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Blood marker in RA

A PROMISING set of new blood-based markers, 14-3-3η, may aid in the diagnosis of rheumatoid arthritis (RA), according to research presented at the 2012 Annual Meeting of the American College of Rheumatology held in Washington.

The 14-3-3η blood-marker is not usually found in blood, and as such when it is present in patients with RA, it appears that the body tries to clear it by mounting an immune response creating "auto-antibodies" which can be measured in blood.

"The data that we have previously presented over the past two years indicates that 14-3-3η on its own, and in combination with blood tests currently used, such as RF and anti-CCP, can increase the diagnosis rate of patients with rheumatoid arthritis," said Dr Walter Maksymowych, co-inventor of 14-3-3η, and Medical Research Professor of Medicine at the University of Alberta.

"Also, in both rheumatoid arthritis and psoriatic arthritis, it marks joint damage which is an irreversible process contributing to the physical debilitation associated with these diseases," he added.

Interestingly, research from the University of Amsterdam, also presented at the conference, found that in psoriatic arthritis with joint damage 14-3-3η was particularly elevated, and that its expression marked likelihood of response to a therapy called adalimumab.

In addition, researchers found that when the levels of 14-3-3η decrease twelve weeks after the treatment is started, that it marks response to therapy.

Aussie antibiotic confusion

A LARGE portion of the Australian population are not aware that taking antibiotics incorrectly or inappropriately accelerates the spread of antibiotic-resistant bacteria throughout the community, according to NPS.

The statement comes on the back of new research which coincides with Antibiotic Awareness Week this week.

The research involved a survey of 1,019 Australians which revealed that the message that antibiotic resistance is a problem is reaching the public, with 68% of respondents saying that they know that bacteria are becoming

resistant to antibiotics (an 18% increase in public awareness of the issue over a six month period).

Meanwhile in terms of causal knowledge, just over half of respondents (52%) said that they were aware that failing to complete a course of antibiotics directly contributes to the spread of antibiotic resistance, whilst only one in three knew that not completing a full course of antibiotics may mean they won't work for them in future.

In addition 63% of people surveyed recognised that taking antibiotics when they are not needed contributes to the spread of resistance, and more than half (57%) didn't realise that antibiotics don't treat viruses.

The survey also revealed that many Aussies don't understand which illnesses can be treated by antibiotics, with one in five believing that antibiotics kill both viruses and bacteria.

Less than one in three also reported knowing that colds and most coughs are caused by viruses only, whilst around half (52%) were unsure as to whether viruses or bacteria are the cause of colds and most coughs.

Swisse winnings

SWISSE CEO Radek Sali has been named as *GQ Magazine's* Businessman of the Year as part of the publication's Men of the Year Awards in Sydney on Tuesday night.

Accepting his award, Sali paid tribute to his team saying "awards are significant for the team and don't happen without the team being focused".

"Swisse has an exceptional team. "That is what we are most proud of - how far we have come and how much more there is to do," he added.

MEANWHILE, this week also saw Swisse named joint winner of the Australian Self-Medication Industry 'Best Marketing Campaign of a Consumer Healthcare Product - large budget' award for its Olympics campaign.

Questions over laser

THE Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA) is currently conducting a survey regarding the use of laser and IPL devices by people with little or no training.

In a letter addressed to health care professionals, ARPANSA said it has been "concerned for some time" about the practice and has been lobbying for a national regulatory framework and for standards to be developed for unregistered providers.

"Earlier this year, ARPANSA established a working group, which includes the CPSA, with the main task of gathering the evidence necessary for a Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) on the use of lasers and IPLs for cosmetic purposes," the letter said.

"This includes gathering evidence to assess the extent of injuries and mistreatments caused by the inappropriate use of IPLs and lasers and assess suitable options for better regulation of the practice," the letter added.

As such ARPANSA is calling on health care practitioners who have treated injuries caused by lasers or IPL devices to participate in the 10 minute survey.

CLICK HERE to view the survey.

WIN A BATH & BODY PACK

This week, **Pharmacy Daily** is giving five lucky readers the chance to win a Bath & Body Pack, courtesy of **Designer Brands**.

Each prize pack contains: Body Lotion, Body Wash, Body Scrub, Hand & Nail Cream, Body Butter Pump and Body Butter Tub. Designer Brands NEW Bath & Body range has your skincare needs covered!

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Travel Specials

WELCOME to *Pharmacy Daily's* travel feature. Each week we highlight a couple of great travel deals for the pharmacy industry, brought to you by *Cruise Weekly*.

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DAYDREAM Island Resort and Spa is enticing Australian holidaymakers to its shores this festive season with a four-night getaway.

The Christmas and New Year deal includes accommodation in a Garden Balcony room, as well as a full buffet breakfast daily, complimentary return ferry transfers on Cruise Whitsundays for two adults and a \$50 Rejuvenation Spa voucher per room for just \$798 per person, twin share.

