

Hit Nitz awarded

Melissa Barrett, Michelle Olden and Gaby Bracks have been awarded a microbusiness award for inventing the Hit Nitz 4 6 head lice treatment.

The women created the remedy after researching how insects and fleas were removed in medieval times (wormwood).

Free intern rego

PHARMACY Defence Limited has volunteered to support intern registrations to the Australian College of Pharmacy's 23rd Annual Conference in Brisbane taking place between 3-6 August 2012.

Originally the offer was capped at 20 places, however this has now been extended and no longer has restrictions on numbers.

As such, the offer is available for all interns Australia-wide, however eligible interns must register before 5pm on 03 August to qualify.

To access the offer, visit the College website under Conferences and Events - www.acp.edu.au.

New dementia drug review

THE Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee has announced a post-market review of all anti-dementia drugs listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) for the treatment of Alzheimer's disease.

The review has been called in the wake of an initial study on Alzheimer's drugs in 2010-11, carried out by the Drug Utilisation Sub-Committee of the PBAC and published in the *Australasian Journal on Ageing*, which indicated that these medicines were being prescribed to a much larger population for longer periods of time than was originally agreed as cost-effective by the PBAC.

The review, which assessed cholinesterase inhibitors by data linkage using the PBS Authority database and other health databases, found that there was an unexpectedly high continuation rate for cholinesterase inhibitors in Alzheimer's patients beyond six prescriptions.

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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.

15 Jul: Primary Health Care Workshop, 10am-3.30pm, Wollongong, NSW
guild.clinical@nsw.guild.org.au.

24 Jul: Guild Business Bites: Retail Management - Product and Pricing, 6.30pm-8.30pm, St Leonards, NSW
guild.clinical@nsw.guild.org.au.

03-06 Aug: Australian College of Pharmacy Annual Conference, Hilton Hotel Brisbane - for details phone 02 6163 6700.

07 Aug: Guild Business MasterClass: Retail Solutions for Pharmacy, 9am-4.30pm, St Leonards, NSW
guild.clinical@nsw.guild.org.au.

07 Aug: First Aid Certificate, 9am-3pm, Cammeray, NSW
beryl.park@psa.org.au.

11-15 Aug: Medici Capital Pharmacy Snow Business 2012, Mt Buller Vic - details at www.medic.com.au.

29-31 Aug: The Pharmacy Management Conference; Palmer Resort Coolool, Sunshine Coast, Qld;
pharmacyconference.com.au.

02-06 Oct: Pharmacy Guild of Australia Offshore Conference 2012, Waikiki, Hawaii - pgahawaii2012@arinex.com.au.

19-21 Oct: PSA Pharmacy Australia Congress, Melbourne Convention Exhibition Centre - www.psa.org.au/pac.

01-04 Nov: SHPA 38th annual conference - Medicines Management 2012, Canberra - mm2012shpa.com.

Findings in the report included the fact that 18,000 people commenced cholinesterase inhibitors during 2004, and that adherence was 79.4% while the medication possession ratio was 0.88.

In addition, the report showed that around 70.3% of people filled all six scripts for the initial trial period of therapy, whilst around 57.3% of evaluable patients accessed funding beyond six prescriptions, a finding which indicated that their GPs had declared that there was a two-point or more greater improvement in the Mini-Mental State Examination.

Despite the high rate of continuation beyond 6 months, the report found that rates of institutionalisation and death were no different to those reported in clinical trials.

The new study, according to the Department of Health, will look at donepezil; rivastigmine; galantamine; and memantine, and will review recent Australian utilisation data on patient initiation and continuation rates to cholinesterase inhibitors and memantine.

The review will also look into whether the two point improvement in Mini-Mental State Examination continues to be an adequate surrogate for measuring improvement in patients with dementia treated with these medicines; and if there are other more reliable measures of patient relevant outcomes?

In addition, the review will investigate if there is more recent evidence on the safety and efficacy of these medicines that would inform the PBAC about their cost-effectiveness, and will also look at the current PBS restriction continuation rule and the likely effect it has on cost-effective utilisation of these medicines.

To this end the PBAC is now calling for submissions from interested parties and individuals which address the report's terms of reference.

Submissions must be received by 06 July 2012, see www.pbs.gov.au.



