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World Kidney Day

TODAY is World Kidney Day, and to mark the event IVD Australia is reminding Aussies about the importance of routine testing of urine, blood and blood pressure to reassure or detect if there are any early signs of kidney problems.

WIN A BUSBY PURE TISSUE OIL

Every day this week **PD** is giving three lucky readers the chance to win a **Busby Pure Tissue Oil** prize pack.

Busby Pure Tissue Oil is a clinically proven face and body oil specifically formulated to improve the appearance of scars, stretch marks, wrinkles, ageing and dehydrated skin. It contains no harmful ingredients just a unique blend of naturally derived avocado, grape seed and rose hip oils and 5 times more vitamin E than leading tissue oil brands.

To win, simply be one of the first three people to send in the correct answer to the question below to:

comp@pharmacydaily.com.au

Is Busby Pure Tissue Oil suitable for sensitive skin and use during pregnancy?

Hint! Visit www.fgb.com.au

Welsh pharmacist consults

THE Welsh Government is expanding a scheme which allows pharmacists to consult with patients and dispense medicines for minor ailments free of charge.

The Minor Ailments Scheme, already operational in a smattering of Welsh pharmacies, will be rolled out to all pharmacies across the country by 2013, and is designed to free up doctors time, with authorities saying that around 40% of Welsh GP consultations are taken up by people with minor illnesses.

To take part, people will need to register with their local pharmacy, but will not need an appointment to see the pharmacist.

Participating pharmacists will consult with patients in private over illnesses such as indigestion, colds, conjunctivitis and hay fever, with set medicines to be dispensed for free, without a GP's prescription.

Consultations will take 15-20 minutes, and pharmacists will be reimbursed for the dispensing of medicines via their local health board.

It is expected that pharmacists will however refer patients on to a

doctor if they suspect the illness is not minor.

Speaking to media about the expansion, Welsh Health Minister Lesley Griffiths said, "By visiting pharmacists rather than GPs for minor ailments, patients will not need to make an appointment, but they will still be able to get any necessary medicine without charge".

"Ultimately, the service will promote a more appropriate use of GP and community pharmacy skills," she added.

The head of Community Pharmacy Wales, Ian Cowan, also spoke to media about the scheme, saying "Such a service is extremely good use of the medicines expertise of pharmacists, as well as the widespread ease of accessibility of the 710 local pharmacies in villages, towns and city centres across the country".

"This is the key to making community pharmacies real health centres," he added.

Have your say SA

THE Minister for Health and Ageing, Mental Health and Substance Abuse, John Hill, is inviting South Australians to tweet him with questions, comments or ideas about the public health care system.

"HealthChat is a terrific way for anyone with an interest in or observations or concerns to share their experiences and suggestions with the people who run it," he said.

To participate, tweet your thoughts to [@JohnHillMP](#) and [@SAHealth](#).

Cardiopatch hope

A NEW type of stem cell-seeded patch may help with healing after heart attacks, according to a new study in the *Stem Cells Translational Medicine* journal.

The cardiopatch study, conducted by researchers from Geneva University, used cardiac-committed mouse embryonic stem cells with a protein growth factor called BMP2, which were embedded into a biocompatible and biodegradable fibrin hydrogel, and grafted onto the hearts of rats who then had heart attacks.

The cells were loaded with superparamagnetic iron oxide nanoparticles so they could be tracked using magnetic resonance imaging, which also enabled the more accurate assessment of regional and global heart function.

Six weeks after the heart attacks the hearts of the animals with the patches showed significant improvement over those without.

The results showed that the patches had degraded, and that the cells had colonized the infarcted tissue and new blood vessels were forming in the vicinity of the transplanted patch.

Improvements were also shown to have reached beyond the part of the heart where the patch had been applied to manifest globally.

"Altogether our data provides evidence that stem-cell based cardiopatches represent a promising therapeutic strategy to achieve efficient cell implantation and improved global and regional cardiac function after myocardial infarction," said head researcher Professor Marisa Jacon.

Hospital hygiene

A NEW report by the AIHW has found that 19% of Australian hospitals fall below the benchmark (70%) for hand washing hygiene.

Of the 233 major public hospitals, about half were found to be over the national benchmark, whilst 30% were "similar to the benchmark".

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New evidence guide

THE TGA is in the process of updating the Guidelines for levels and kinds of evidence to support indications and claims.

The update will incorporate findings from stakeholder consultation which will be undertaken in April 2012, and is due for release in July.

