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## CM courses defended

**AN ARTICLE** published today in the *Medical Journal of Australia* strongly defends the teaching of complementary medicine courses in Australian universities.

Professor Stephen Myers, director of the natural medicine research unit at Southern Cross University, has responded to an earlier article on behalf of a group called Friends of Science in Medicine (FSM), which condemned the growth of CM courses in Australian universities.

FSM spokesman Prof Alastair MacLennan from the University of Adelaide said the trend in "pseudo scientific health courses" was undermining the scientific credibility of Australian universities.

However today's article says that removing these courses will not reduce public demand for the sector but could result in a lowering of their educational rigour.

"The real benefit of an appropriately mentored and approved university education is the exposure of students to the biomedical sciences, epidemiology and population health, differential diagnosis, safe practice and clinical appraisal," said Professor Myers.

He said the courses help develop critical thinking and "fulfil the criteria for legitimate university disciplines".

## Atorvastatin 25% price cut

**THE** generics price war is continuing to hot up, with an unnamed atorvastatin sponsor having initiated a 25% price cut on the product effective from the beginning of December.

Both Alphapharm and Ranbaxy have distanced themselves from the move which under the price disclosure arrangements will affect all generic Lipitor suppliers.

Alphapharm issued a statement on Saturday in which it "states categorically that it is not responsible for the price cut."

"Alphapharm is interested to understand the logic and rationale for the cut from the sponsor that initiated it," the company said.

Ranbaxy md Alex Evans has also denied being behind the move, confirming that the Health Department had contacted atorvastatin sponsors late last week to advise them of the move.

"Let me just confirm this is not the work of Ranbaxy and we deplore the further impact this will have on pharmacy margins in 2013," Evans said.

According to the *Pharma in Focus* newsletter other atorvastatin sponsors include Apotex, Ascent, Dr Reddys Laboratories, Generic Health, Pfizer, Sandoz, STADA, Spirit, and Southern Cross Pharma.

AstraZeneca's Crestor (rosuvastatin) will also be impacted because its price is linked to that of the atorvastatin molecule.

## Stent trial proceeding

**REVA** Medical, a dual listed US-Australian research firm, has completed clinical enrolment for a clinical trial of its *ReZolve* drug-eluting bioresorbable scaffold.

26 patients have been enrolled since Dec last year and there are no major adverse coronary events reported to date.

The company anticipates resumption of clinical trials in the fourth quarter of 2012, when patients will be treated with a lower profile *ReZolve2* scaffold which will be evaluated at up to 25 clinical study sites in Brazil, Europe, Australia and New Zealand.

*ReZolve 2* combines REVA's proprietary stent design with a polymer that is metabolised and cleared from the body, and offers full x-ray visibility and a controlled and safe resorption rate.

Early encapsulation of the stent in the artery tissue combined with the loss of the scaffold structure over time is hoped to reduce the incidence of late forming blood clots or thrombosis, which is a "rare but serious problem associated with drug-eluting metal stents currently on the market".

## Bayer sells Trasylol

**BAYER** Healthcare has signed an agreement with Nordic Group, which will acquire its Trasylol (aprotinin injection) worldwide excluding in the USA.

Under the deal Nordic will become the Marketing Authorization Holder for aprotinin in the relevant territories.

The move follows a European Medicines Agency recommendation that marketing authorisation for aprotinin be reinstated in the EU.

Aprotinin is an antifibrinolytic medicine which is indicated for prophylactic use to reduce blood loss and blood transfusion in adult patients undergoing isolated cardiopulmonary bypass surgery.

It was withdrawn from the market in 2007 based on the results of a study of its costs and benefits - and now the EMA says the research was unreliable.

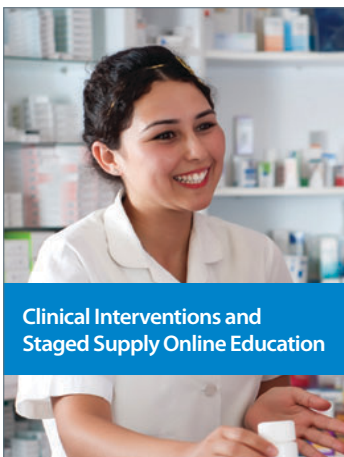
Since 2007 both Nordic (which was already marketing an aprotinin product) and Bayer have maintained compassionate limited access programs in 16 countries, and last Sep the product's marketing authorisation was also reinstated in Canada.

## Qatar pharmacy degree

**THE** undergraduate pharmacy degree program offered at Qatar University in the Middle East has been officially recognised by the Pharmacy Examining Board of Canada.

The course was previously accredited by the Canadian Council of Pharmacy Programs in 2009.

The recognition means that Qatar University pharmacy graduates will be permitted direct entry to Canada's PEBC Pharmacist Qualifying Examination, which was previously reserved for graduates in Canada and the US only.



