



Reducing fall risk

INCORPORATING balance and strength training into everyday routines could cut the risk of falls in older Australians by nearly one third, according to new research from the University of Sydney.

The study, published in the *British Medical Journal* and authored by researchers at the University's Faculty of Health Sciences, recruited 317 men and women over the age of 70 living in the community who had experienced two or more falls, or one injurious fall, in the past year.

The group was split into a LIFE group who had balance and lower limb strength training incorporated into their daily routines (such as climbing stairs, stepping over objects, and moving from sitting to standing); and a control group who performed a structured exercise program three times a week using ankle cuff weights.

The two groups were then asked to record any falls over twelve months using daily calendars, and also had their static and dynamic balance, ankle, knee and hip strength, daily living activities, and quality of life measured using recognised scales.

According to the results of the exercise programs, those in the LIFE group experienced a significant 31 percent reduction in the rate of falls compared with participants in the control group.

LIFE participants also showed improvements in both static and dynamic balance, ankle strength, and in function and participation in daily life.

“The LIFE program provides an alternative for older people at risk of falls to traditional exercise programs, and it could work better for many people,” said Professor Lindy Clemson, lead author of the study.

“LIFE gives participants more energy to do tasks, improves function during activities and enhances participation in daily life.

“In a modern world that increasingly relies on automation and doing less, the LIFE program offers some much-needed challenge and complexity,” Professor Clemson added.

Are biologics the future?

THE next frontier in medicine may be biologic drugs, according to Medicines Australia Chief Executive Dr Brendan Shaw.

The comments follow the launch of a publication by the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers & Associations titled *Biotherapeutic Medicines: Grasping the New Generation of Treatments*, which highlights the dramatic increase in treatment options resulting from the development of biologic medicines.

“Biologic medicines and vaccines represent the cutting edge of medicine and have the potential to deliver the most effective means of treating and diagnosing some of humanity's most appalling diseases,” said Shaw.

“Over 250 innovative human-use biologics have been approved since 1990 and more than 900 are currently under development globally, targeting diseases such as cancer, AIDS, arthritis, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's,” he added.

Moving forward Shaw said that biologic medicines could represent the answer to previously untreatable illnesses.

MEANWHILE Shaw used the opportunity to call for Australian policy makers to institute sound intellectual property policy and specific regulatory standards that would cover the increasing prevalence of biological treatments.

“Biologics are more complex and costly to produce than chemical medicines,” Shaw said.

“The level of testing and clinical studies required to compare the effectiveness of different biologic medicines presents regulators in Australia and elsewhere with a new set of challenges.

“Biologic medicines and their generic copies, called biosimilars, are often not interchangeable with each other in the same way that chemical-based medicines are, so regulatory approval systems need to evolve to cope with evaluating such medicines,” he added.

Shaw also addressed the issue of intellectual property protection regarding biologics, saying it is

“another crucial policy element as it underpins further research and development of biologic medicines and ensures Australians have access to these medicines as soon as they become available”.

“This includes assurances that policies on things like patents and clinical trial data are up-to-date with the requirements of biologics medicines,” he added.

Rural scholarship

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia has announced the 41 recipients of the Rural Pharmacy Scholarships for 2012.

Each recipient will receive up to \$10,000 a year for up to four years of study at university to help cover the costs of studying away from home.

Scholarship recipients will also participate in a mentor program designed to reinforce ties to rural and regional Australia.

Scholarship recipients include: Alexander McNamara, Jack Collins and Jack Donovan from the University of Sydney; Caitlin Landwehr and Rebecca Res from Curtin University; Amy Scott, Elizabeth Telford and Jessica Dayment from Monash University; Sian Halpin from the University of Technology Sydney; Abbey Dixon and Annie Sharp from Latrobe University; Aimee Lynch, Elizabeth Friend, Maryann Douglas, Pieternella Van Eerden and Victoria Earnshaw from the University of New England.

Other scholar recipients include: Annika Rookyard, David Phelps, Georgia Woodhouse, Hannah Knowles, Jemma White, Leah Davidson, Matthew Tom, Nathan Sergi, Rebecca Clauss, Robert Baun, Shannon Hurley, Thomas McCalman and Warwick Smith from Charles Sturt University; Danielle Silvestro, Philip Duffy, Rebecca Butler, Ruben Dunk, Sarah Miller and Tayler Macmillan from James Cook University; Gemma Ferrier, Karly Scott, Mitchell Rigby from University of Qld; Kieran Thillon from Qld University of Technology; Liam Beattie from University of Tasmania; and Tran Dang from Charles Darwin University.

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.

- 11-15 Aug:** Medici Capital Pharmacy Snow Business Mt Buller - www.medici.com.au.
- 18 Aug:** Mental Health First Aid, 9am-1pm, Sydney, beryl.park@psa.org.au.
- 19 Aug:** Regional Seminar Series Lismore: Sad Blokes- Understanding Men and Depression, 9.30am-3.30pm, Lismore, www.psa.org.au.
- 25-26 Aug:** PSA Adventure Education Weekend, Stewarts Bay Lodhe, Port Arthur - lorraine.norris@psa.org.au.
- 26 Aug:** PSA Qld Branch Medicines Update 2012, Pharmacy Australia Centre of Excellence Building, Dutton Park, Brisbane- 07 3896 1900.
- 29 Aug:** HMR Accredited Pharmacist's Workshop: Guild Training Victoria, Hawthorn, Victoria, 6-10pm Kate.castle@vic.guild.org.au.
- 03-05 Sep:** Essential Pharmacy Financial Management 3-day Workshop, Sydney, fmrcbusdev.com.au/pharmacy-2
- 13-16 Sep:** Pharmacy Business Network, National Convention Centre Canberra, pharmacybusinessnetwork.com.
- 15-16 Sep:** PSA Qld Sunshine Weekend, Sea World Resort, Gold Coast, Queensland, educationqld@psa.org.au.
- 02-06 Oct:** Pharmacy Guild of Australia Offshore Conference 2012, Waikiki, Hawaii - pgahawaii2012@arinex.com.au.
- 19-21 Oct:** PSA Pharmacy Australia Congress, Melbourne Convention Exhibition Centre - www.psa.org.au/pac.
- 01-04 Nov:** SHPA 38th annual conference - Medicines Management 2012, Canberra - mm2012shpa.com.

