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Menopause & aneurism

BRAIN aneurysms, bulges and balloons in vessel walls have been linked with early onset menopause, suggesting that the premature loss of oestrogen could be a risk factor for aneurism formation and development.

The link was outlined in a new retrospective, case-control study that compared the gynaecologic and medical histories of 76 cases of consecutive postmenopausal women who were diagnosed with brain aneurysms and treated by a single physician from 2009 to 2011 to 532 controls, seven controls for each case, identified in the general population from 1994 to 1998.

Results showed that 26.3% of the total cases with brain aneurysms had undergone pre-mature menopause, defined as under age 40, as compared with 19.2% of the control group.

When comparing across all variables, later menopause age was significantly associated with a lower aneurism incidence.

Additionally, for each categorical increase in menopause age (40-44, 45-49, 50-54, and greater to or equal to 55), the likelihood of developing a brain aneurism decreased by 21%.

Australian headache issues

ONE in ten Australians suffer from a headache every week, according to the results of a new NPS study.

Conducted during National Pain week, the survey of over 1,200 participants found that one in three Australians suffer from headaches at least once a month, of whom one in 10 experience them once a week or more often.

Of these sufferers, the survey found that many may have trouble pinpointing the possible triggers for their headaches.

The survey also found that in those who reported having regular headaches (one or more a week), around 50% have seen a doctor, but only one in three kept a record of their symptoms or other information about their headaches.

The most popular treatment for headaches, according to the survey results, included over-the-counter pain medicines, with 81% of headache sufferers reporting using one for their last headache.

Massage (11%) and ice packs (9%) were also other popular treatment options reported.

NPS clinical adviser Dr Philippa Binns

responded to the results saying "If you are suffering from regular headaches, there may be certain environmental or lifestyle factors which are triggering their onset".

"For these people, keeping a headache diary can help identify these triggers and ultimately help them avoid them," Binns added.

A headache diary, according to NPS allows sufferers to record important details about headaches, such as symptoms, frequency and other factors which may be contributing to their onset, and also helps GPs treatment success rates.

As such, the NPS has released a new Headache Diary, see-
nps.org.au/conditions/headache.

Sleep concerns

THE growing popularity of using Provigil as a pick-me-up after a lack of sleep has caused health experts in the US to issue a warning to patients that the drug is not the "secret to success" in the absence of a full night's sleep.

"I am very concerned that people have discovered yet another wonder pill they can pop when they get tired instead of figuring out how to change their lives in order to get the rest they need," said Dr Schwimmer, founder of The Snoring Center.

"Not a day goes by in my practice that a patient doesn't ask me for a prescription for sleeping pills or for a drug to increase their alertness during the day.

"It is a growing problem," he added.

At present Provigil is approved in the US only as treatment for narcolepsy, sleep apnoea and for people who work irregular hours, however numbers of healthy users are swelling, with patients using the drug off label as a way to enhance focus and productivity.

"It strikes me as shortsighted and dangerous to think that we can outmaneuver our innate need for sleep by popping pills – particularly pills with no long-term safety data," Schwimmer said.

"This is a deeper problem that needs to be addressed by promoting a healthy lifestyle that includes adequate sleep," he added.

Generic Sporanox

THE US Food and Drug Authority has approved Mylan Pharmaceuticals Itraconazole capsules 100mg for the treatment of fungal infections that begin in the lungs, blatzomycosis, histoplasmosis, and aspergillosis in patients who are intolerant of or who are refractory to amphotericin B therapy.

Itraconazole capsules are also indicated for the treatment of fungal infections of the toenails and fingernails in non-immunocompromised patients.

The product is a generic version of Janssen Pharmaceutical Inc.'s Sporanox.

Dolutegravir study

A 48-WEEK trial evaluating the investigational integrase inhibitor dolutegravir in treatment-naive adults with HIV-1 infection, has found that the proportion of study participants who were virologically suppressed (HIV-1 RNA <50 c/mL) was 88% for once-daily dolutegravir (DTG) and 85% for twice-daily raltegravir (RAL), with a 95% confidence interval for the difference, (-2.2% to +7.1%) meeting the 10% non-inferiority limit.

The study involved 822 HIV-1 infected treatment-naive participants and ongoing study compares the efficacy and safety of unboosted dolutegravir to raltegravir as part of an overall treatment regimen.

The study also found that response rates were similar regardless of which dual nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor (NRTI) therapy was used.

For study participants with high baseline viral load (HIV-1 RNA >100,000 c/mL), the response rates were 82% for DTG vs. 75% for RAL.

Prespecified secondary analyses also supported non-inferiority of dolutegravir to raltegravir; the proportion of subjects without treatment-related discontinuations was 93% on dolutegravir and 92% on raltegravir.

Median CD4 increases were also similar in both groups (+230 cells/mm3).

Virologic failure was also found to occur in 5% of DTG subjects and 7% of RAL subjects.