See www.tga.gov.au for details.

Travel Specials

WELCOME to *Pharmacy Daily's* travel feature. Each week we highlight a couple of great travel deals for the pharmacy industry.

PARK Shore Waikiki has added a golf package for sale, whereby guests can enjoy a round of golf at either Kapolei Golf Course or the Royal Hawaiian Golf Club with a golf cart and a Subway voucher.

The package must be booked seven days in advance for a minimum stay of two-nights.

Prices start at \$194 per night plus taxes.

GREECE Med Travel has released a two-for-the-price-of-one special offer on selected Variety Cruises through the Greek Islands, offering savings of up to \$3,304.

Bookings must be made by 13 Apr - more information at bit.ly/greecemed.

AIR Asia has released a range of special airfares from Sydney to Asia, with seats to Singapore starting from \$289, and Bali from \$309.

Both fares are per person one-way and are inclusive of airport taxes and surcharges.

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Government loses control

THE Government has lost control over supply of taxpayer funded PBS drugs, according to Professor Ian Harper of Deloitte Access Economics.

Addressing delegates at this week's APP Conference, Harper criticised the Federal Govt over its failure to act on Pfizer's direct distribution decision, saying it had reneged on its commitment to its people.

"The Government has an obligation to ensure that patients have access to essential medicines," said Harper.

"The Government must explain why it has failed to meet this obligation and allow a key element of National Medicines Policy to be compromised," he added.

Pfizer's direct distribution decision, according to Harper, now threatens the viability of the Community Service Obligation agreement, whereby the Govt subsidises wholesalers in return for guaranteed delivery of any PBS medicine anywhere in Australia within 24 hours.

"While CSO distributors guarantee the timely and reliable delivery of PBS medicines, Pfizer has given no equivalent undertaking," he said.

"Health Minister Plibersek is allowing a double standard in the distribution of PBS medicines to go unchecked," he added.

This double standard of distribution, according to Harper, means that "some medicines are delivered to Government standards and others are delivered to a lower standard set by a manufacturer".

"We also have a situation where

taxpayers' dollars are being used to fund timely distribution of some but not all medicines on the PBS," he said.

Harper was also critical of the Govt's failure to establish any mechanism to measure the impact of direct distribution on access to PBS drugs and patient health.

The Health Minister Plibersek's argument that Pfizer's decision was a commercial move and was "outside the responsibility of Government", and that the Govt had not yet received any evidence that direct distribution caused any patient harm or diminished access, was also called into question by Harper.

"The onus of proof that exclusive supply is delaying access to medicine and inconveniencing patients shouldn't rest with pharmacists or their customers, but with the Government," he said.

"If the Government pays for PBS medicines, it has an obligation to all Australians to also regulate when, where and how those medicines are supplied to pharmacies and patients.

"This is fundamental to a coherent medicines policy," he added.

Looking to the future Harper said that the CSO would be weakened further if other manufacturers were to follow in Pfizer's footsteps.

Speaking to pharmacists, Harper said best way to guarantee the viability of the CSO and the timely and reliable supply of drugs across the nation is for pharmacists to require "all PBS medicines to be available through CSO-accredited distributors".

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DISPENSARY CORNER

UK pharmacists prepare for influx of teens seeking pimple cream.

Councilors in Cardiff have come up with an innovative way of getting teens to stop loitering on the street at night, via the use of special lights which highlight pimples and acne.

The light, used in beauty salons, highlights acne and pimples with a pink glow and exaggerates them.

"It would be very much for areas of anti-social behaviour," said one council member.

"I know when I was that age I would have been put off if blemishes on my face were shown up - I am pleased that the police are being proactive," the councilor added.

A HEALTHIER use for fast food.

A McDonald's Chicken McNugget which resembles George Washington, has sold on eBay for US\$5,000.

The nugget's owner, Rebecca Speight, obtained it when she bought a box of McNuggets for her children at McDonald's three years ago.

According to Speight, she noticed George Washington in chicken flesh form after her children had finished their meal and left a few strays.

Rather than bin McNugget Washington, Speight decided to pop him in the freezer for a rainy day.

The rainy day came when Speight decided to sell the nugget to help 50 children attend a camp.

Initially eBay took down the auction, because it violated the site's rules on expired foods, but later reneged, saying it was "willing to make exceptions to help" Speight's cause.



George Washington nugget meets George Washington coin.