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New/extended listings

THE Government has approved eight new and extended listings for drugs on the PBS.

Among the new and extended listings are: Emend (aprepitant), for the treatment of nausea and vomiting associated with chemotherapy for cancer; Atenolol-AFT (atenolol), for the treatment of high blood pressure; and Vytorin (ezetimib with simvastatin), for the treatment of high cholesterol.

Other drugs featured in the new/extended line up include: Naloxone Min-I-Jet (naloxone hydrochloride), for the emergency treatment of opioid overdose; VitA-POS (paraffin compound eye ointment) for the treatment of severe dry eye syndrome; and Xarelto (rivaroxaban) for the treatment of deep vein thrombosis (blood clots).

The remaining two new/extended approvals include: Hylo-Fresh Hylo-Forte (sodium hyaluronate), for the treatment of severe dry eye syndrome; and Temodal (temozolomide) for the treatment of certain types of malignant brain cancer.

The majority of the new and extended listings will take effect from 1 December 2012.

Pharmacists as advocates?

HEALTH consumer advocacy may be an underappreciated role for Australian pharmacists, according to a new study into possible extensions to the role that pharmacists play in the healthcare environment.

The study, published in *BMC Health Services Research*, invited a sample of general practitioners, health care consumers, pharmacists and practice managers in South-East Queensland to participate in focus groups on the integration of a pharmacist into the Australian general practice environment.

According to the results, there was a division of opinions regarding the potential for pharmacists to prescribe medications, with consumer groups citing greater accessibility and a reduction of costs as benefits to pharmacist prescribing.

"This may be an extension of the health care consumer's perception on retail pharmacy where they generally do not pay for professional services offered by pharmacists," the study authors said.

Consumers also identified

attributes such as medication knowledge as a benefit to pharmacist prescribing.

Meanwhile, discussing the expansion of the pharmacists role, consumers suggested that whilst health consumer advocacy has long been described as the realm of nurses, it may be an area where pharmacists can look to explore.

Interestingly, the researchers found that whilst pharmacist participation within primary care specialty clinics such as chronic disease clinics (COPD) or therapeutic clinics (anticoagulation) was seen as a positive role by the pharmacist group, it was not so the case with other groups of participants.

Aspirin and colon cancer

A NEW study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* has found a link between the regular use of aspirin after a diagnosis of colon cancer, and better clinical outcomes in patients with cancers characterized by mutated PIK3CA (the phosphatidylinositol-4,5-bisphosphonate 3-kinase, catalytic subunit alpha polypeptide) gene.

The study looked at data from 964 patients with rectal or colon cancer including data on aspirin use after diagnosis and the presence or absence of PIK3CA mutation.

According to the results, regular use of aspirin after diagnosis was associated with longer survival in patients with mutated-PIK3CA colorectal cancer, but not among patients with wild-type PIK3CA cancer.

Teen suicide prevention

A NEW suicide prevention initiative, headspace, has been launched this week by the Minister for Health, Mark Butler.

The youth headspace service is designed to support students and the broader school community in the wake of a suicide.

"When a student takes their own life, it can be devastating for the whole school community," said Butler.

"The headspace School Support program will help grieving school communities to come to terms with their loss and it will provide ongoing resources and training for school staff to identify students at risk of suicide," he added.

PBS price changes

THE Government will alter the cost of 11 medicines on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, in line with recommendations made by the Pharmaceutical Benefits Pricing Authority.

Nine of the medicines will increase in cost, including: Uro-carb (bethanechol), Cal-Sup (calcium), Dantrium (dantrolene), Deptran (doxepin), Natrilix SR (indapamide), Zeffix® 3TC (lamivudine), Lincocin (lincomycin), Synarel (nafarelin), and Macrochantin (nitrofurantoin).

The remaining two drugs: Cetrotide (cetrotirelix) and Orgalutran (ganirelix) will have their prices reduced.

The changes are due to take effect from 1 December 2012, subject to final arrangements being met by the suppliers of the medicines.

WIN A BOSISTO'S SOLUTION PACK



Pharmacy Daily has teamed up with **Bosisto's** this week and is giving five lucky readers the chance to win a Bosisto's Solutions prize pack, valued at \$40 each.

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The Bosisto's Solutions range is the key to what?

Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner, **Ammar Sachak** from **Priceline Pharmacy**.

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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.

