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## EMA issues pill advice

**COMBINED** contraceptives carry a very rare risk of blood clots, and the risk differs between types of combined contraceptives, according to the European Medicines Agency.

The comments come in response to growing reports in the media about combined contraceptives and venous thromboembolism.

“There is currently no new evidence that would suggest any change to the known safety profile of any combined contraceptives marketed today,” the EMA said.

“Therefore, there is no reason for any woman to stop using her contraception,” the EMA added.

## Free HIV testing in Vic

**THE** Victorian Department of Health has announced it will trial a HIV testing program which will see free point of care HIV testing rolled out across the state.

“By providing affordable, accessible, convenient, rapid HIV testing we can reduce a number of barriers to testing, such as the need to return for results and provide an incentive to frequent testing by getting results in 20 minutes or less,” said Minister for Health, David Davis.

“If more people test more often we would potentially see people accessing HIV treatments sooner and improving their long-term health and quality of life,” he added.

The rapid HIV point of care testing to be used in Victoria was approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration in December 2012.

## Pharmacist has voice on ethics

**THE** Pharmaceutical Society of Australia has welcomed the appointment of pharmacist Lyn Todd to the ACT Human Research Ethics Committee, saying it is a recognition of the diverse roles pharmacists play throughout the community.

The role of the committee is to review research proposals that involve humans, monitor the conduct of research and deal with any complaints and issues that may arise from research.

In her role, Todd will join a group of other professionals on the committee with the aim of protecting the welfare and rights of participants involved in research.

“The absence of a pharmacist on HRECs in the past has left a gap in the expertise available to them,” said National President of the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia, Grant Kardachi.

“The HRECs play a central role in the Australian system of ethical oversight of research involving humans.

“HRECs review research proposals involving human participants to ensure that they are ethically acceptable and in accordance with relevant standards and guidelines.

“The appointment of Ms Todd brings to the HREC an area of knowledge and experience which will be invaluable to its work,” he added.

ACT PSA Branch President and National Board Member Professor Gabrielle Cooper also chimed in her support, saying that the inclusion of an experienced pharmacist

recognised the expertise and experience pharmacists can add to high-quality research.

Meanwhile, Kardachi used the announcement as a platform to remind the industry that this year the PSA is launching a pilot ethics advisory service.

“So clearly the issue of ethics and ethical behaviour is a very important one for us and for the pharmacy profession as a whole,” he said.

## ACE and zinc reaction

**ACE** inhibitors and angiotensin 2 receptor antagonists or thiazide diuretics have the potential to reduce zinc levels in hypertensive patients, according to the results of a study published in the *International Journal of Clinical Practice*.

The research was designed to explore whether antihypertensive medicines have the potential to affect zinc status, and looked at eight studies which involved the use of ACE inhibitors, thiazide diuretics, beta blockers, or ARB drugs (of which five included a control group). Studies used urinary zinc excretion, plasma zinc levels or erythrocyte zinc as key measures of zinc status).

According to the study's findings there were increased urinary zinc losses for: captopril (from 50 mg/day), enalapril (20 mg/day), losartan (50 mg/day), losartan (50 mg/day) together with hydrochlorothiazide (12.5 mg/day), captopril (75 mg/day) together with frusemide (40 mg/day) and stand-alone hydrochlorothiazide (25 mg/day).

The study also noted serum levels of zinc decreased with captopril (50–150 mg/day), verapamil (240 mg/day), atenolol (50–150 mg/day) and the combination of losartan (50mg/day) and hydrochlorothiazide (12.5 mg/day), erythrocyte levels decreased with use of valsartan (80 mg/day) and in some studies for captopril, but not for metoprolol (100 mg/day), atenolol (50–150 mg/day), verapamil (240 mg/day), doxazosin (4 mg/day) or amlodipine 10 mg/day).

## Medical device changes

**THE** TGA has published a proposal paper for changes to premarket assessment requirements for medical devices.

The proposal paper is seeking to: refine a risk-based approach to regulation; ensure that the TGA undertakes a more comprehensive review of higher risk medical devices, in particular implantable and surgically invasive medical devices intended for long term use; increase transparency and accountability of the TGA's decision making; and allow Australian manufacturers of lower risk medical devices to have the option of European Conformity assessment for supply of their devices in Australia.

Interested parties should respond by close of business Friday 15 March 2013, see [www.tga.gov.au](http://www.tga.gov.au).



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### Guild Update

Bushfires have caused significant damage to areas of Tasmania throughout January.

The ATO recognise that businesses in areas affected by natural disasters may need more time to meet their lodgment and payment obligations.

