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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*.

CRUISE WEEKLY

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VIVA! HOLIDAYS has launched a special sale to Hawaii, including a range of kids specials and inter-island flights from just \$5. Packages including Hawaiian Airlines flights plus accommodation start from just \$1698 per adult and \$912 per child (aged 2-17 years).

Bookings must be made by 10 May, so get in quick to see your friendly travel agent for details.

QANTAS is currently offering bargain fares between Australia and New Zealand, available for sale until midnight on Friday.

Prices start at just \$179 one way and every fare comes with a baggage allowance, entertainment, frequent flyer points and inflight drinks and food.

The carrier also has sale fares on offer for destinations across Australia - for more details or to book see www.qantas.com.

ECRUISEING.TRAVEL is offering up to \$100 bonus on-board credit for bookings of South Pacific voyages aboard Princess Cruises made up to this Sat 20 April.

For details call 1300 369 848 or see www.ecruising.travel.

API reports \$12.9m profit

AUSTRALIAN Pharmaceutical Industries this morning reported its results for the first half of the financial year, with a statutory net profit of \$12.9m.

That was down from the prior corresponding period result of \$18.3m - but that had included a \$14.5m insurance payout, with the underlying result up 6.8%.

CEO Stephen Roche said the company's pharmacy division was "proving resilient in the face of ongoing sector reform."

"Our operational performance continues to improve and our business strategy is delivering."

"The Priceline Pharmacy proposition remains central to our future growth," he said, with further expansion expected "as the impact of PBS reform makes a compelling proposition for independent pharmacists looking

for alternative profit drivers".

Total retail sales for Priceline, excluding dispensary, were up 3.3% but like for like store sales fell 0.6% with an 0.8% growth in gross profit margin.

On the wholesale side Roche said API's strategy of restructuring its distribution model "and working with our customers to reduce discounts to pharmacists in a structured, timely manner" was working, with underlying sales growth of 6.9%.

However he warned that if the government wants the next round of reforms to deliver further savings while maintaining equity of access to PBS medicines "then it must include those responsible for their distribution in the next round of negotiations".

Scan every script

ERX script exchange has released a flyer urging pharmacies to "scan every script" for faster dispensing and fewer errors.

"Using eRx helps ensure your professional future," it states, with 3,491 pharmacies already using eRx every day, some of whom scan 85% of their scripts.

13,829 doctors are also connected to eRx, but the flyer warns that scanning reliability in pharmacy depends on many factors including the quality of the doctor's internet connection.

"Keep looking for barcodes on originals...you will see more and more appearing," the flyer says.

Online PBS claiming is automated, with eRx fees reimbursed from Medicare via PBS Online.

"eRx is a vital part of pharmacy's involvement in our eHealth future"

IMS under fire

THE RACGP is reportedly seeking advice on the use of doctors' details for marketing purposes, in connection with dissemination of prescribing information via pharmacies to clients of pharmaceutical data firm IMS.

The move follows letters sent from IMS Health in recent days to doctors across the country.

According to *Australian Doctor*, the letter says "IMS has contractual arrangements in place with pharmacies for the transfer to IMS from the pharmacies of certain information, including potentially data about you."

"This information is collected by the pharmacies in the course of fulfilling patient prescriptions."

Doctors are told that they are able to opt out of the program and have their personal information deleted.

FDA blocks generic OxyContin

THE US Food and Drug Administration has formally blocked generic pharmaceutical makers from producing versions of the old form of OxyContin, in the light of the patent on the original drug which is set to expire next week.

Purdue Pharma, which originally patented the drug in 1995, created a "crush-resistant" formulation in 2010 in order to combat widespread abuse of the painkiller.

The FDA said the original OxyContin was often manipulated to defeat its extended-release properties which significantly increased the risk of serious adverse events, including overdose and death.

The newer formulation cannot be injected if someone tries to dissolve the tablets in liquid, and Purdue stopped shipping the original OxyContin to US pharmacies in August 2010.

In a statement issued overnight, the FDA said it had approved "abuse-deterrent labelling" for Purdue's reformulated OxyContin, which indicates that the products has physical and chemical properties that are "expected to make abuse via injection difficult and to reduce abuse via the intranasal route (snorting)".

The agency also said it would not accept or approve any generic drug applications which rely on the approval of the original OxyContin.

That means that generic makers will have to create their own crush-resistant formulations, delaying the entry of generic versions.

"The development of abuse-deterrent opioid analgesics is a public health priority for the FDA," said a spokesperson.

Postmarketing assessments of the impact of reformulated OxyContin on abuse are ongoing, the FDA said.



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Clinical trial scam

A BRITISH man has been sentenced to three months in prison for altering pre-clinical trial data, in a case brought by the UK Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA).

A company called Aptuit had informed the MHRA about serious irregularities in pre-clinical data generated support human trials and the registration of new medicines.

