

## Generic pricing getting you down?

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### Pharmacy gets funding

THE University of Sydney has announced three research projects led by staff at the Faculty of Pharmacy and involving asthma, cancer and drug therapy and have been awarded National Health and Medical Research Council grants.

The first project titled 'Pharmacological development of synthetic analogues of cytochrome P450-mediated omega-3 fatty acid epoxides as novel anti-metastatic agents' has been awarded \$835,860; whilst the second 'Novel strategies to boost tristetraprolin function: a critical anti-inflammatory protein in asthma' has received \$528,675.

The third project, titled 'Novel cellular trafficking mechanisms for the drug influx transporter, human Organic Anion Transporting Polypeptide 1A2 (OATP1A2)' has been granted \$326,175.

## Calls for end to Guild's reign

FEDERAL Health Minister Nicola Roxon has found herself in the midst of a power struggle, after the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia, the Consumer Health Forum and APESMA launched joint action calling for an end to the Pharmacy Guild of Australia's exclusive Community Pharmacy Agreement negotiations.

Reported in today's *Sydney Morning Herald*, APESMA supported the calls by commissioning an Essential Research poll which looked at the responses of 1,038 Aussies in regards to the deals between the Pharmacy Guild of Australia and drug companies.

According to the poll results, 30% of respondents said they have heard of the deal, 62% of which said the deals reduced their trust in pharmacists.

"We are outraged that the Pharmacy Guild and drug companies, motivated by profits, have caused unprecedented damage to the pharmacy profession," said Chris Walton, CEO of APESMA.

In the letter penned by the coalition to Roxon, the trio said called the exclusive negotiations "absurd", adding that the Guild "only represents pharmacy owners, and is the organisation responsible for recent controversies which have damaged the reputation of Australian pharmacists".

In addition, Carol Bennett from the Consumer Health Forum told reporters from the *Sydney Morning Herald* that the public should know where the 5CPA's \$15 billion in funding is spent.

"Unfortunately we currently do not know what is in the agreement, we do not fully monitor how the \$15 billion is spent, and we do not measure its effectiveness in terms of real health outcomes," she said.

MEANWHILE the Pharmacy Guild has responded to the action saying it is "perplexing that the Consumers Health Forum would assert that 'we currently do not know what is in the Agreement' as the Agreement is a public document, "and there is no lack of accountability and independent evaluation of the effectiveness of its provisions".

"The Pharmacy Guild continues to work hard to maintain the trust the community places in pharmacists," the Guild said.

"The only people talking down the trust put in pharmacists is APESMA, which partly explains why the union has a small and dwindling membership," the Guild added.

The Guild also defended itself saying that in the Community Pharmacy Agreement negotiations it represents the overwhelming majority of community pharmacy owners.

"As an industry, community pharmacy brings over 5,000 critical pieces of health infrastructure to the table," the Guild said.

"With such a huge investment in their custodianship of the PBS, it is only appropriate that community pharmacists be able to negotiate the ongoing sustainability and viability of their businesses directly with the Government," the Guild added.

### Avastin alterations

THE US Food and Drug Authority has revoked Avastin's breast cancer indication, saying it has not been shown to be safe and effective for that use.

"After reviewing the available studies it is clear that women who take Avastin for metastatic breast cancer risk potentially life-threatening side effects without proof that the use of Avastin will provide a benefit, in terms of delay in tumor growth, that would justify those risks," the FDA said.

"Nor is there evidence that use of Avastin will either help them live longer or improve their quality of life," the FDA added.

The agency has however allayed concerns, saying the drug will still remain on the market as an approved treatment for certain types of colon, lung, kidney and brain cancer (glioblastoma multiforme).

### Qld pharmacy dicipline

QUEENSLAND pharmacist, Simon Booy has been ordered to complete an ethical decision making course and 12 months of mentoring after a Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal found he wrongfully dispensed steroids and supplied himself with restricted medications.

According to reports Booy supplied a customer with 168 Deca-Durabolin, 54 Primoteston Depo, 309 Sustanon and 20 Reandron phials over a 14 month period between June 2008 and August 2009, as per prescriptions from Dr Peter Grant.

Booy did raise concerns with Grant over prescriptions, however he continued to supply the medications until August 2009.

"Unfortunately, those steps proved inadequate," said Judge Fleur Kingston.

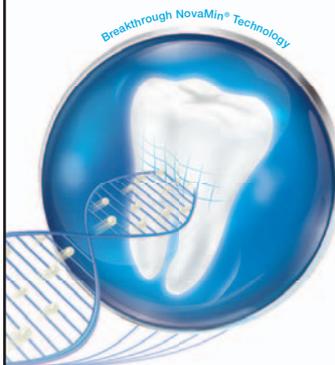
Booy was also found to have supplied himself with restricted drugs including Omepral and Somac, for which he later obtained medical authorisation.

"At the time, he was a junior pharmacist who had a high level of responsibility and, it seems, he was not well equipped to discharge it," Kingston said.

