



NRT confidence

THE Australian Self-Medication Industry has defended nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) saying it remains a proven effective therapy in helping smokers to quit.

The comments come in the wake of a study published in *Tobacco Control*, by researchers at Harvard School of Public Health, which found that NRT's were not effective in helping smokers quit long-term.

The study followed around 800 smokers who had quit over a period of five years, and asked them to complete surveys over three time periods: 2001-2002, 2003-2004, and 2005-2006.

According to the survey responses for each time period, one-third of smokers relapsed, with researchers finding that there was no difference in relapse rate among those who used NRT for more than six weeks, with or without professional counseling.

ASMI has however hit out at the findings saying "the author of the Harvard study notes that his own survey findings contrast with the results of clinical studies which have demonstrated NRT's success".

In addition ASMI cited the most recent Cochrane review which concluded that NRT almost doubles the success rate of long-term abstinence versus cold turkey.

"NRT is a clinically proven therapy that reduces withdrawal symptoms," an ASMI statement said.

Chemmart continues growth

CHEMMART Pharmacy anticipates that it will be the largest community pharmacy brand in Australia by the end of 2012, according to a company statement.

The prediction follows a year of healthy growth for the company, which saw the brand sign up more than 50 new stores in 2011, and reach its target of 260 stores nationwide.

The Chemmart Pharmacy brand was launched in late 2010 to capitalise on the increasing demand for healthcare services and advice.

"The Chemmart brand is successfully communicating what it stands for to its customers," said Chemmart Executive Director, Jonathan Layton.

"We have positioned Chemmart

as a brand that differentiates by delivering professional health solutions, while still providing an exciting, compelling retail offer.

"As a result, our average store growth is tracking well ahead of other industry players and that's a critical factor in attracting new pharmacists to Chemmart," he added.

Layton attributed part of the brand's success to its "full service franchise model".

"With major and complex changes happening within the industry, pharmacists are looking for a brand that will give them the necessary guidance and support," he said.

"Importantly, the quality of the new members coming on is high.

"They believe in the Chemmart brand and are excited to be part of it," he added.

Corum resolves Westpac loan dispute

PHARMACY software supplier Corum Group yesterday announced the resolution of its long-running battle with Westpac Bank.

Under the terms of the settlement Corum will pay Westpac \$1.2 million as "full and final settlement of Corum's obligations" under a 2007 loan agreement, and Westpac will in turn discharge its charge over Corum's assets.

Corum will also redeem for cash the \$1.85m and interest due on its Convertible Notes which were subordinated by the Note holders in favour of Westpac, and repay the \$1.5m outstanding balance of a loan owed to Lujeta Pty Ltd.

The company said that the funds required to settle the amounts had been generated from the group's operations.

"Corum will then be debt free and its assets will be totally unencumbered," the firm said.

This week Corum also announced the appointment of former NSW govt minister Michael Cleary as an independent non-executive director, and the resignation of Peter Bradfield from its board.

2012 PSA interns

THE Pharmaceutical Society of Australia is reminding students that the closing date for enrollments in its National Intern Training Program (NITP) is 30 January.

The NITP program includes interactive workshops and workplace-based activities, and is designed with a focus on the workplace.

See www.psa.org.au/intern.

Fish oil guidelines

THE TGA has updated the compositional guideline for fish oil-natural, see www.tga.gov.au.

PHARMACY FIRST

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Singleton Pharmacy First is seeking an experienced Pharmacist Manager to lead our team in Singleton NSW.

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Please call 0409 269 676 or submit your application to steve@nmpg.com.au.

VivaGel nod from FDA

STARPHARMA has received Special Protocol Assessment approval from the US Food and Drug Administration for the design of its Phase 3 clinical studies of VivaGel for the treatment of bacterial vaginosis.

Under the Special Protocol Assessment scheme Starpharma's Phase 3 clinical study design, endpoints, statistical analysis and other aspects of the planned studies are acceptable to support regulatory approval for the product.

According to Starpharma the VivaGel is "a gel-based formulation of a nano-pharmaceutical under development as a vaginal microbicide to prevent the transmission of sexually transmitted infections including HIV and genital herpes; and also for the treatment and prevention of bacterial vaginosis".

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Accredited at APP2012

THE AACP Accredited Pharmacists' Forum program to be held at APP2012 will provide information and insight into pathophysiology, therapeutics, practice pointers, business issues and clinical controversies.