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Weekly Comment

Welcome to **PD's** weekly comment feature. This week's contributor is **Richard Manthey**,



National Development and Operations Manager for Pharmacy Choice.

Don't be store blind

Today's consumers are faced with an increasing amount of options.

There's no doubt they are equipped with more knowledge and have more choices than ever before.

So what is it about your store that has customers coming back time and time again, buying your products and telling their friends and colleagues about you and your services?

Or, perhaps even more importantly, what is it that's preventing some of them from returning?

One of the hardest things for any retailer to do is to step back and analyse their store objectively and in the eyes of the customer.

Working in the same environment all day means it's easy to become oblivious to the strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities for the business.

In other words, become 'store blind'.

There are several simple questions that I like to ask store managers to help them put themselves in customers' shoes:

- How easy is it for consumers to shop in your store?
- What are you asking your customers to do?
- Do they leave with everything they came in for – knowingly or not?
- How do they feel when they left?
- What message did they leave with?

There are many aspects to a retail outlet which can affect the consumer's experience.

Lighting, cleanliness, staff presentation, signage and stock positioning might seem, at times, small and insignificant but if these components are not right it can drastically affect the overall shopping experience.

Shift working heart risks

SHIFT work has been linked with an increased risk of vascular events, according to new research published in the *British Medical Journal*.

The research looked at 34 studies involving a total of over 2 million people and found that shift work was associated with myocardial infarction (risk ratio 1.23, 95% confidence interval 1.15 to 1.31; $I^2=0$) and ischaemic stroke (1.05, 1.01 to 1.09; $I^2=0$).

In addition, the study found that coronary events were also increased for shift workers (risk ratio 1.24, 1.10 to 1.39), albeit with significant heterogeneity across studies ($I^2=85\%$).

In looking at the data, researchers also concluded that "all shift work schedules with the exception of evening shifts were associated with a statistically higher risk of coronary events".

According to the researchers calculations, shift work was linked

with a 23% increase in workers risk of heart attack, a 24% increase in the risk of a coronary event, and a 5% increase in the risk of stroke.

Despite these results however, researchers did find that shift work was not associated with increased rates of mortality (whether vascular cause specific or overall).

These findings, according to the researchers may have implications for public policy and occupational medicine.

Researchers also said that screening programs for conditions such as high cholesterol and blood pressure may help identify and treat at-risk shift workers.

David Babaii Winner

CONGRATULATIONS to the winner of last Friday's David Babaii competition, Katy Duldig of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia.

See below for this week's comp.

WIN A KISS AND TELL PACK



This week *Pharmacy Daily* is giving 10 lucky readers the chance to win a Kiss and Tell pack, courtesy of **Designer Brands**.

Kissable lips is the promise from Designer Brand's Kiss and Tell Collection, it features:

- Eternal Colour Lipstick: Rich, full coverage lipstick, the Vitamin E based formula locks in colour that lasts, and glides onto lips for a perfect pout.
- Chubby Lipstick Crayon: The creamy coverage of lipstick in the form of a wind up pencil. Loaded with Cocoa Butter and Vitamin E, it is just what lips need to feel soft and smooth.
- Lip & Cheek Rouge gives flirty flush power to cheeks and helps create beautiful pout-worthy lips and comes with a FREE Lip Brush.

Purchase any 3 products from the Kiss & Tell Collection and receive a FREE Cosmetic Bag. Visit www.dbcosmetics.com.au.

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

How many colours does the Eternal Colour Lipstick come in?

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

DISPENSARY CORNER

SUN, sea and scurvy?

A European couple, Kristina Damijanidis and Giuseppe Della Volpe are getting set to head off on the adventure of a lifetime with their 17 month old daughter, having sold everything they own to sail the seven seas.

The duo, who have copped a lot of flak for their decision, bought a 12-metre sailboat and now plan to spend the first five years of their daughter's life at sea, until she has to attend school.

"We hope that she will really benefit from meeting different peoples and cultures around the world," said Damijanidis

HOW to avoid increasing flight stress levels? Wear a higher pair of pants.

Flying can be a stressful event for most people, and can at times effect the health of passengers, but if a recent online survey by travel comparison website Skyscanner is correct, there are measures that passengers can embrace to make the experience more pleasant for themselves and their fellow travellers, such as avoiding "builders bum" - also known as "plumbers crack", which was revealed as the number one pet peeve by air travellers.

The ungracious exposure of fellow passengers' rear ends, usually witnessed through loose fitting pants or careless bending over, took 28% of the vote.

The survey was conducted in response to a recent occasion when an American woman was denied boarding of a Southwest Airlines plane for excessive exposure of her cleavage.

Second on the list of undesirable attributes was personal hygiene, or "sweat patches on clothes," followed by exposure of bellies or midriffs.

Other offensive attributes included wearing white socks under sandals, offensive logos or slogans on clothing, hairy-chested men and loud jewellery.