Free Wi-Fi is available in the atrium 24 hours a day.

See www.daydreamisland.com.

PEPPERS Coral Coast Resort is celebrating its name change to Peppers Airlie Beach by offering one free night per booking when guests stay for two nights from \$285 per night in a One Bedroom Apartment including breakfast and complimentary Wi-Fi access.

For details call 1300 987 600 or visit www.peppers.com.au.

VAIL Resorts has discounted a seven-night trip to the historic mining ski town of Breckenridge, Colorado, by 25%.

The earlybird deal is priced at \$1,342pp and includes seven nights ski-in ski-out accommodation at the Village at Breckenridge Resort, Epic seven-Day Lift Pass, resort fee and local taxes.

See www.travelplan.com.au.

Pearly whites protect health?

DIABETICS with gum disease who receive treatment can significantly lower their out of pocket expenses for medicines, according to a new US study.

Conducted by researchers at United Concordia Dental and the University of Pennsylvania, the oral health study looked at 1.7 million US patients over a three year period and found that after seven dental treatments for gum disease, patients saved around US\$1,477 per annum on medication costs compared to those who did not seek dental assistance.

The study followed research in March which looked at the same patient group and found diabetics who received regular dental treatments spent US\$1,814 less yearly on hospitalisations and doctor visits.

Looking at the breakdown of the March research, diabetics who received gum disease treatment had 33% less hospitalisation rates, and paid 13% less visits to their GPs.

"When you look at the study's sheer size and scope, as well as its

statistical significance, it is clear the results are no fluke – when diabetics have their periodontal disease treated, it not only helps them become healthier, it also helps them and their employers save money in the long run," said James Bramson, DDS Chief Dental Officer. Meanwhile, speaking out in the wake of the findings United Concordia's Dental Director, Jim Bramson said "annual health care savings of more than US\$3,200 are possible when you combine the medical and pharmacy savings for individuals with diabetes (who) are treated for gum disease".

Bramson went further to highlight the importance of dental health to overall health.

"If we can mirror this study with those other diseases, we should be able to show some significant health savings there, as well, which would broaden the argument for why it makes sense to treat someone's periodontal disease across a variety of different conditions," he said.

Aussie icon Sigma celebrates its century

THIS week Australian pharmaceutical giant, Sigma, is celebrating its centenary with the launch of a new book, *Sigma-Celebrating 100 Years*.

The launch, held last night in Melbourne, was attended by past and present Sigma employees, as well as members of the company's board, key industry representatives, and several members of Sigma's founding pharmacist, Ernest Leete's, family.

According to the book, Sigma had a modest beginning in Melbourne in 1912 under the guidance of pharmacists Ernest Leete and Edwin Church, manufacturing its famous Sigma remedies - tonic, hair lotion, wound salve and tooth paste and powder.

"Leete and Church were men of great vision," a statement from the company said.

"They saw the opportunity to manufacture and package products for exclusive sale by pharmacists

and set about bringing their vision to life," the statement added.

The book was produced by Sigma in consultation with historians Andrew Kilsby and Sue Johnston, who spent countless hours chatting to Sigma staff past and present, delved into a great deal of historical material including minutes of meetings, correspondence, photos and old products.

Sigma-Celebrating 100 Years is on sale for \$25, with proceeds going to charity sigma100years.com.au.

Pictured below (from left) is Brian Jamieson, Chairman; Margaret McNair, Leetes granddaughter; Heather Melzer, Leetes granddaughter; Mark Hooper, CEO & MD.



DISPENSARY CORNER

MEDICS on standby needed.

A gun range in Florida is taking unusual measures to draw punters in, offering customers the opportunity to shoot real guns at other customers.

According to reports, the Combat City gun range is facilitating combat courses, whereby customers are able to engage with other and fire guns at opponents.

The guns however are not loaded with live ammunition, but rather deliver a hit similar to that of a paintball.

"There is supposed to be a degree of pain so that you do learn from it," said Combat City's owner, Dave Kaplan.

"Someone's trying to hurt you. You learn how to be as tactical as a civilian can be," he added.

Customers are however fitted with protective gear for their eyes and ears.

VERTIGO?

A Chinese business man has taken an unusual step to beat peak hour traffic, opting to paraglide to work.

The man, Zeng Daxia, got fed up with his three hour morning commute through the packed streets of Zhuzhou city in Hunan province, and came up with the idea of power operated paragliding as the logical way to soar up and above the melee and into work.

"I work and live at different ends of the city, so I used to waste lots of time in traffic jams in my commute every day," he told local media.

"Now I can drift above all of them and get to work in just a few minutes.

"There are a few of us doing it now because the traffic here is so bad," he added.

According to local rules, paragliding around the city is allowed as long as the "vehicle" does not pass over military bases and stays below 1,000 metres.