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Prostate gene link

A **RARE** genetically inherited gene mutation linked to a significantly higher risk of prostate cancer has been identified by a team of researchers from John Hopkins University School of Medicine and the University of Michigan Health System.

Published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, the study involved around 5,200 men who had been treated for prostate cancer.

Researchers identified a mutation of the HOXB13 gene in around 1.4% of men, the majority of which were much more likely to have at least one first-degree relative who also had been diagnosed.

A control group of 1,400 men without prostate cancer only found one man with the mutation.

"We found that the mutation was significantly more common in men with a family history and early diagnosis compared with men diagnosed later, after age 55, without a family history," said senior author Dr Kathleen Cooney.

"The difference was 3.1 percent versus 0.62 percent," she added.

An antipsychotic balance

THE NPS is encouraging open dialogue between mental health patients and healthcare professionals to ensure right treatment balances are reached.

According to NPS around 4% of Australians will be affected by a mental illness such as schizophrenia or bipolar disorder at some point in their lives, many of which deal with "distressing side effects such as weight gain from the antipsychotic medicines they take".

"While avoiding such side-effects altogether may not be possible, there are ways to make them more manageable," the NPS said.

An honest two-way communication between healthcare professionals and

patients regarding what the medications will do as well as their benefits and potential side effects will, according to the NPS, give patients taking antipsychotic medicines more control over their situation and the ability to work towards the best long term outcomes.

"Achieving this treatment balance requires co-operation," said NPS Clinical Adviser, Dr Danielle Stowasser.

"It often involves trial and error over a period of time," she added.

Patients who monitor the type and severity of their side effects with different medicines, and who then share this information with their healthcare professional, will benefit by finding the right treatment balance, according to NPS Clinical Adviser, Dr Danielle Stowasser.

Birth and baby hotline

SINCE its launch in July 2010, the Pregnancy, Birth and Baby Helpline has advised around 40,000 callers, according to Health Minister Tanya Plibersek.

Last year the highest numbers of hotline users came from NSW (11,824), followed by Vic (8,659), Qld (5,917), SA (5,629), WA (5,371), ACT (1,541), Tas (724) and NT (288).

The Helpline is a 24-hour seven day a week telephone support service providing general info about pregnancy, birthing, post-natal care and parenting in the first 12 months.

With the start of the new year, Plibersek is urging new parents with any questions or concerns to make use of the free service by calling 1800 882 436.

Integrative medicine

GRIFFITH University School of Pharmacy is offering pharmacists the opportunity to attend a workshop on 'integrative medicine for pharmacists' at APP2012.

The workshop runs 11-12 March at Jupiters Hotel Gold Coast, for more information visit www.integratedshortcourses.com.

Stem cells & hearing loss

THE US FDA has approved a Phase I study on the use of cord blood stem cells to treat children with sensorineural hearing loss, to be undertaken at the Children's Memorial Hermann Hospital.

The year long study will follow 10 children aged between six weeks and 18 months who have sustained post-birth hearing loss.

Reserachers will utilise the childrens' own cord blood, and the treatment will involve an IV infusion and follow up tests.

"This study is exciting because it might offer a non-surgical option for some children with profound loss," said project researcher Linda Baumgartner.

"More importantly, this is the first treatment with the potential to restore normal hearing," she added.

Pharmacy Business

THE new Pharmacy Business Network conference will replace the Women and Young Pharmacists' Congress this year, and will be held in Canberra from 13 – 16 September 2012.

The event will feature hands-on workshops, offsite educational excursions as well as presentations from high profile speakers including Canberra Nobel Prize Professor Brian Schmidt.

Key focuses for the event will include: effective business planning, more efficient purchasing, mastering new software solutions, better staff management and creating high value professional services.

The event will also host the finals of the National Student Business Plan Competition.

See www.guild.org.au/pharmacybusiness.

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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.

22 Jan: Brisbane Senior First Aid and CPR Course; PSA Qld Branch Office, Dutton Park, Brisbane; email - educationqld@psa.org.au.

02 Feb: Anaphylaxis Training for Pharmacists, Charles Darwin University, email - sa.branch@psa.org.au.

24-26 Feb: Guild Pharmacy Academy-NSW Convention; Novotel Manly Pacific- see www.guildpharmacyacademy-nswconvention.org.au.

Dispensing with legalities

UK REGULATORS, in conjunction with pharmaceutical organisations, are in the midst of discussions over current regulations that mean a dispensing error could be an act liable for prosecution.

The issue came to the fore following a decriminalisation debate in the House of Lords last month, over a proposed amendment to current regulations which leave pharmacists open to an offence if the sale or supply of a medicinal product does not meet the nature and quality demanded by the purchaser.

"In other words, where it is proved that an offence has been committed, then the person who committed it has no defence, and the person's state of mind at the time the offence was committed is not relevant," a statement from the UK Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) said.

This stipulation, according to the MHRA may also discourage pharmacists from reporting errors.

The amendment however was withdrawn after the debate to allow the Government to consider the issues in more detail.

This month, regulators including the MHRA, UK Health Departments, the Royal Pharmaceutical Society and the General Pharmaceutical Council met to consider the next steps to address prosecution concerns.

The meeting saw the MHRA agree to work with the Govt and interested parties on a program of activity to address these concerns, initially through legislative amendments to introduce the possibility of pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and others affected by the relevant medicines legislation to mount a defence that they had exercised all due diligence to avoid committing the offence.

These amendments would then be followed up by a wider review of sanctions and penalties in medicines legislation to address the underlying issue about the relationship between medicines legislation and professional regulation.

The Government has since committed to "legislate at the earliest opportunity".

Speaking about the outcome, the Royal Pharmaceutical Society said "We now aim to work with the Govt to ensure a speedy resolution to an issue that affects every dispensing pharmacist in the UK".

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DISPENSARY CORNER

COUGH cancer away.

A UK woman, Claire Osborn, recently coughed up a tumor she didn't know she had.

Osborn was driving when she had a coughing fit and expelled a "heart-shaped lump of liver-colored tissue".

Subsequent hospital tests revealed that the lump was in fact metastatic adenocarcinoma - an aggressive form of cancer.

Doctors told Osborn that she had a 50/50 chance of survival and would need chemo and surgery.

Follow-up tests to ascertain how much cancer was left revealed the cancer was gone.

"The consultant turned round to me and said, 'It appears you have coughed up your cancer'," Osborn said.

Speaking about the case, Osborn's surgeon said "We suspect the tumor grew on a stalk at the back of her mouth, somehow she dislodged this and the stalk snapped and she coughed up the tumour".

MILITARY strength protection.

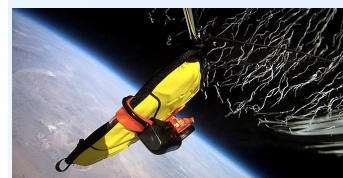
An iPad has survived a 100,000ft drop from space due to a \$4.95 protective case made by US company G-Form.

The drop, was part of a marketing push from the company for the case, which it says is made using military grade ballistic fabric.

The 2 minute and 20 second clip shows the iPad encased in G-Shock's protective case, mounted with a camera to a high-altitude weather balloon and set free to climb into space.

After a while floating in space the balloon bursts sending the iPad, camera and case back down to land in one piece on a rocky patch of the Nevada desert.

To watch the video **CLICK HERE**.



Apple got there first Branson!

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.

How many mascara brushes are in a multi-pack?

The first correct entry received wins!

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

Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner, **Anna Michael** from **APHS Pharmacy Greenslopes**.