- 28 Oct:** One Day Workshop, Better Business with MedsCheck; Pharmacy House, Deakin; 7.45am-4.30pm; act.branch@psa.org.au.
- 28 Oct:** Regional Seminar: Sad Blokes, Understanding Men and Depression; Goulburn; 8.30am-3.30pm beryl.park@psa.org.au.
- 31 Oct:** Evening Lecture Mackay: Chronic Pain, An Update for Pharmacists; Captain's Table Room, Clarion Hotel; Goulburn; 6.45pm-7.45pm; educationqld@psa.org.au.
- 01-04 Nov:** SHPA 38th annual conference - Medicines Management 2012, Canberra - mm2012shpa.com.
- 04 Nov:** Primary Health Care Workshop; 10am-3.30pm; Batemans Bay Soldiers Club, Batemans Bay; email guildclinical@nsw.guild.org.au.
- 05 Nov:** Discussion Group, Parkinsons Disease; Hobart, University of Tasmania; 7pm-8.30pm; guildclinical@nsw.guild.org.au.
- 07 Nov:** How to Conduct MedsCheck and Diabetes MedsCheck; 9am-1pm; The Pharmacy Guild of Australia, St Leonards, NSW; email lorraine.norris@psa.org.au.
- 11 Nov:** Apply First Aid; Bathurst, NSW; NSW; phone 02 9966 9750.
- 21 Nov:** Business Bites & Masterclass; Guild Building, St Leonards, NSW; phone 02 9966 9750.

New anti-smoking weapon

QUITTING smoking is just a few sprays away thanks to the launch of Nicorette's new QuickMist Mouth Spray.

The new nicotine replacement therapy is said to start to relieve cravings in just 60 seconds, providing relief 2.7 times quicker than a nicotine 4mg lozenge (median time to 50% cravings reduction 3.4mins for QuickMist vs. 9.2 mins for lozenge).

In addition, the QuickMist Mouth Spray provides maximum relief at 10 minutes compared to nicotine 4mg lozenge at 25 minutes (mean craving VAS score at the time of maximum relief 29.2mm for QuickMist vs. 26.3mm for lozenge).

According to Nicorette, the maximum concentration of nicotine was observed no later than 12.5 minutes for QuickMist and no earlier than 45 minutes for nicotine 4mg lozenge.

A placebo-controlled, double blind, multicenter study with a year-long follow up also found that the QuickMist demonstrated proven efficacy for long-term abstinence, being 2.5 times more effective at helping smokers quit compared with placebo at 52 weeks.

"Most people who go without smoking experience urges to smoke," said Dr Hayden McRobbie, Reader in Public Health Interventions at the Wolfson Institute of Preventive Medicine,

Queen Mary University of London.

"At times these can be overwhelming and leads to relapse.

"The faster a product can act to reduce urges to smoke the better they will be in helping many people to stay away from cigarettes.

"This mouth spray has been shown to alleviate urges to smoke quickly, and increase the chances of quitting smoking for good and it will provide another opportunity for smokers to give quitting a go," McRobbie added.

The recommended dosage of QuickMist is one to two sprays every 30 minutes to one hour, and no more than four sprays per hour or 64 sprays per day, into the side of the cheek or under the tongue.

QuickMist can also be used in combination with Nicorette Patch if breakthrough craving is experienced or there is difficulty in controlling cravings for cigarettes.

Pictured below at QuickMist's launch this week is Declan Rooney, Associate Professor Renee Bittoun, and Dr Hayden McRobbie.



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Jobs of the Week

- **Pharmacist in Charge** - Coral Coast, QLD (Job# 2009180)
Management duties, \$100K+ package.
- **Pharmacist** - South Coast, NSW (Job# 2009089)
Relocation assistance. 3 month+ contracts considered. December start.
- **Pharmacist** - Melbourne's South East, VIC (Job# 2009419)
Full-time role, ongoing training and development, would suit a new-reg.

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DISPENSARY CORNER

DON'T risk the read!

It surely has crossed the mind of many passing through doctors and dentists surgeries, that the magazines on offer, may in fact offer more than just light entertainment, but a bevy of bugs as well.

Now it seems that the UK National Health Service agrees, with one British dentist telling media that she was told by a NHS Infection Control Worker to get rid of her old waiting area magazines as they posed an infection risk.

According to reports, the Infection Control Worker informed the dentist that magazines should be in "good condition and free from contamination", and that the presence of crusty old magazines could end up in the surgery failing its health and safety inspections.

The dentist however took her concerns to the press, saying she found it "a bit over the top", with the worker also urging her to use plastic upholstery instead of fabric and to not use Blu-Tac on posters as it also posed an infection risk.

Mendel wins award

MENDEL Grobler, Director of Access and Public Affairs at Pfizer Australia has taken home the 2012 Pat Clear Award.

The award recognises an outstanding level of commitment by an individual, group or team for the benefit of the Australian medicines industry.

"Mendel has been a key contributor to the shaping of the policy environment for industry in Australia and an important adviser on major policy issues, such as PBS reforms and the Memorandum of Understanding with the Commonwealth," said Medicines Australia CE Dr Brendan Shaw.

"The fact that he has been more than happy to share his considerable intellect with his colleagues and the broader community for the greater good over the years is a credit to him and the Australian medicines industry," he added.