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### Weekly Comment

Welcome to *Pharmacy Daily's* weekly comment feature. This week's contributor is **Darren Dye** from **Pharmacy Alliance**.



#### Changing The Mix

With 01 April fast approaching, all pharmacies need to explore and exploit all opportunities to grow the total business.

It is now more critical than ever to look at your mix of business ratio. Is your pharmacy a 90/10 split? (90% dispensary, 10% front of shop).

The opportunity for pharmacy is to change your mix of business ratio, whilst still growing your dispensary.

If you are a current 90/10, the challenge to you and your staff is to change your mix of business and move your ratio to 85/15.

The four key consumer drivers in order of importance are: Convenience, Range, Service and Price

It is business critical that you understand these key consumer drivers and evaluate your business to understand them and maximise your opportunity.

Convenience: This is not made up of location alone, although this is a major part of it.

How is your parking? How is the internal layout of your store?

Is it the traffic flow for your customers such, that they will have an enjoyable shopping experience?

Range: This is the single biggest opportunity for a pharmacy to gain incremental sales.

New products excite consumers, and if merchandised and ticketed well, new lines will always sell.

The hidden opportunity with new lines is, every time that you bring a new line into your business, this is an opportunity to review your existing range and remove dead stock. Dead stock is a sales killer as it is sitting in the place of something that should be selling.

Service: It goes without saying, to ensure that your customers have a good experience your staff need to be friendly, approachable and knowledgeable.

Price: Notice how price is the fourth most important consumer driver? Whilst it is absolutely fundamental to have a strong pricing strategy, this is NOT the most important to your customers.

If you maximise the four key consumers drivers, convenience, range, service and price, you will go a long way to changing your mix of business.

## Atrial fibrillation on the rise

**INCIDENTS** of the most common cardiac arrhythmia, Atrial fibrillation (AF), are on the rise in Australia, according to the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine (ACEM).

The comment comes on the back of a presentation today on the latest AF information by Professor Ben Freedman, Professor of Cardiology at Concord Hospital, and Deputy Dean of Sydney Medical School, at the annual scientific meeting of the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine.

According to ACEM, AF currently affects around 1% of the population, and more Australians are hospitalised as a result of the condition than for stroke or heart failure.

The rise in incidents of AF in the population is in large part being attributed to the aging population, with over half of all sufferers aged over 75 years, and around 10% of all people over 80 suffering from AF.

Another major contributing

factor to the condition in younger people, is increasing rates of obesity and a reduction in levels of physical activity.

According to ACEM many more Australians may suffer from AF than are currently diagnosed, with research indicating that one in 200 relatively fit people who have an ECG as a check prior to operation will have AF and be completely unaware.

ACEM also warned that AF sufferers are three times more likely to have heart failure, and have a higher overall mortality (up to 90%).

Sufferers of AF are also up to seven times more likely to suffer a stroke than the general population.

In addition, drugs to help prevent stroke in AF sufferers including Warfarin and newer blood thinners are often underused in sufferers because of fears about haemorrhage, according to ACEM.

### WIN A BOTANI PACK



This week **Botani** brings five *Pharmacy Daily* readers a special prize pack for Christmas 2011 to reawaken their skin radiance – Sensational Skin Hydration Pack, valued at \$70.

“True hydration and nourishment for the whole body is made possible with this deeply penetrating and versatile skin hydration pack for the face, hands and body. Whether you're experiencing dry, sensitive skin or

wanting to enhance your overall skin health, your skin will appreciate the Botani difference.

This pack contains the Olive Hand Cream 100g, Olive Skin Serum 15mL & Olive Cleansing Bar 125g.”

To win this fabulous skin hydration pack, simply be the first person to send in the correct answer to the question below:

**What is the name of the main active ingredient in the Olive Skin Serum?**

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

Hint: Visit [www.botani.com.au/arrow](http://www.botani.com.au/arrow)

### DISPENSARY CORNER

**OBESE** pants come in handy.

A giant pair of pink underwear helped one group of record-wannabe's score themselves a place in the annals of Guinness World Records history, as the largest group to fit into a pair of pants.

The attempt was just one of many held across the world last week to celebrate Guinness World Records Day.

Other attempts included the most people to dress as leprechauns with 262 people donning costumes, and a world record race between the fastest toilet, the smallest roadworthy car and the fastest mobility scooter.

One man even dressed in protective clothing and ran 120 metres on fire to pick up the title for the longest distance full-body burn without oxygen.

**A USE** for discarded hair.

Have you ever wanted to do something useful with the hair caught in your hair brush? No?

Well one UK dressmaker, Thelma Madine, decided to make the most of unwanted hair by crafting a dress made entirely of human hair.

It took 250 metres of human hair, swept up from the floor of the Voodoo hair salon in Liverpool, Britain, as well as eight designers and 300 man hours to craft the colourful gown which weighs a whopping 95kgs.

“It's something that we've been thinking about designing for a while as it's just so different,” said one of the design team.

In addition to 250 metres of human hair, the dress also contains 1500 crystals and 12 underskirts.



Stuck for something to wear to the work Christmas party?