



### Guild farewells Young

THE NZ Pharmacy Guild has announced that its Chief Executive Annabel Young has stepped down from her position.

"Now that the Community Pharmacy Services Agreement has been finalised this is the right time to hand over the reins to a new Chief Executive," Young said.

"Pharmacy delivered in a community setting has a strong future and is a vital part of primary health care," she added.

### Mitchell joins Osprey

THE Chief Financial Officer of Australian medical device company, Cochlear, Neville Mitchell, has joined the board of Osprey Medical.

The US based Osprey is a newly listed medical device company whose core product is CINCOR, a protective device for patients undergoing angioplasty or stenting procedures.

Mitchell's association with Osprey will see him serve as an independent director as well as Chair of the company's audit committee.

## GSK faces the regulators

GLAXOSMITHKLINE has pleaded guilty to fraud charges brought against the company by US regulators and has been sentenced to pay US\$3 billion to American authorities.

The settlement has been heralded by the US Justice Department as the largest healthcare fraud settlement in American history.

According to reports, the settlement involves GSK pleading guilty to fraudulent activity involving three of its drugs: the diabetes medication Avandia, and the antidepressants Paxil and Wellbutrin.

The charges were initiated after four former employees of the company blew the whistle on a range of improper activities undertaken by GSK during the 1990's and up until the mid-2000's.

These improper practices included illegally marketing off-label uses for Paxil and Wellbutrin, including promoting the former for use in patients under 18 when it

had not been FDA approved for use in those under 18, and the latter for weight loss, as well as in the treatment of sexual dysfunction, drug addiction and ADHD.

"Glaxo sales representatives sometimes referred to Wellbutrin as the 'happy, horny, skinny pill' as a way to remind doctors of the unapproved uses," the US Government said.

The regulators also charged GSK with helping in the publication of a report which claimed that Paxil aided in the treatment of depression in under 18's, when in fact the trial did not prove any such thing.

GSK was also charged with lavishing doctors with holidays, gifts and spa treatments.

Meanwhile, in relation to Avandia the Justice Department said that GSK failed to inform the FDA of safety data, including two studies which highlighted issues with the drug and cardiovascular health.

Speaking in the wake of the settlement, GSK CEO Andrew Witty tried to separate the company from its past actions, saying "Whilst these originate in a different era for the company, they cannot and will not be ignored".

"On behalf of GSK, I want to express our regret and reiterate that we have learnt from the mistakes that were made," he added.

### QRx will fight for drug

AUSTRALIAN pharmaceutical company QRxPharma has vowed to fight the US Food and Drug Administration's decision not to approve Moxduo.

The painkiller contains both oxycodone and morphine and QRxPharma had hoped to have the drug approved and on the US market by September this year.

Last week's refusal saw almost two thirds of the company's share value wiped off the market, however the company is positive that it can deal with the FDA's concerns in a scheduled meeting now set for August.

Speaking to media QRx's John Holaday said "I'm confident about overcoming this".

### Stilnox solution?

THE NPS is responding to a wave of media reportage of Stilnox sleeping tablet usage in Australian athletes, by reminding the public that there are many non-medicine options available to help those who have trouble sleeping.

"While popping a sleeping pill may seem like an easy option when you're finding it hard to sleep, these medicines can have side effects and consequences with long-term use," NPS said.

"For this reason, non-medicine therapies should always be the first-choice when it comes to treating sleeping problems," NPS added.

NPS also added that whilst sleeping tablets are effective, they do come with the risk of side effects, including dependency issues.

"When a sleeping medicine is prescribed it should be for the shortest duration possible or for intermittent use," NPS said.

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### 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 **Dettol**.

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**CREATIVE** Holidays has launched a three-night Singapore hotel package which includes three nights accommodation at Traders Hotel, complimentary late checkout (until 2pm), return coach airport transfers and a half-day Singapore tour.

The package is priced from \$335 per person.

Meanwhile the company is also offering an eight-night flight and hotel Phuket package from \$1,259 per person.

For more information see [www.creativeholidays.com.au](http://www.creativeholidays.com.au).

**FIESTA** Holidays has released a Free Upgrade and US\$500 Onboard Credit offer for selected 2012 Azamara Club Cruises' European voyages.

The deal includes a 12-night Spain and France voyage departing 20 August, priced from \$4,195 (Oceanview Stateroom upgraded to a Verandah and US\$500 onboard credit).

