

## Antibiotic resistance

**THIS** month NPS is supporting a nationally coordinated Antibiotic Awareness Week between 12 and 18 November.

The campaign aims to raise awareness about the proper use of antibiotics, the dangers of antibiotic resistance and the role of health professionals in the global fight against antibiotic resistance.

"The overuse and misuse of antibiotics globally threatens to drive us back to a pre-antibiotic era - where infections last longer, are more difficult to treat and have an increased risk of complications and death," NPS said in a statement.

"With around 19 million prescriptions written every year, Australia has one of the highest rates of antibiotic use in the world, contributing significantly to the global threat of antibiotic resistance.

"There is a strong link between antibiotic prescribing practices and the rate of antibiotic resistance; Australian health professionals have an important role to play in bringing Australia's antibiotic use down in line with the OECD average," NPS added.

Other organisations supporting the campaign include the Australasian Society for Infectious Diseases, the Australian Society for Antimicrobials, and the Australian Commission for Safety and Quality in Health Care.

## TGA lauded for label revision

**THE** Australian Self-Medication Industry has welcomed the TGA's revised approach to the medicines labelling and packaging review (PD 06 Nov).

ASMI had previously expressed its "disappointment" with the original approach taken by the TGA to the review, but the release of the revised review has led the industry body to a more positive stance, saying "this revised approach will lead to appropriate reform and therefore better outcomes for all stakeholders".

Speaking about the revised review ASMI's Executive Director, Dr Deon Schoombie said "This is the biggest review that the industry has faced in the last 10 years and it is vital that we get it right, given the significant impact it will have on both consumers and the consumer healthcare industry".

"We view this review constructively, but given its importance, we urge a robust, evidence-based approach before proceeding down a potentially expensive and commercially damaging path," he added.

In reference to ASMI's stance, Schoombie said that consumers strongly rely on brand names to

determine what is appropriate for them.

"Unlike prescription medicines, which can only be obtained with the aid of a healthcare professional, non-prescription or OTC medicines are purchased often without assistance, and the brand name is the key identifier," he said.

"There are other ways we can facilitate ingredient identification, while keeping it simple for consumers and protecting brand integrity," he added.

As such, Schoombie welcomed the TGA's abandonment of "its blanket approach to reform in order to explore labelling requirements that are specific to each class of medicine".

## Lung cancer stigma

**STIGMA** surrounding lung cancer may delay sufferers from seeking medical help, according to Cancer Australia.

The comments follow a review of evidence commissioned by Cancer Australia, which found that lung cancer patients are more likely to feel stigmatised by their disease than patients with other forms of the disease.

"The diagnosis of cancer is stressful and confronting for anyone and for many people with lung cancer, this can be compounded by feelings of guilt, shame, distress and isolation," said Cancer Australia ceo Professor Helen Zorbas.

The review also found that stigma and nihilism associated with lung cancer may lead to delays in seeking treatment.

"It's important to address this stigma to ensure that all people with cancer access and receive the treatment and support they need," Zorbas added.

## Roberts rewarded

**DR** Jason Roberts has received the Australian Clinical Pharmacy Award 2012.

Roberts is a consultant clinical pharmacist at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, and an NHMRC Health Practitioner Research Fellow at the School of Medicine, University of Qld.

## Pradaxa gets thumbs up

**A NEW** study presented at the 2012 American Heart Association annual meeting has added fuel to the push for Pradaxa to be PBS listed for patients with atrial fibrillation, with results supporting the long-term benefit and safety of the treatment.

The double-blinded RELY-ABLE trial tracked 5,851 non-valvular atrial fibrillation patients taking Pradaxa for 2.3 years and found the rate of ischaemic stroke: 1.15% per year on dabigatran 150mg bd and 1.24% per year on 110mg bd.

Other data showed incidence of hemorrhagic stroke: 0.13% per year on dabigatran 150mg bd and 0.14% per year on 110mg bd; as well as incidence of major bleeding: 3.74% per year on dabigatran 150mg bd and 2.99% per year on 110mg bd; and rate of intracranial bleeding: 0.33% per year on dabigatran 150mg bd and 0.25% per year on 110mg bd.

"RELY-ABLE reveals reassuring rates of stroke and bleeding with both doses of dabigatran over a sustained period of treatment," said Associate Professor John Amerena, Cardiologist from Geelong Hospital and RELY-ABLE investigator.

"Most patients with non-valvular atrial fibrillation need life-long anticoagulant treatment to be protected from ischaemic stroke. The long-term data we now have for dabigatran is reassuring for both patients and prescribers," Amerena added.