Designed for accredited pharmacists, those undergoing accreditation and other interested pharmacists, the program attracts 6 AACP Group 1 CPD credits for attendance or 12 Group 2 CPD credits for attendance and successful completion of the accompanying assessment.

The session will take place on 08 March and costs \$350pp.

See www.appconference.com.

Travel Specials

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

FANCY a break in Bali?

The four-star Centra Taum Seminyak, Bali, is offering special introductory room rate bookings made between now and 05 February for stays between March and the end of June.

The discounted rates start at \$270pp for a seven night stay in a studio room including daily brekkie, for details or to book see www.centarahotelsresorts.com.

AZAMARA Club Cruises is celebrating the new year with airfare offers to Europe starting from \$499 when combined with selected *Azamara Journey* and *Azamara Quest* voyages.

The offer includes return economy airfares from \$499 and is valid for new, individual Oceanview stateroom (or higher) bookings made before 31 March -www.azamaracruises.com.

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Cancer drug shortages

THE decision by Ben Venue Laboratories to extend the voluntary suspension of manufacturing at its Bedford Ohio facility may create shortage of the cancer medication Caelyx (doxorubicin) until as late as the fourth quarter this year.

Ben Venue Laboratories is the manufacturing arm of Bedford Laboratories, a Boehringer Ingelheim company, is one of the largest sterile injectable facilities in the world.

The company is also the sole-source manufacturer of J&J's ovarian cancer and multiple myeloma therapy Caelyx, as well as several other medically necessary drugs.

The suspension of operations occurred on 19 November as a result of a joint inspection by the FDA and EMA which found several contamination and quality management issues, and that the facility's equipment was overdue for maintenance and requalification.

The extension of the facility's

shutdown, according to Ben Venue, is now required to address the manufacturing problems and to undertake major reconstruction works.

"Ben Venue is now in a position where it can no longer continue to manufacture and remediate simultaneously and must direct its focus on addressing manufacturing-related issues," the company said in a statement.

The company said that it is in the process of working to restore some manufacturing in the first quarter of 2012, but that reconstruction work may take up to nine months to complete.

"As we address the facility and equipment issues in each factory, we will resume production, likely one line at a time," the company said.

"We anticipate that no products manufactured in the North facility will be available to patients and healthcare professionals before the fourth quarter of 2012," the company added.

WIN A \$50 MANICARE PRIZE PACK

This week *Pharmacy Daily* is giving five lucky readers the chance to win a **Manicare** Prize pack, valued at \$50.

Each pack includes a pack of Mixed Mascara Brushes, a Retractable Foundation Brush, a Retractable Concealer Brush and a Retractable Kabuki Brush.

Create a new look in the blink of an eye with new Manicare Disposable Mascara Brushes. Four handy disposable brushes provide a different lash look so you can maximise your mascara's potential. Blue = Volume; Purple = Define; Red = Curl and Orange = Lengthen. It's all about Va-Va Voom Variety! Duo pack of 10 for \$4.95 & Multi-pack of 20 for \$8.95.

To win, simply send in the correct answer to the question below.

What colour mascara brush creates length?

The first correct entry received wins!

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

Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner, **Bonnie Norman** from **Murray T Martin Pharmacy Mount Gambier**.

DISPENSARY CORNER

94-YEAR and still got it.

A YouTube video posted by 94-year old Stan Thomas, of his grueling workout routine has shamed lazy youth everywhere, and proved that age is no barrier to fitness.

Stan, a former naval officer and later, a pie shop owner, made the video after encouragement from his friends.

The video shows Stan slogging it in his home gym for 50 minutes utilising equipment including a treadmill, crosstrainer, bike, speedball, wall bars, weights, punching bag and rowing machine.

After his bi-weekly training routine, Stan says he has a ten minute sauna, then a shower and then hops into the jacuzzi.

"And then I go into a rest room and I have got a bed with a revolving mattress so I have a massage on my back as I am lying down," he said.

"Every Friday I have a masseuse that comes in and gives me a full body massage," he added.

AND in other feats of physical endurance....

South Korean soldiers have recently been filmed stripping off to undergo training in Arctic conditions.

The video shows male soldiers without their shirts, and female soldiers fully clothed, undergoing rigorous exercises in the snow, including press ups, being covered in snow and wading through icy waters.

NATURAL order?

A Russian zoologist who took a baby chimp home to hand raise it after it was rejected by its mother was shocked when her mastiff adopted the baby as its own.

Now the chimp eats and sleeps with its "mother" in what experts say is a fairly unusual situation as dogs are usually wary of primates due to their tendency for unpredictable behaviour.