

## Vitamin investment

SWISSE has announced a \$20 million commitment to establish a Swisse Wellness Institute.

Under the Institute the company will fund, launch and support scientific research and clinical trials over the next five years, investigating the role of vitamins and minerals in human health and wellbeing.

"Swisse has always invested heavily in the science behind our products, and in fact, as a market leader, this new Wellness Institute will be a benchmark for the industry and instigate a fundamental shift in how complementary medicine research is conducted here in Australia," said Swisse Chief Executive Officer Radek Sali.

At present, Swisse has confirmed that it is in discussions with a number of universities as prospective partners to undertake a world first research program to investigate the role vitamins, minerals and herbal supplements have on people's health and wellness.

"The research activities from this collaboration will have a significant impact on the health and food sectors in a variety of ways, including rigorously designed research programs, education and professional and industry development initiatives," the company said in a statement.

At present, Swisse has said it is undertaking a global search to secure a Research Director for the Institute, and will soon announce the appointment of a scientific and industry expert committee to guide the initiative.

## Aspirin: the key to clots?

ASPIRIN may hold the key to keeping clots at bay, according to a new study from researchers at the University of Sydney.

The ASPIRE study, conducted by the National Health and Medical Research Council's Clinical Trials Centre at the University of Sydney, and a team of international investigators, is published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

Kicked off in 2003 the ASPIRE study included 822 participants from five countries including Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, India and Argentina, all of whom had previously suffered unprovoked blood clots in the veins of the leg (deep vein thrombosis or DVT) or the lungs (pulmonary embolism or PE).

Participants had completed on average six months of anti-coagulant treatment, generally with warfarin, and were randomly allocated to receive either low dose enteric coated aspirin or a matching placebo.

On average participants were followed for three years.

According to the study results, participants taking the low dose aspirin were found to be less likely to suffer a recurrence of serious blood clots or cardiac events.

"The results of this study suggest the simple, inexpensive treatment of low-dose aspirin could prevent thousands of patients from experiencing recurrent clots each year and may make substantial healthcare savings in Australia and worldwide," said Professor John Simes, Director of the NHMRC

Clinical Trials Centre at the University of Sydney and Chair of the study.

"These results suggest that aspirin prevents about one third of recurrent blood clot events.

"For every 1000 patients treated for one year, aspirin can be expected to prevent about 20 to 30 episodes of recurrent major thrombotic events at the cost of about 3 significant bleeding episodes," he added.

Meanwhile speaking about the study results Dr Tim Brighton, from Prince of Wales Hospital and principal investigator of the study, said that low-dose aspirin can be of particular benefit for patients who are unable or do not wish to continue warfarin in the long term.

"Many patients discontinue warfarin therapy after six or twelve months of treatment due to the inconvenience of regular blood tests and the increased risks of serious bleeding [putting them at high risk of recurring thrombosis]," he said.

"Aspirin reduces the risk of important blood clotting event including recurrent VTE, myocardial infarction, stroke, or cardiovascular death," he added.

## Inhaled oxytocin

A TEAM from Monash Institute of Pharmaceutical Science has been granted \$1 million from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to assist with their inhaled oxytocin project.

The project is designed to help save 150,000 mothers each year around the world, by transforming oxytocin, which is currently a needle-administered drug given to mums to prevent postpartum haemorrhage (or post birth bleeding), into an inhalable drug.

Postpartum haemorrhage is one of the largest preventable causes of deaths of mums in developing countries, however if successful, the inhaled oxytocin will make the drug safer and more affordable and accessible for women worldwide.

The Phase II funding will help the team move to clinical trials in human patients next year.

## Anti-smoking Australia

THE Government is amping up its anti-smoking stance, with a spate of new TV, radio, print and social media adverts.

"We want the message to be heard and seen, loud and clear, among these groups and indeed all Australians: smoking causes sickness, disease and premature death," said the Minister for Indigenous Health, Warren Snowdon.

The campaign will run until Jan next year, and will include five national TV ads and two free quit smoking apps: Quit Now: My QuitBuddy and Quit For You, Quit For Two, available to download from iTunes and Android Market.

"The statistics for smoking among at-risk and hard-to-reach groups are particularly alarming," said Health Minister Tanya Plibersek.

"In 2009, 14.5% of pregnant women in Australia smoked," she added.

