

New board members

STEPHEN Marty has been reappointed as chairman of the Pharmacy Board of Australia, with the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council naming a new board after advertising for prospective members of the ten national health practitioner boards earlier this year (**PD** 12 Feb).

Across the professions a total of 274 individuals applied for appointment or reappointment to 105 vacancies, with about 90% of the inaugural national board members seeking to stay on for another three year term.

As well as Marty, Pharmacy Board reappointments include practitioner members William Kelly (ACT), Rachel Carr (WA), Trevor Draysey (SA), Gerard McInerney (NSW), Bhavini Patel (NT) and Ian Huett (Tasmania).

The only new pharmacist member of the board is Brett Simmonds from Queensland.

Karen O'Keefe and John Finlay were reappointed as community members of the board, along with new appointee Katie Sloper.

Adverse events now online

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration has launched a new online database covering adverse medicines events which have been reported since 1971.

The information includes reports about prescription medicines as well as OTC and complementary products, and currently contains around 251,000 adverse events reported by consumers, health professionals and industry.

Just last year the TGA received more than 14,000 adverse event reports.

"This is a great advance in transparency by Australia's medicines regulator," said Parliamentary Secretary for Health and Ageing, Catherine King.

However she urged consumers to understand that the details on the database are not necessarily an indication of effectiveness.

"The data should not influence a person's decision to stop taking a medicine - it is simply meant to give consumers additional information that they can discuss with their

healthcare professional if they have any concerns," she said.

The database is searchable by medicine name and covers commonly reported adverse events as well as de-identified patient reports, including information on other medicines they were taking at the time of the event and the reactions they experienced.

The TGA has developed the new resource together with NZ regulator Medsafe, as part of the staged implementation of the Australia New Zealand Therapeutic Products Agency.

See tga.gov.au/safety/daen.htm.

MEANWHILE the TGA has released a new edition of its Medicines Safety Update, covering a range of issues including accidental paracetamol poisoning which can sometimes occur at therapeutic doses.

There's also coverage of new Product Information for strontium ranelate (Protos), covering the risks of venous thromboembolism and serious skin reactions.

Altrazeal launch

A NEW wound care product is set to debut in Australia, distributed by a company headed up by former Novogen gm Craig Kearney.

US wound management specialist Uluru Inc yesterday announced the first Australian shipment of its Altrazeal, which is described as "incorporating the features and benefits of the desired 'ideal' wound dressing".

An extensive pre-marketing program has already been locally conducted, and initial customers already include a "significant state government contract".

Altrazeal will be launched in a two gram pouch for the private market, followed by a 0.75 gram blister pack which is considered the most commonly used dosage form.

Uluru said that Altrazeal has been "widely sampled to the key medical centres for use by the leading wound care opinion leaders," with clinical results achieved (significantly faster treatment of slow healing wounds) creating strong support from stakeholders incl academic groups and nurses.

August **MIMS** Monthly Medicine Update

NEW PRODUCTS

Victoza (**liraglutide (rys)**) is a human glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) analogue that binds to and activates the GLP-1 receptor. Liraglutide stimulates insulin secretion in a glucose dependent manner and improves beta-cell function. Simultaneously, liraglutide lowers inappropriately high glucagon secretion, also in a glucose-dependent manner. Thus, when blood glucose is high, insulin secretion is stimulated and glucagon secretion is inhibited. Conversely, during hypoglycaemia liraglutide diminishes insulin secretion and does not impair glucagon secretion. Victoza is indicated as an adjunct to diet and exercise for treatment of adults with type 2 diabetes mellitus to achieve glycaemic control in dual combination, added to metformin or a sulfonylurea, in patients with insufficient glycaemic control despite the

use of maximally tolerated or clinically adequate doses of metformin or sulfonylurea monotherapy. Victoza is also indicated in triple combination, added to metformin and a sulfonylurea in patients with insufficient glycaemic control despite dual therapy. Victoza is contraindicated in patients with a past history of GLP-1 analogue associated pancreatitis. Victoza is administered once daily at any time, independent of meals. Victoza is available as a prefilled multidose disposable pen containing 3 mL solution, delivering 30 doses of 0.6 mg, 15 doses of 1.2 mg or 10 doses of 1.8 mg, respectively, in packs of 1 or 2 pens.

