

Drugs early for croup

TREATMENT with corticosteroids for just 30 minutes can benefit children with croup, according to a new Cochrane study.

The Australian research, conducted by Clinical Professor Gary Geelhoed and Dr Milana Dobrovoljac from the Emergency Department at the Princess Margaret Hospital for Children in Perth, observed 70 children aged over six months who presented to a paediatric emergency department with croup.

According to their observations children benefited within 30 minutes of treatment with dexamethasone (much less than the 4-6 hours previously thought), and in lower 0.15mg/kg doses than the 0.6mg/kg usually used.

"Just 10 minutes after treatment with 0.15 mg/kg of dexamethasone, an oral corticosteroid, benefit was observed," researchers said.

"This result might encourage doctors to treat more children with all severities of croup and be less worried about potential side-effects and delayed benefit," said Geelhoed.

OTC set for less regulation

THE business reform process currently underway for the over-the-counter medicines sector is set to lessen regulation of OTC drugs, bringing "significant benefits in medicine approvals and timelines" according to the Australian Self Medication Industry (ASMI).

Speaking about the reform process at ASMI's national conference in Sydney this week, Dr Rohan Hammett, the National Manager of the Therapeutic Goods Administration, told delegates that "You are going to see greater clarity from the TGA on what you are required to do."

"You will see greater predictability, faster approvals, and we will be working much more closely with our international counterparts, adopting similar approaches to regulation of over-the-counter medicines," he added.

Hammett warned delegates that previous reform processes by the TGA for other sectors have resulted in "a loss of flexibility in processes that have arisen over decades", but

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API in the red

AUSTRALIAN Pharmaceutical Industries has reported a net loss after tax of \$23.3 million for the period ended 31 August 2011.

The company also saw drop in revenue of 7.6% to \$3.4b, which it attributes to PBS reforms, Pfizer's direct distribution and the Qld floods.

that this loss of flexibility "is more than outweighed by the predictability, clarity and efficiency of the regulatory environment".

MEANWHILE Hammett said that manufacturers should brace for greater public scrutiny.

"One very bad marketing idea can do a lot of damage to trust that has been built up in our attempts to improve health literacy," he said.

Warfarin monitoring

THE NZ Govt has announced it will launch a nationwide pharmacy-based warfarin monitoring service.

The decision is founded on the results of a pilot project involving 15 pharmacies and which saw pharmacists perform finger prick blood tests on warfarin patients in community pharmacies, and then advised them on the management of their medication.

According to an evaluation of the project conducted by The University of Auckland the "management of warfarin treatment by pharmacists is safe and convenient for patients with heart disease".

The evaluation report also found that if 50% of current warfarin patients were moved to the pharmacy management model, savings to the NZ health system could amount to \$111m over five years.

The nation-wide rollout has been welcomed by the NZ Pharmacy Guild which said "This is a tremendous show of support by the Government for the pharmacy sector".

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WIN A KIDDIE BOTTLE



Pharmacy Daily has teamed up with **Kiddie Concepts** this week and is giving five lucky readers the chance to win an **Adaptable Kiddie bottle**, valued at \$27.95.

Kiddie Concepts, an eco-friendly company based in Melbourne, Australia, has launched its safer, healthier alternative to the plastic children's 'sippy' bottle.

Practical, stylish and safe for kids the Adaptable Kiddie bottle allows you to simply change the top as your child grows. The Adaptable

Kiddie bottle can change from a nipple teat to sippy top (Phillips AVENT™ Sippy Top supplied with bottle) and finally can convert into a sports bottle - the perfect three-in-one bottle!

For more information, visit www.kiddieconcepts.com.au.

To win, simply be the first person to send in the correct answer to the question below to: comp@pharmacydaily.com.au.

What size (ml) is the Kiddie Concepts Bottle?



Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner, **Theresa Ness** from **Goonawarra Pharmacy, VIC**.

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SHPA awards app

THE Society of Hospital Pharmacists Australia (SHPA) awarded the NPS Medicines List iPhone app two awards including Best Paper in IT and Innovation, as well as Best Paper overall, at its national conference held last week. "I'm delighted with the recognition for the NPS Medicines List iPhone app from the pharmacy sector," said NPS clinical adviser Dr Danielle Stowasser, who presented the NPS Medicines List iPhone app paper.

Events 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.