Clinical Interventions and Staged Supply Online Education

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### Weekly Comment

Welcome to PD's weekly comment feature. This week's contributor is **Oskar Hakansson** from Symbion Consumer Products



### Set yourself apart

As supermarkets continue to place competitive pressure on the industry, community pharmacies need to set themselves apart by providing first-class service and health advice.

A recent Pharmacy Guild of Australia survey found that 62% of surveyed shoppers had sought information about medicines or the treatment of a minor illness from a community pharmacist in the past year.

Research has also revealed that quality advice, trained staff and trust are the most important competitive advantages pharmacy has to offer.

Considering this, it's never been more important to make sure staff are well trained in *all* aspects of your pharmacy – from OTC medicines to baby care.

By providing personal service and in-depth advice you will give customers the confidence to return to your pharmacy time and time again.

Stocking products which are only sold in pharmacy (such as the Faulding range) is another way pharmacies can stand apart from supermarkets and other retailers.

It's important to ensure staff are educated about these products and their benefits and can easily recommend them to customers.

Consumers look to pharmacists to help them look after their overall health. If your pharmacy achieves this by providing the best possible products and advice then you'll be rewarded with loyalty as well as the best free advertising a business can hope for – promotion of your pharmacy through word-of-mouth.

*Symbion Consumer Products source and distribute high quality products to pharmacy. Information on 1300 774 000.*

## TGA indications response

**SPONSORS** will be able to use established sources of evidence to support indications for established ingredients, under proposed TGA amendments to its consultation document on 'Evidence required to support indications for Listed medicines'.

The TGA has now issued a summary of the main points of a variety of submissions from across the industry, as well as its response.

The consultation document was launched in April, aiming to clarify requirements for sponsors and improve the community's understanding of the TGA's regulatory processes, and it's intended that the final outcome will replace the current *Guidelines for Levels and Kinds of Evidence to Support Indications and Claims for Non-Registerable Medicines, including Complementary Medicines and other Listable Medicines*.

One of the major issues raised by the submissions was that "active ingredients with established credibility and high levels of evidence will be significantly disadvantaged and the amount of

work required to list will be disproportionate to the risk of the medicine".

In response, the TGA says it will change the document to allow established sources of evidence to be used to support indications.

However where these are not available, a systematic review will be required to ensure that all evidence/studies possibly relevant are identified, and "analysis regarding statistical and clinical significance is conducted appropriately".

Several respondents also argued that the consultation document incorrectly accepted scientific and traditional methods as equivalent, but the TGA said this was not intended and will clarify that rather than intending equivalence, "the intention is to adopt a transparent approach where the context of traditional indications is explicitly provided to consumers with the promise of efficacy".

The TGA said costs involved with the new arrangements "should not significantly increase if sponsors' existing arrangements are appropriate".

### WIN A YEAR'S SUPPLY OF CARMEX® LIP BALM PRODUCTS

Every day this week **Pharmacy Daily** is giving 2 lucky readers the chance to win a Carmex lip balm prize pack, which includes one year supply of Carmex products and a bling mirror.

Dry, chapped lips are often a sign that winter is reaping havoc on your lips! Winter relief is easy "squeeze" with the Carmex lip balm squeeze tube – the essential accessory this winter!

Ideal as a winter lip primer under lipsticks, Carmex ensures your lips are looking healthy and happy! Echo European Winter 2012 make up trends, and keep your look natural by applying Carmex simply on its own, ensuring nourishment and natural beauty.

For more info go to [www.mycarmex.com.au](http://www.mycarmex.com.au).

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

**In what year was the Carmex® lip balm traditional jar created?**

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



### DISPENSARY CORNER

**A LAWYER** in Hawaii should be checking his personal hygiene, after being convicted of harassment for licking the ear of one of his clients.

64-year-old Lawrence McCreery was tied over allegations from the former customer that while discussing a child custody case he licked the back of the 21 year-old woman's right ear.

Judge Frank Rothschild found the claims proven and levied a \$250 fine, saying "quite frankly, these are the actions of a dirty old man".

**HEALTH** officials in Switzerland have banned a new pizza because it is topped with a range of toxic substances.

The dish was offered at a restaurant in Zurich, having been designed by chef Ismail Ertekin who used "tiny amounts of poisons from homeopathic remedies".

Toxins apparently included poisons from spiders, scorpions and snakes, with Ertekin insisting the special pizzas were harmless.

"Preservatives in foods are much more damaging than my poison pizzas," he said.

However the local health department investigated, and despite only containing small amounts of poison withdrew the pizzas from sale because "medicinal products are not food stuffs".

**A NAKED** man in Dallas, Texas, was so keen to get some gear on that he crashed his pickup truck into a local shopping mall.

Police were called to the Southwest Center early in the morning last Fri, after the nude offender allegedly drove his vehicle through the glass entry doors and then crashed through several kiosks before driving into a sporting goods store.

Once he was inside he apparently started putting on some clothes and a pair of Air Jordan sneakers.