Volulyte 6% (**hydroxyethyl starch 130/0.4 in a balanced electrolyte solution**) is a derivative of amylopectin, which is a highly branched compound of starch. Volulyte

is an artificial colloid for volume replacement whose effect in intravascular volume expansion and haemodilution depends on the molar substitution by hydroxyethyl groups (0.4), the mean molecular weight (130,000 Da), the concentration (6%), as well as the dosage and infusion rate. Volulyte is indicated for the therapy and prophylaxis of hypovolaemia. It is also indicated in the maintenance of adequate circulating blood volume during surgical procedures. Volulyte is contraindicated in fluid overload (hyperhydration), especially in cases of pulmonary oedema and congestive cardiac failure; intracranial bleeding; renal failure with oliguria or anuria not related to hypovolaemia and in patients receiving dialysis treatment. Volulyte is available as 500 mL solution in a carton of 20 Freeflex bags.

Zelboraf (**vemurafenib**) is a protein kinase inhibitor, selective for the activating mutation of the oncogenic BRAF serine threonine kinase enzyme. Some mutations in the BRAF gene result in constitutively activated BRAF kinases, which can cause cell proliferation in the absence of growth factors that would normally be required for proliferation. Vemurafenib had antitumour effects in xenograft models of melanomas with mutated BRAF V600E. Zelboraf is indicated for the treatment of unresectable stage IIIC or stage IV metastatic melanoma positive for a BRAF V600 mutation. The recommended dose of Zelboraf is 960 mg (four 240 mg tablets) twice daily. Zelboraf is available as 240 mg tablets in packs of 56.

NEW INDICATIONS

Remicade (**infliximab**) is now indicated for the treatment of moderately severe to severe active ulcerative colitis in adults, children and adolescents (6 to 17 years) who have had an inadequate response to conventional therapy.

SAFETY RELATED CHANGES

Primoteston (**testosterone enanthate**) is now contraindicated in hypercalcaemia accompanying malignant tumours.

This list is a summary of only some of the changes that have occurred over the last month. Before prescribing, always refer to the full product information.

Travel Specials

WELCOME to *Pharmacy Daily's* travel feature. Each week we highlight a couple of great travel deals for the pharmacy industry, brought to you by **Cruise Weekly**.

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VALUE Tours is making an NZ ski trip even more affordable, with a seven-night deal at Clarion Highview Apartments in Queenstown.

The land-only package is priced from \$899pp and includes seven-nights accommodation, seven-days car hire, a five-day liftpass and a Queenstown Action Discount Pack.

The deal is valid for travel until 04 October - call 1300 361 322.

INSIGHT Vacations has created a special UK/Europe tour to coincide with the the centenary of the iconic global gardening event, the Chelsea Flower Show in May next year.

As well tickets to the show and 16 nights of first class hotel accommodation the tour visits iconic attractions in France, Switzerland, Italy and Germany.

It's priced from \$5,622pp and also features luxury coach transport, many meals and airport transfers.

See www.insightvacations.com.

SWAN Hellenic Cruises is offering special fares on board the newly refurbished 350-passenger *Minerva* which offers an "English country house experience" at sea.

A range of cruises departing Sep 2012-May 2013 are on offer in Europe, the Middle East and Asia, and prices include all tips and shore excursions.

A 30-day Athens-Dubai cruise starts at \$4110 - 02 9959 1382.

Getting aggressive on lipids

THE Heart Foundation has set new cholesterol targets for heart attack survivors, with desired LDL levels of less than 1.8 mmol/L to "reflect the high risk of further events in these patients".