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### Guild Update

Following visits to each other's country this year, the Guild and the Community Pharmacy Association (CPA) of Thailand signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) at the Federation Internationale Pharmaceutique (FIP) Conference in Amsterdam.

Guild National Councillor Paul Sinclair signed the MOU on behalf of the Guild with Thailand's CPA president, Chongmas Nitisingkarin, in front of delegates attending the community pharmacy session at FIP on Sunday 7 October.

The focus of the MOU is the community pharmacy quality assurance and accreditation systems of the two countries, and how they are supported by each organisation.

The Guild will help CPA to monitor how they are responding to various influences over their systems of health care, such as Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the goals of the 'ASEAN Vision 2020'.

Strategically, international activity is important for the Guild, as expertise specific to our region is built and shared.

Given the benefits of our community pharmacy model for health consumers, Australia has a lot to offer our neighbours in terms of advice and assistance, especially in relation to quality services.

In the future, the Guild will continue to work ensuring excellent relations with corresponding organisations across the region, recognising the Government's and all Australians' focus on Asia.



The Pharmacy  
Guild of Australia

## TGA reviews label proposals

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration has responded to significant opposition to several facets of its medicines labelling and packaging review by committing to further discussion with stakeholders into possible alternatives.

During the consultation period, the TGA received 110 submissions from consumers, academics, healthcare professionals and industry responding to its *Medicines Labelling and Packaging Review Consultation Paper*.

According to the TGA, there was strong support for changes regarding active ingredient prominence, standardised medicine information presentation, dispensing label space and the creation of a committee to provide advice to the TGA on labelling and packaging issues.

Despite this, there were six consistent issues with the proposed changes which came to light during the consultation, as identified in multiple submissions, including: the need to have some differences in the labelling requirements for different classes of medicine (prescription, over-the-counter and complementary); as well as the need, in subsequent analysis, to provide evidence that particular changes will improve medicine safety and the quality use of medicines; and greater clarity on which proposed options are to be mandated versus encouraged.

The remaining three issues included: assessment of the cost of particular options, and ability of industry to implement them; harmonisation of labelling plans with other jurisdictions where possible, including with New Zealand; and a commitment to undertake independent consumer testing of proposed options, followed by education and awareness programs once they are implemented.

The TGA also noted "consistently divergent views regarding the way to achieve the objectives of the recommendations between industry and consumer groups on some issues, such as prominence of

active ingredient names and use of umbrella branding".

As such the TGA proposed that these also be the subject of further discussion with stakeholders.

Moving forward, the TGA has said that as a next step, it will focus on labelling requirements for registered prescription and non-prescription medicines.

"Separation of labelling and packaging reform for different classes of medicines will ensure that thorough consideration of the revised requirements and their impact can be undertaken, particularly for products at the interface of therapeutic and consumer products, such as sunscreens," the TGA said.

As such, the initial recommendations will be refined to more specifically reflect the needs of registered prescription and OTC medicines, and options discussed in a separate paper.

### DISPENSARY CORNER



#### CLEAN floor crawl!

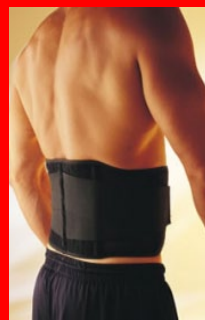
A website BetterThanPants.com is offering parents a way to "teach your baby a strong work ethic early on in their life", with a new infant outfit which doubles as a floor polisher.

The tongue in cheek product combines a baby onesie with mop like fibres, which work to clean the floor as the child learns to crawl.

The website jokes that with the product the child will "get a nice workout, burn off energy, and do muscle toning. And sleep better too".



## WIN A BIOSPORTS PACK



Pharmacy Daily has teamed up with **Lightning Brokers** this week and is giving five lucky readers the chance to win a BioMagnetic Sport products prize pack, valued at \$110 each.

Each prize pack includes a Magnetic Back Support Belt and Moulded Insole Pack.



BioMagnetic Sport products offer more than regular sport wraps and supports. Loaded with therapeutic magnets, they specifically target painful trouble spots. The Back Support is their number one seller and the New Moulded Insoles have been a popular favourite since joining the range. You've got nothing to lose but your pain!

To win, simply be the first person to send in the correct answer to the question below to: [comp@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:comp@pharmacydaily.com.au).

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Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner, **Juliana Kobryn** from **Blooms the Chemist Springwood**.