If your pharmacy is in one of the identified affected postcodes listed below, the ATO will automatically make arrangements to defer the following taxation obligations - there is no need to apply for a deferral:

- lodgment and payment of the December monthly activity statement from the original due date of 21 January 2013 to 28 April 2013
- lodgment and payment of the January monthly activity statement from the original due date of 21 February 2013 to 28 April 2013
- lodgment and payment of the February monthly activity statement from the original due date of 21 March 2013 to 28 April 2013
- lodgment and payment of December quarterly activity statements from the original due date of 28 February 2013 to 28 April 2013.

List of postcodes:

7080 7082 7090 7171 7172  
7173 7174 7175 7176 7177  
7178 7179 7180 7182 7183  
7184 7186 7187 7190 7215

All deferrals granted for later dates will still apply.

If you are affected by a natural disaster and you need further assistance or your business is outside the following postcodes, phone the ATO on 1800 806 218.

For information about the tax consequences of a disaster, read the Guide to dealing with disasters.

For information about assistance from other Government agencies in Australia, visit the Disaster Assist website.



The Pharmacy Guild of Australia

## Monash chemistry focus

**PHARMACY** students at Monash University will now be able to make use of a new the Translational Medicinal Chemistry Facility at the University's Parkville campus.

The new facility is the result of a collaborative partnership between Monash Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences, the Federal and Victorian Governments, and private industry "to enhance Australia's translational medicinal chemistry drug development capabilities".

The facility is housed in new, dedicated and well-equipped laboratories and is co-located with the Centre for Drug Candidate Optimisation, which has collaboratively supported the translation of 16 drug candidates into clinical evaluation.

"Collaborative research between chemists, biologists and pharmaceutical scientists is essential to translate innovative research insights into high value, clinically relevant products and new

medicines," said Director of MIPS and Dean of the Faculty of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, Professor Bill Charman.

"Our strengths are in structure-based drug design and synthetic medicinal and organic chemistry. "Our researchers apply these chemical principles and techniques to the discovery and development of compounds to prevent, treat or cure disease," he added.

Charman also added that world-class medicinal chemistry was essential to translate fundamental biological and chemical insights into potential drug candidates destined for pre-clinical and clinical development.

### Compositional guide

**THE TGA** is seeking comments from interested parties on the draft compositional guideline for calcified Lithothamnion topiforme. See [www.tga.gov.au](http://www.tga.gov.au).

WIN A  
REEF  
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This week **Pharmacy Daily** is giving five lucky readers the chance to win a Reef prize pack, valued at over \$50 each.

Each prize pack contains Reef Dry Sun Tan Oil SPF30+, Reef Dry Touch Sunscreen Lotion SPF30+, Reef After Sun & Tan Extender and Reef iPhone cover.

Iconic Australian brand Reef will have you beach ready with this fabulous pack of Reef products including Reef Dry Sun Tan Oil SPF30+, Reef Dry Touch Sunscreen Lotion SPF30+, Reef After Sun and Tan Extender and a Reef iPhone cover. With Reef's full suncare range scented with their signature coconut fragrance, every day will seem like a summer day!

To win this great prize pack, simply be the first person to send in the correct answer to the question to: [comp@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:comp@pharmacydaily.com.au)

### Who would you recommend the Reef suncare range to?

Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner, **Abbey Butler** from **Flinders Medical Centre**.

## DISPENSARY CORNER

**IT'S** time to embrace foot health.

The newly instated Russian Defence Minister, Sergei Shoigu, has made it a priority to stamp out the dated practice of foot wrapping in the Russian military.

According to reports, foot wrapping has been the standard in the Russian military since the 1600's, and involves soldiers using rectangular strips of cloth, called portyanki, to carefully wrap around their feet to protect them from blisters whilst training, walking and warring.

The practice was adopted by Czar Peter the Great in the 17th century, after he learned that the Dutch army did the same.

Instead of these wraps, Shoigu has advocated the use of socks, saying "In 2013, or at least by the end of 2013, we must forget the word portyanki".

**NO US Death Star.**

It has long been a dream of Star Wars aficionados worldwide that the Death Star be recreated, however this dream has been dashed under the Obama administration.

According to reports, the White House responded to a petition signed by 34,435 Americans for the creation of a Death Star by the US.

"The Administration shares your desire for job creation and a strong national defence, but a Death Star isn't on the horizon," said Paul Shawcross, head of the White House budget office's science and space branch.

"The Administration does not support blowing up planets.

In terms of being fiscally responsible in uncertain times, the Shawcross also told the petitioners that "The construction of the Death Star has been estimated to cost more than

US\$850,000,000,000,000,000"

"We're working hard to reduce the deficit, not expand it," he added.