The foundation's Clinical Issues Director, Dr Robert Grenfell, said the new targets are not for healthy Australians, but specifically for those with established heart disease.

The guidelines also include a new goal for non-high-density lipoprotein cholesterol (NHDLC) which should be less than 2.5 mmol/L because this is "likely to be a more accurate measure of bad cholesterol".

NHDLC may also be a better measure for diabetics, who often have high triglyceride levels.

The revised targets are outlined in the Heart Foundation's 2012 edition of *Reducing risk in heart disease - an expert guide to clinical practice for secondary prevention of coronary heart disease*.

"We believe up to 80% of deaths

from coronary heart disease could be prevented if evidence-based treatment and management was more widely implemented and adhered to," Grenfell added.

The high risk patient targets also include HDL-C of greater than 1.0 mmol/L, and triglycerides of less than 2 mmol/L.

New BP website

THE UK Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency has launched a new British Pharmacopoeia website, where subscribers are able to access new and revised monographs, monographs omitted from previous editions of the BP and typical chromatograms published in the hard copy version.

"It is anticipated the new site will make a significant contribution to improving communication with stakeholders," the MHRA said.

See www.pharmacopoeia.gov.uk.

DISPENSARY CORNER

YOU'VE heard of bird flu and swine flu - but the latest potential for pandemic panic comes from harbour seals.

Scientists in the USA have identified a new influenza strain which they say could potentially impact human health.

Seal flu is manifested by the so-called H3N8 flu virus, which the researchers say possibly evolved from migratory birds.

Professor Ian Lipkin from Columbia University was part of the team which made the discovery when investigating the mysterious pneumonia-related death of 162 seals off the coast of New England last year.

JAPANESE women are dying younger, with Hong Kong females now outstripping their Japanese counterparts in terms of longevity for the first time in 25 years.

In an annual report issued by the Japanese health ministry, the expected lifespan for Japanese women has dropped from 86.3 years in 2010 to 85.9 years in 2011 - slipping behind the official life expectancy in Hong Kong where women live 86.7 years.

The major factor in the change is last year's devastating earthquake and tsunami which left more than 20,000 dead.

However a rising suicide rate in Japan also contributed to the life expectancy decline.

THESE Snickers wouldn't really satisfy - at least in the traditional chocolatey, nutty sense.

A US man is facing drug charges after being caught allegedly trying to smuggle about 2kg of methamphetamine - disguised as several dozen Snickers bars.

The 34-year-old was intercepted at Los Angeles Airport trying to board a flight to Tokyo, after federal agents conducting routine baggage inspections found 45 Snickers in his bag - coated in chocolate but with a tasty centre of illicit narcotics.

WIN A KISS AND TELL PACK



This week *Pharmacy Daily* is giving 10 lucky readers the chance to win a Kiss and Tell pack, courtesy of **Designer Brands**.

Kissable lips is the promise from Designer Brand's Kiss and Tell Collection, it features:

- Eternal Colour Lipstick: Rich, full coverage lipstick, the Vitamin E based formula locks in colour that lasts, and glides onto lips for a perfect pout.
- Chubby Lipstick Crayon: The creamy coverage of lipstick in the form of a wind up pencil. Loaded with Cocoa Butter and Vitamin E, it is just what lips need to feel soft and smooth.
- Lip & Cheek Rouge gives flirty flush power to cheeks and helps create beautiful pout-worthy lips and comes with a FREE Lip Brush.

Purchase any 3 products from the Kiss & Tell Collection and receive a FREE Cosmetic Bag. Visit www.dbcosmetics.com.au.

For your chance to win this great prize pack, simply be the first person to send in the correct answer to the daily question below.

Is the Eternal Colour Lipstick long lasting?

Send your answer to: comp@pharmacydaily.com.au

Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winners, **Jossie Beare** from **Blooms the Chemist Kingaroy** and **Michelle Scarano** of **Amcal North Balwyn Pharmacy**.