See [www.fiestaholidays.com.au](http://www.fiestaholidays.com.au).

**SAVINGS** of more than \$1,400 per couple are now available through Bench International on a three night stay at Xakanaxa Camp on the banks of the Khwai River in Botswana's Moremi Game Reserve.

The package is priced from \$2,045pp including return air transfers from Maun and all meals and drinks.

See [benchinternational.com.au](http://benchinternational.com.au).

## Alarming asthma issues

A **NEW** asthma survey has revealed a surprising national shortfall in the awareness of the symptoms of asthma, as well as a worryingly laid-back attitude towards its treatment.

Released to support the launch of a national asthma education program endorsed by National Asthma Council Australia and The Pharmacy Guild of Australia and developed by GSK Australia, called *"There's nothing normal about asthma symptoms,"* the online study involved 1,011 Australian adults aged 18-45 who had been diagnosed with asthma by a doctor.

According to the results, less than half of adults' surveyed believed asthma needed ongoing treatment and 64% were unaware that over time, poorly controlled asthma and repeated attacks have the potential to cause permanent changes to the lungs.

Interestingly, the survey found respondents were more likely to take vitamin supplements than use preventer medication daily (42 per cent and 25 per cent respectively).

Of those that did report using preventer medication (52%) half did not use the medications correctly.

In addition 55% of those using preventer medication said that they didn't think their asthma was serious enough to warrant using it as recommended and 32 per cent believed they controlled their asthma well enough using reliever medication.

Responding to the results Associate Professor Noela Whitby, Chairman, National Asthma Council Australia said "There is an alarming difference between adults' perception of their asthma management and the reality.

"It appears they aren't fully aware of their symptoms and don't register that they shouldn't be just part of having asthma.

"We need to make sure that adults with asthma are managing their asthma well and are able to recognise when their symptoms are getting out of control in order to minimise long-term risks, rather than relying on quick fix relief," she added.

### WIN AN AL'CHEMY PRIZE PACK



This week *Pharmacy Daily* is giving 5 lucky readers the chance to win the full hair care regime from Al'chemy, valued at \$50 each.

Each prize pack includes the Al'chemy Ylang Ylang Shampoo, the Al'chemy Macadamia & Wheat Conditioner and the Al'chemy Lavender & Anthyllis 24 Hour Intensive Moisture Leave-In Conditioner.

Each gentle formulation in the Al'chemy hair care range combines natural botanical ingredients that have been specially selected for purity and effect, giving all skin types, including those with sensitive skin and scalps the care they need with positively radiant, healthy results.

To learn more about Al'chemy, visit [www.purist.com](http://www.purist.com) or join the conversation at [www.facebook.com/alchemybypurist](http://www.facebook.com/alchemybypurist).

For your chance to win the full hair care regime from Al'chemy, simply be the first person to send in the correct answer to the question below.

**Al'chemy has a sister brand, what's the name of the skincare range?**

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

Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner, Emily Keleher from Good Price Pharmacy.

### DISPENSARY CORNER

#### DESERT survival.

If your car ever breaks down in a desert, you could always take some survival tips from Emile Leray, a retired electrician.

Leray was facing a grim future after crashing his car whilst driving across the Moroccan desert, but managed to survive the ordeal by building himself a motorbike out of parts from his crashed car.



### AF iPhone & pharmacy

**RESEARCHERS** at Sydney University are conducting a feasibility study for a program which would see pharmacists use an iPhone ECG app to identify undiagnosed atrial fibrillation.

As part of the study researchers are recruiting 10 pharmacies where staff will undergo training to assess patients' cardiac rhythm using a pulse palpation and iPhones which, utilising the app, turn into a single-lead electrocardiograph (ECG) devices.

Researchers will also recruit 1,000 patients aged 65 and over to undergo the tests.

The primary outcome of the study is the proportion of people newly identified with AF at the completion of the screening program.

Secondary outcomes include level of agreement between the pharmacist's and the cardiologist's interpretation of the single-lead ECG; level of agreement between irregular rhythm identified with pulse palpation and with the single-lead ECG.

"We anticipate that this study will demonstrate that it is possible to identify and treat people in the community who were not previously known to have AF, thus greatly reducing the risk of stroke," the researchers said.