

Lead meds warning

THE UK MHRA has issued a warning to people to avoid buying or using unlicensed Chinese medicines sold online after some products were found to contain excessive levels of mercury or lead (including Bak Foong Pills, Fung Shing Paij Tian-Ma Wan; and Shi Hu Ye Guang Wan and Nai Chang Ming Yan Pills).



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Help with fungal concerns

THE Guild Pharmacy Academy has joined forces with Bayer Australia to develop new skin and fungal training.

Designed for pharmacy assistants, the practical resource covers the issues of skin and fungal conditions and focuses on key areas that customers need assistance with.

"We see the involvement of companies like Bayer adding value to these units, which form part of the Community Pharmacy qualifications," said Anthony Tassone, Director of the Guild Pharmacy Academy.

"We believe we have created a benchmark learning tool which now sets the industry standard," he added.

For those worried about impartiality, Tassone stressed that Bayer's contribution is "very balanced".

"Maintaining our integrity as a

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Reducing VTE

DABIGATRAN etexilate mesylate may help to reduce the risk of recurrent venous thromboembolism (VTE) according to trial results published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

VTE is the third most common cardiovascular disorder after heart disease and stroke, and consists of two related conditions caused by blood clots: deep vein thrombosis and pulmonary embolism.

The trials involved a combined 4,199 patients, with the first RE-MEDY trial finding that treatment with dabigatran 150mg twice daily was non-inferior to warfarin ($p=0.01$) in preventing recurrent VTE, including VTE-related death.

The second trial, RE-SONATE, demonstrated dabigatran was superior to placebo for the prevention of first recurrent or fatal VTE with a risk reduction of 92 percent during the treatment period ($p<0.001$).

Lower event rates were reported across all secondary efficacy endpoints for dabigatran over placebo.

Navada health trial

HEALTH Plan of Nevada is set to stand trial for its role in the largest outbreak of Hepatitis C in US history.

The case, brought by two victims, alleges that the state's largest health management company sent the duo to a Las Vegas outpatient medical clinic where they contracted incurable hepatitis C in 2005, despite evidence that former physician Dipak Desai had a history of medical negligence.

"We are confident that this jury, in this case, will not only send a message to Health Plan of Nevada but to every HMO that if you want to be an HMO, you better do your job right," the plaintiffs' lawyer said.

training provider is paramount and the Academy has gone to great lengths to ensure that the content is unbiased and informative," Tassone said.

MEANWHILE, speaking about the initiative Kos Scavos, President of the Pharmacy Guild said the resource was designed to give frontline pharmacies the best quality learning available.

"We think partnering is an important step and the Guild is actively looking for more companies that want to support the development of new training and education resources for pharmacy assistants," he said.

"All of the new and improved units from the Community Pharmacy qualifications have been rewritten and updated with industry feedback from peak organisations including the National Asthma Council the Heart Foundation and others.

"In addition practising pharmacists help write and contribute to the content," he added.

See www.guild.org.au/academy.

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Travel Specials

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Travel Indochina is celebrating the Year of the Snake by offering three hot China specials (for bookings made by 31 March).

The specials include a Shanghai City Stay with 4 nights accom, brekkie daily, and a private half-day tour of Shanghai from \$300pp, as well as a Beijing & Xian Explorer from \$640pp including 3 nights accom in Beijing, 3 nights accom in Xian, a train trip between the cities, brekkie daily, and a private half day tour in Beijing and Xian.

Finally, the City & Warriors Footloose deal is priced from \$968pp incl 3 nights in Beijing, 1 night in Xian and 3 nights in Shanghai, brekkie daily, a complimentary private half-day tour each in Beijing, Xian and Shanghai, and two nights' overnight train (soft sleeper, four berth cabin) between Beijing - Xian and Xian - Shanghai.

See www.travelindochina.com.

Homeopathy faces Court

HOMEOPATHY Plus! Australia will face the Federal Court over allegations of misleading claims regarding the effectiveness of the whooping cough vaccine.

The action has been instigated by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, which has alleged that statements made on the Homeopathy Plus! website are in breach of the Competition and Consumer Act 2010.

The Homeopathy Plus! claims state that the whooping cough vaccine is "unreliable" and "largely ineffective" in preventing whooping cough and that homeopathic remedies are a safe and effective alternative for the prevention and treatment of whooping cough.

As part of its case the ACCC is seeking an injunction to have the

claims removed, as well as penalties against the company and individuals.

"Whooping cough is a highly infectious respiratory disease which is most serious in young children," the ACCC said.

"The Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing recommends children receive the whooping cough vaccine as part of routine childhood immunisation," the ACCC added.

Calcium supps safe

ASMI has added its voice to the growing swell of calcium support, saying that existing advice on the use of calcium supplements for the treatment or prevention of osteoporosis remains sound.

The comments follow a study which suggested very high calcium intake to an increased risk of heart disease and stroke.

Despite its reassurances, ASMI did however remind consumers to ensure their calcium intake does not exceed the recommended daily amount of 1000-1300 milligrams depending on age and sex.

New salt targets

The salt content of savoury crackers will be reduced over three years following an agreement between the Government and: Arnott's Australia, Kraft Foods Australia, PepsiCo Australia and retailers Woolworths, Coles and ALDI.

The changes will see salt reduced as follows: plain crackers: 850mg per 100g (max); flavoured crackers: 1000mg per 100g (max); flavoured rice crackers/cakes/corn cakes: 850mg per 100g (max); and a 15% sodium reduction towards the targets for products above the agreed maximum targets for all of the above categories.



A NEW social media trend?

A new study by the American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery (AAFPRS) has found that social media is leading consumers to have a more self-critical eye.

The finding was part of the AAFPRS' annual poll of 752 of the organisation's board-certified facial plastic surgeons which revealed that there was a 31% increase in requests for surgery as a result of social media photo sharing.

The study also showed that a growing number of procedures are cosmetic versus reconstructive in nature, accounting for 73% of all procedures in 2012, up from 62% in 2011.

The most popular social media inspired procedures included rhinoplasty, Botox, and facelifts.

Despite this, the survey also found that social media's influence as an info resource for plastic surgery is down, with just 7% of patients using it to research doctors and procedures in 2012, down from 35% in 2011.

WIN A BOSISTO'S TEA TREE PACK

Pharmacy Daily has teamed up with **Bosisto's** this week and is giving ten lucky readers the chance to win a Bosisto's Tea Tree prize pack, valued at \$45 each.

What's the secret to natural first aid? Bosisto's Tea Tree.

This Australian favourite contains 100%

pure tea tree oil – and is the perfect natural remedy for treating minor cuts and scrapes, soothing the itch of insect bites and relieving Tinea.

It can also be used in so many other ways throughout the home – from deodorising bins and pet areas to killing bacteria and eliminating odours.



For more information or a free handy hints pack visit www.fgb.com.au.

To win, simply be the first person to send in the correct answer to the question below to comp@pharmacydaily.com.au.

True or False: Bosisto's Tea Tree Spray is perfect for treating cuts and scrapes?

Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winners, Nancy Wehbe from The Pharmacy Guild of Australia and April Pearce of Ayr District Hospital.

Pharmaceutical Society of Australia

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