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More Medicare services

THREE new services are set to be added to the Medical Benefits Scheme including: surgery to insert artificial intervertebral discs for patients with spinal conditions, an endoscopic procedure for patients with pre-cancerous lesions in their oesophagus and a genetic test to detect a hereditary condition associated with retinal and other tumours.

The Medicare approvals are based on the recommendations made by the Medical Services Advisory Committee, and will come into effect from 01 November 2012.

Women in research

THE University of Melbourne is hosting a *Women in Medical Research- Passionate Minds* forum as part of its 150th anniversary celebrations for the Melbourne Medical School.

The event will take place on 03 July from 1pm in the University's Basement Theatre, and will hear from speakers including Australia's first female Nobel Laureate Professor Elizabeth Blackburn.

The forum will also focus on fostering new and emerging researchers and will address ways women can work to advance their careers in medical research.

KidsMatter in Oz

THE Government has announced plans to expand the KidsMatter primary school program to 2,000 primary schools by June 2014.

The program aims to improve the mental health and wellbeing of the nation's primary school students, and provides teachers, parents and schools with expert knowledge, tools and support to help children learn about good mental health and how to build their resilience and coping skills.

"Evidence has found that when mental health is made a priority in schools, children are less likely to have behavioural problems and learning difficulties, and staff experience higher levels of job satisfaction," said the Minister for Mental Health and Ageing, Mark Butler.

Private insurance debate

THE Minister for Health, Tanya Plibersek, has slammed claims printed in the *Courier Mail* by State Health Minister Lawrence Springborg, that 320,000 Queenslanders will ditch their private health insurance and clog up the public system because of the new law to means-test the private health insurance rebate.

"For Mr Springborg to say that hospital services will be impacted misleads the Queensland public and only serves to spread fear in the community," Plibersek said.

"A family would need to have an income of more than \$260,000 a year before they would lose the rebate entirely.

"To suggest of thousands people who might not even be affected by the changes will drop out is ridiculous," she added.

Plibersek backed up her argument, saying the story made no reference to Treasury modeling which said that 99.7% of people will not drop their cover as a result of means-testing.

The Health Minister also said that the Deloitte report referenced in

the article, which suggested that people would drop out, was "out of date didn't take account of historical data which showed new members were joining health funds all the time".

"In fact, the latest data from the Private Health Insurance Administration Council shows that during the first three months of this year, when Parliament was debating the new law, another 50,000 people actually joined health funds," she said.

Plibersek went further, defending means-testing saying it means that low and middle income earners would no longer subsidise the health insurance of higher income Australians, and that nearly eight million Aussies with private health insurance won't be affected.

The changes will come into effect on 01 July this year and will see individuals and families earning upwards of \$130,000 per annum lose the rebate entirely, whilst individuals earning around \$84,000 or less and couples and families earning around \$168,000 or less will not be affected.



DISPENSARY CORNER

QUICK thinking.

A lucky Brazilian biker must have taken his ginkgo biloba on the morning he was confronted by a hitchhiking snake at 155mph.

The motorbike rider was (unwisely) filming his 155mph ride when a yellow snake appeared from behind his handlebars and lunged.

Rather than panic, swerve and crash, the rider calmly slowed down and pulled his bike to a stop by the side of the road before hopping off and showing his fellow riders his new friend.

THE way of the future?

Scientists in Japan have taken the hard work out of Rock, Paper, Scissors, creating a robot especially for the purpose.

Of course if you don't like to lose then this is probably not the Rock, Paper, Scissors partner for you, as it is designed to win the game every time.

The robot cheats the system by using a high-speed camera to track the shape and position of its opponents hand, and using that data then predict their next move.

Despite the rather arbitrary nature of its existence, the scientists who created it, from the University of Japan, hope the technology it uses will eventually be used to promote co-operation between robots and humans.

GOT some spare toilet paper?

A US woman, Susan Brennan, who created a wedding dress from ten rolls of jumbo toilet paper has won around \$2,000 for her efforts.

Brennan told reporters that it took her just one week to craft the elegant gown for the toilet paper dress competition run by Cheap-Chic-Weddings.com which stipulated entrants use only toilet paper, tape, glue, and/or needle and

thread to craft the bridal pieces.



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Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner, **April Pearce** from **Ayr District Hospital**.