SHPA celebrates 50 years

THE Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) is celebrating its 50th year as a national organisation and 70 years since its inception this week.

Started by 25 public hospital pharmacists in Victoria in 1941, the Society moved in 1961 to become a national organisation at its first ever conference which took place in Adelaide.

Half a century on, the Society will mark its birthday at the 37th SHPA National Conference this weekend.

"SHPA has led the way in innovation and change in pharmacy practice as we moved from the basement to working beside doctors and nurses on the wards," said Society President Sue Kirska.

"This is how most pharmacists in hospitals now work, in a wide variety of roles using their skills as medicines experts within the healthcare team," she added.

"Having been established as an organisation to support

pharmacists practising in hospitals, SHPA now has one third of its members coming from across the whole healthcare system.

Kirska is also using the milestone celebration to call for an expansion of community pharmacist roles allowing them to utilise fully their medicines knowledge and skills within a team of healthcare professionals for optimal patient outcomes.

Medicine awards

CSL has taken out the Minister's Award for Outstanding EEO Initiative/Result for the Advancement of Women at this year's Business Achievement Awards (an initiative of the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency).

In another coup for the medicines industry GlaxoSmithKline's VP and GM Deborah Waterhouse won the EOWA Director's Award.

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- ★ Keep wrap styles wrapped

Three lucky **Pharmacy Daily** winners a day will win Hollywood Fashion Tape's 36 strips worth \$19.95.

For more information visit www.keysun.com.au or www.hollywoodfashiontape.com.au.

To win, simply be one of the first three readers to send in the correct answer to the question below:

Say no to safety pins that ruin your clothes, Hollywood Fashion Tape is discreet and fabric _____

Send your answer to comp@pharmacydaily.com.au

Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winners, **Jolyon Hawley** of **Aspen Pharmacare**, **Tara Gustafson** from **Warwick Friendly Society Pharmacy** and **Kelly Forrester** of **Symbion Pharmacy Services**.

DISPENSARY CORNER

SOMEONE needs a Berocca to give them back their B B bounce.

An unfortunate pair of US 20-somethings have lost their respective cars to fires caused by a simple jump-start.

The motoring mistake occurred when Andrew Jernigan offered his friend jumper-leads to start his stalled car.

Unfortunately Jernigan attached the positive cable to the negative terminal on the battery and vice versa.

The second Jernigan started his car, the leads began to melt making it impossible to remove them from the batteries, which then caught fire.



FIVE- thousand-three-hundred year old murder mystery solved!

The world fell in love with a mummified corpse called Ötzi when he was discovered in September 1991 by climbers in the Ötztal Alps, near Hauslabjoch on the border between Austria and Italy.

At the ripe old age of 5,300 Ötzi is Europe's oldest mummy, and offered scientists, historians, archeologists and the public a window into the life of Copper Age Europeans.

Initial investigations into his cause of death revealed that Ötzi was most probably murdered or accidentally killed after having been shot with an arrow and hit with a club in the head, and left to bleed to death.

Researchers today however believe that the cause of Ötzi's demise was in fact a mountaineering accident.

Using body-mapping scans, researchers now say that it is just as likely that Ötzi's injuries were sustained from a fall, and that the arrow injury may have been an old one.

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