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Pfizer faces fine

PFIZER and its subsidiary Wyeth are set to pay a whopping US\$60.2 million dollars in fines after US officials brought charges of bribery against the pharmaceutical giant.

As part of the settlement Pfizer will pay US\$15 million to the Justice Department, and US\$26.3 to the US Securities and Exchange Commission, whilst Wyeth will pay US\$18.8m.

The case surrounds allegations by the two US authorities that Pfizer bribed officials and healthcare professionals in China, Croatia, Bulgaria, Italy, Kazakhstan, Czech Republic, Serbia and Russia, with cash and perks in exchange for favouring and prescribing its drugs between 2001 and 2007.

These bribes were in direct violation of the US Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, and included inducements such as mobile phones, cash and international trips.

"Pfizer subsidiaries in several countries had bribery so entwined in their sales culture that they offered points and bonus programs to improperly reward foreign officials who proved to be their best customers," said the SEC's Kara Brockmeyer.

"These charges illustrate the pitfalls that exist for companies that fail to appropriately monitor potential risks in their global operations," she added.

Meanwhile authorities and Pfizer stressed that the manufacturer had been cooperating with Government since 2004 by reporting its own misconduct to investigators, as well as informing them of industry marketing practices overseas.

"The actions which led to this resolution were disappointing, but the openness and speed with which Pfizer voluntarily disclosed and addressed them reflects our true culture and the real value we place on integrity and meeting commitments," Pfizer spokesperson Amy Schulman.

"We expect every colleague across Pfizer to adhere to the highest standards of conduct, and we will continue to hold ourselves and our colleagues accountable for maintaining these standards" she added.

Migraines and mental decline

A **NEW** study is calling into question the link between migraine and cognitive decline, with researchers revealing their findings showed that migraine status does not correlate with faster rates of cognitive decline.

The research, published in the *British Medical Journal*, looked at 6,349 women aged 65 or older who were assessed for their migraine status at the start of the study, and then grouped into four groups: no history of migraine, migraine with aura, migraine without aura, and past history of migraine (reports of migraine history but no migraine in the year prior to baseline).

The researchers then followed the women up with cognitive testing at two year intervals up to three times.

Interestingly the researchers found that the women who experienced migraines with or without auras, or who had a past

history of migraines did not have significantly different rates of cognitive decline in any of the cognitive scores.

In addition, the researchers found that participants who experienced migraines were also not at increased risk of substantial cognitive decline.

The results sit in contrast to past studies which associated migraines with an increased prevalence of clinically silently brain lesions - which are a risk factor for dementia and cognitive decline.

Nurofen advertising

RECKITT Benckiser has moved to clarify the murky waters surrounding the advertising complaint against Nurofen (*PD yest*) saying that it ceased airing the LiveWell advertisement and the claim "goes straight to the source of pain" subject to the CRP challenge in July last year.



DISPENSARY CORNER

ENGINEERING fail.

A section of the World Heritage Listed Great Wall of China has succumbed not to the slow ebb of the ages, but rather to the jarring march of progress.

The 100-foot section running through Zhangjiakou in Hebei province collapsed after workmen dug up a city square that sat in front of it.

City officials have however taken the collapse in their stride, with one official telling media that "The wall has constantly been rebuilt and repaired throughout history. Like any building project, some work lasts longer than others".

WATCHING age-appropriate TV will help kids sleep.

Researchers from the Children's Research Institute in Seattle have found that children who swapped out age-inappropriate television for age-appropriate programs experienced "long-lasting, significant reductions in sleep problems".

Interestingly during the 12-month study of 3 to 5 year old children, the researchers did not cut down the hours the kids spent watching TV but rather simply swapped the content.

The inappropriate viewing, according to researchers, was not M rated TV, but rather cartoons and shows aimed at older children, such as Scooby-Doo and SpongeBob.

"The fact that Bugs Bunny can be too violent for a 3-year-old is not something that always clicks with some families," said study lead author Michelle Garrison.

Nearly 600 families participated in the research, half of which were used as a control group, and the other half were instructed to watch age-appropriate TV and DVDs, with parents encouraged to watch the programs with their children then engage in discussions with the children to help them process what they viewed.

WIN A EUKY BEAR PACK



Every day this week, **Pharmacy Daily** is giving one lucky reader the chance to win a Euky Bear Pack, valued at \$50, courtesy of **FGB Natural Products**.

Each pack contains a Euky Bearub, Euky Bear Thermometer, Koala Soft Toy and Information Guide.

Euky Bear to the rescue!
Little noses blocked?
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way to provide some relief to your sniffling tot, with Euky Bearub! This fast acting, gentle and naturally soothing Australian Eucalyptus chest rub helps to relieve a sore throat, clear a stuffy nose and soothe irritating chesty coughs.

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Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner **Thea van Heerden**, from **Crossmark Pharmacy**.