- 20 Nov:** Guild NSW Work Health and QCPP/PPI Requirements, Parramatta - 02 9467 7100.
- 21 Nov:** PSA Gold Coast Evening Lecture, Wound Care Update, 7-8pm, Gold Coast, Qld - Deborah.Stevens@psa.org.au.
- 21 Nov:** Tasmanian Pharmacotherapy Trends, 6.30-8.30pm, for details email - chanelle.rolls@psa.org.au.
- 23 Nov:** Guildcare training (evening), St Leonards, NSW - 02 9467 7100.
- 24 Nov:** Guild NSW workshop, Using Medical Devices, St Leonards, NSW - 02 9467 7100.
- 27 Nov:** Guild NSW, Work Health & QCPP/PPI Requirements, Wagga Wagga NSW - 02 9467 7100.
- 27 Nov:** Renal Masterclass workshop, 9.30am-3pm, Hobart, Tasmania, email - lorraine.norris@psa.org.au.
- 24-26 Feb:** Guild Pharmacy Academy, NSW Convention; Novotel Manly Pacific- for info call Rob 02 9467 7100.

Pharmacists help hay fever

PHARMACISTS are playing an increasingly integral role in helping patients with hay fever, with a new report from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) finding that spending on hay fever medications has doubled between 2001 and 2010 from \$107.8m to \$226.8m per year.

"Identifying the triggers for hay fever is often a key to better managing it, and while pharmacists can help patients in this regard, they can also advise on the best medicines to treat their condition," said National President of the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia, Grant Kardachi.

"This can include preventive measures such as advising patients to take their medicines the night before forecast high-risk days," Kardachi added.

According to AIHW report, around 3.1 million Australians, or 15% of the population, suffer from hay fever, making it one of the most common chronic respiratory conditions in Australia.

The majority of sufferers are aged between 25 and 44 years, whilst those aged between 0-14 and 65-74 are the least likely to suffer from the condition.

Interestingly, the report also found that the condition is slightly

more prevalent in women than in men, and that the ACT and WA have the highest rates of sufferers, whilst NSW and Qld have the lowest.

The most popular medications for treatment of hay fever, according to the report, are intranasal corticosteroids (nasal sprays) and oral antihistamines.

Meanwhile, the report's authors attribute the doubling in medication spending to an increase in condition treatment, rather than an increase in sufferers.

In response to these figures the PSA said that whilst pharmacists can advise on suitable antihistamines as well as other treatment options such as nasal sprays and eye drops for more severe cases, they can also provide more detailed information on how to best manage their condition through the PSA Self Care Hay Fever Fact Card.

"This very informative Fact Card gives consumers tips and hints as well as explaining hay fever so sufferers can fully understand it and take appropriate steps to manage it," Kardachi said.

"Hay fever sufferers should speak to their pharmacist who will provide advice and refer them to their doctor when necessary," he added.

A charitable golfing day away from the office



PHARMACISTS and industry members came together for a day on the green earlier this month, as part of the NSW Chemists Golf Day, to raise much needed funds for the Burns Unit at Concord Hospital.

Held at one of Sydney's most prestigious golf clubs, Concord was in perfect condition with 108 people tee-ing off.

Major sponsors of the day included Dr Reddy's Laboratories Australia and Lynette Brown Accountants, who together with the golfers helped to raise over \$16,000.

The latest golf fundraising effort brings the total amount raised by NSW Chemists Golf Day for charity to \$96,000 since 2006.

"We are very pleased to donate the money to the Burns Unit at Concord Hospital which has fully funded 12 of the 18 rooms," the golfers said.

Pictured above (from left) is Glenn Ryder, Tony Sellars (Lynette Brown Accountants), Carlyle Fernandez (Dr Reddy's) and pharmacist Greg Hollier.

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PUT away those meds, the key to happiness is...

An Austrian multi-millionaire businessman, Karl Rabeder, who gives talks about contentment, has revealed to media that the secret to his happiness was to give away all of his money.

The 49-year old entrepreneur donated all his money two years ago to a charity which provides small loans to third world citizens to start up businesses.

He now lives on \$1,500 a month, earned through giving talks on his lifestyle change, and is planning to buy a modest house.

"Love, sunshine, fresh air - those are the things that make me happy," he said.

"Having only a little money makes me happier.

"Seeing pictures of me back then as a millionaire, I look so miserable," he added.

DON'T worry about the digestive system, think of how good it will look on a plate.

The uber wealthy who are looking for a new way to impress guests this holiday season are falling over themselves to get their hands on the newest luxury food, British gold cheese.

The Clawson Stilton Gold is crafted using white Stilton mixed with edible gold leaf and gold liquor.

Priced at a mere \$1000 a kilo, \$100 a 100g slice, or \$10 for a wedge on a cracker, the cheese, according to its maker, Long Clawson Dairy, is attracting worldwide attention ranging from oil sheikhs to famous pop stars.

"We're, frankly, amazed that word has leaked out and we're being contacted by some very important and well-heeled people about the cheese," said a spokesperson from the dairy.

"It's Britain's blingiest cheese but, judging by the enquiries we've had, I'd say most of it will be leaving the country before Christmas," they added.