A subsequent investigation found that Steve Eaton, an ex-employee of the firm, had "selectively reported analytical data over a number of years, dating back to 2003".

"The data manipulation ensured an experiment was deemed successful when in fact it had failed," the MHRA said.

Consequently many hundreds of safety studies had to be reviewed to assess the impact of the data manipulation, and to ensure that the compromised data was not used in future submissions.

A number of new medicines were significantly delayed as a result.

Lightning Brokers grows

A RESTRUCTURE at pharmacy sales brokerage Lightning Brokers has expanded the company's capability, enabling it to fully service 3500 pharmacies every eight to 12 weeks.

The revamped company structure includes three new appointments to help work towards the Lightning Brokers vision "to be the best business services company within the FMCG industry".

The new roles are National Sales Manager, previously managed by Michael Griffiths, with this position now filled by Joshua Barton.

Lightning has also created a Business Development Manager role where the company can "fully maintain a brand for a client".

Garden House Australia is the first client to take advantage of this option, with the BDM for Prunelax being Rick Talbot.

Finally Greg Pierce has been appointed as National Accounts Manager, to look

after the wholesalers and key pharmacy accounts as well as the management of the company's Victorian office.

Sales and admin positions have also been moved to full-time roles.

"This ongoing investment in Lightning Brokers is clear evidence that we are committed to our goal of being the number one pharmacy sales brokerage in Australia," said the company's managing director, Michael Griffiths.

50 years of Bisolvon

BOEHRINGER Ingelheim has launched a campaign to mark the 50th anniversary of Bisolvon this year, aiming to thank pharmacy for its ongoing support.

Bisolvon is Australia's largest selling mucolytic, started from humble beginnings in 1953 and was first registered for sale in Germany in 1963.

It was introduced to Australia as a prescription-only medicine in 1970, and is now available as an over the counter product.

There are also now a range of different formats and flavours, and in 1999 Boehringer added cough suppressant Bisolvon Dry to the range.

"Since 1970 we've focused on innovation and our commitment to pharmacy - this has been key to securing our future," said Bisolvon senior brand manager, Sally Binfield.

Customer preference for Bisolvon has grown in recent years, and the pharmacy-only brand delivered more incremental sales than any other brand in the cough category last year.

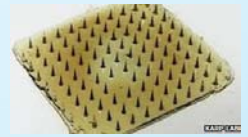
"We've invested heavily in pharmacy and pharmacy education and will continue to do so," Binfield said, adding "In addition we've committed to investment in consumer promotion and television advertising to drive customers in store".

The campaign includes in-store activity which recaps key milestones over the last half-century, complemented by a micro site at bisolvon.com.au/50years.

DISPENSARY CORNER

SCIENTISTS in the USA have designed a "super-grip" sticking plaster, with special microscopic needles to help heal surgical wounds and potentially deliver therapeutic drugs.

The patch, pictured below, is inspired by a parasitic worm called



Pomphorhynchus laevis which lives in the alimentary canal of fish, and clings on using "cactus-like spikes".

It's ideal for treating burns victims because it holds skin grafts in place without the need for staples.

The tiny needles are made of plastic which is rigid when dry but swells once they have pierced wet tissue, allowing the patches to stick to damaged skin with minimal impact.

It's also much easier to remove compared to staples, inflicting less tissue damage, the BBC said.

PLAYING back a sleeper's own brain rhythms may be a way of helping improve sleep, according to a study released by German researchers this week.

According to the team from the University of Tübingen, during deep sleep the brain's electrical signals follow a "slow oscillating rhythm," and in the study published in the *Neuron* journal they played "rhythmic sounds generated to match the electrical brain readings" of 11 subjects.

When the sounds were synchronised the patients reportedly slept better and also appeared to improve their memories - while out-of-sync noises did not have any effect.

"The beauty lies in the simplicity" said research team leader Jan Born - but despite this, the outcome could be a reasonably complex device which would combine some sort of MP3 player with an electroencephalograph.

WIN A SUMMER'S EVE PACK



Every day this week **Pharmacy Daily** is giving 3 lucky readers the chance to win a **Summer's Eve** exclusive gift including the Sensitive Wash and Sensitive Wipes, the essential care pack for every woman valued at \$14.00. The Sensitive Wash is gentle yet effective. It provides daily care for your intimate areas, cleansing away odour-causing bacteria without irritation.

The Sensitive Wipes are designed to wipe away odour-causing bacteria when you're on the go.

All Summer's Eve products are dermatologist and gynaecologist tested for gentleness and effectiveness. They are also part of the sensitive range meaning they are alcohol free and hypoallergenic.

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

The Summer's Eve Wash and Wipes help to cleanse away _____ bacteria.

Send your answer to: comp@pharmacydaily.com.au.

Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winners, **Katy Duldig** from **The Pharmacy Guild of Australia**, **Gayleene Chapman** of **Health Focus Pharmasave** and **Lana Sandic** from **Coolalinga Better Health Pharmacy**.