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**VANUATU'S** Iririki Island Resort is offering a stay seven pay four deal, for stays between now and 31 March 2013.

Along with seven nights accommodation, the deal includes a full buffet brekkie daily.

The offer is available to book until 30 November.

See [www.iririki.com](http://www.iririki.com) for details.

**DAYDREAM** Island is tempting holidaymakers this Christmas and New Year with a four night stay in a Garden Balcony room, plus full buffet brekkie daily, free return ferry transfers for two adults and a \$50 Spa voucher per room, for just \$798pp/ts.

The deal is available to book until 30 November.

See [www.daydreamisland.com](http://www.daydreamisland.com).

### Wednesday Workshop

**THE** last Guild Clinical pharmacy workshop for 2012 will be held on Wednesday 14 November at the University of Sydney's Pharmacy Lecture Theatre.

The session will see Professor Andrew McLachlan, Professor of Aged Care, provide in depth information on the variability of drug use in older patients.

Call 02 9467 7132 for details.

### Botox PBS approval

**PATIENTS** aged over 12 years who are intolerant to Driclor, or for whom this type of antiperspirant does not work after up to two weeks of treatment now have access to Botox on the PBS (PD 29 Oct).

## Fish oil is value for money

**FISH** oil supplementation offers 'very good value for money' for Australians post heart attack, according to a Deloitte Access Economics cost-benefit analysis commissioned by the Complementary Healthcare Council of Australia.

The analysis was conducted to estimate the net benefit of fish oils as adjunctive treatment for prevention of heart disease, compared to standard of care without fish oils supplements.

According to the findings, fish oil supplements would achieve large net benefit of around \$1.0 billion with a high benefit-to-cost ratio of 39 to 1.

The research also estimated the cost per disability-adjusted life years provided by fish oil for Australians who had recently survived a heart attack was \$2,200.

Speaking about the findings, Executive Director of the CHC, Dr Wendy Morrow said "There is a growing pool of research not to be ignored which provides evidence

that omega-3 fatty acids are effective in lowering the incidence of coronary heart disease, stroke and heart attack, especially amongst those who have survived a heart attack and those with high blood cholesterol".

"As the findings of the Deloitte Access Economics study present, omega-3 supplements are a highly cost-effective way to treat people who have suffered from a heart attack.

"Fish oil supplements offer a number of health benefits and recent negative reports in the media should not be used to scare those people who are already supplementing their diet with omega-3 fatty acids," she added.

### TGA palm revision

**THE** TGA has added a new consultation to its website, the Tocotrienols complex - palm: Proposed revision of draft compositional guideline.

The consultation closes on 19 Dec, see [www.tga.gov.au](http://www.tga.gov.au).



## DISPENSARY CORNER

### BLOOD needed?

The Romanian National Tourist Office is promoting the fact that HRH Prince Charles is in fact directly related to the father of vampire legend, Vlad the Impaler.

The promotion is designed to lure Brits into the tourism clutches of Romania, and even features the Prince himself in an interview joking "Transylvania is in my blood, so I do have a bit of a stake in the country".

The connection comes via Prince Charles' great grandmother Queen Mary, the consort of George V, to Vlad IV, the half brother of the infamous villain.

### STOCK up on deodorant.

Pilots in China are facing a rather unusual interview process to get the job, with Hainan Airlines announcing it will be sniffing for body odour during recruitment tests.

The company's new zero-body-odour requirement has caused some raised eyebrows in the airline community, but Hainan has defended its policy saying "our staff work very closely with the public, and no passenger wants to smell a pilot's armpits".

"And if they can keep their cool in this test, they aren't going to sweat in the cockpit," the company added.

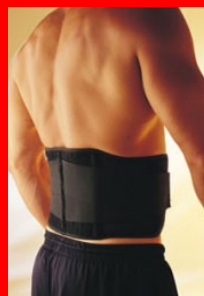
The rudimentary test basically involves a recruitment 'sniffer' to take a deep whiff of applicants armpits to check for odour.

Other key requirements for the job include: being able to fly a plane, 20/20 vision, a max height of 1.87 meters and a very good command of the English language.

After leaving an interview, one would-be pilot told media "I passed everything, but I was doomed by my armpits, which are always a bit whiffy".



## 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).

### What are BioMagnetic Sport products loaded with?

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Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner, **Ben Markowski** from **SA Pharmacy, Lyell McEwin Hospital**.