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Generic confusion

PHARMACISTS have an important role to play in improving public literacy around generic medicines, according to NPS.

The comments follow the publication of research in the *Journal of Pharmacy Practice and Research* which found that people don't fully understand the difference between branded drugs and their generic equivalent.

As such, to help pharmacists assist consumers to address concerns about medicines choices, the NPS has a selection of Brand Choices resources to help engage people in conversations about their medicines options and help improve their understanding of generic medicines.

To order the resources, [CLICK HERE](#).

Prezista approval

THE European Commission has approved a new Prezista (darunavir) 800mg tablet allowing people living with HIV to take one darunavir tablet once a day.

Darunavir is indicated in combination with other antiretrovirals for the treatment of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV-1) infection in treatment-experienced and treatment-naïve patients with no darunavir resistance-associated mutations.

Darunavir is always taken in combination with ritonavir and other HIV medicines together with food.

This new tablet strength has been developed to allow patients taking darunavir once daily to reduce the number of darunavir tablets by half.

NPS urges Champix caution

HEALTH professionals need to weigh the potential small cardiovascular risks associated with the quit-smoking medicine Champix (varenicline) against the immediate and substantial benefits of quitting smoking, according to NPS MedicineWise.

The comments come on the back of a large, meta-analysis of clinical trials that compared patients who received the smoking cessation drug Chantix (varenicline) to patients who received a placebo, conducted by Pfizer by the order of US Food and Drug Authority.

The FDA first notified the public about a possible increased risk of cardiovascular adverse events with Chantix in its June 2011 Drug Safety Communication (DSC).

Pfizer's recent meta analysis found that a higher occurrence of major adverse cardiovascular

events (a combined outcome of cardiovascular-related death, nonfatal heart attack, and nonfatal stroke) was observed in patients using Chantix compared to placebo.

"These events were uncommon in both the Chantix and placebo groups, and the increased risk was not statistically significant, which means it is uncertain whether the excess risk for the Chantix group was due to the drug or due to chance," the FDA said in a statement.

"However, the data analysed many different ways and consistently showed a higher occurrence of events in patients using Chantix, which makes it seem more likely that it is related to the drug and not purely a chance finding," the FDA added.

As such, NPS has urged health professionals advise patients to seek medical attention if they experience new or worsening symptoms of cardiovascular disease while taking varenicline.

"For people with no history of cardiovascular disease who are starting varenicline for smoking cessation, health professionals should advise that the medicine may cause a small increase in their absolute risk of a cardiovascular event," said NPS MedicineWise clinical adviser Dr Philippa Binns.

"But this small risk needs to be weighed up against the cardiovascular benefits if the patient is successful in quitting smoking as a result of taking the medicine," Binns added.

Cooking is the key

THE key to weight-loss may lay in cooking at home, according to the Dietitians Association of Australia (DAA).

The statement comes in conjunction with the release of Newspoll survey results of 200 young women aged 18-24 which found one of the hurdles faced in eating well is that they perceive take-away foods as convenient and easily available, compared with making a meal at home.

The report found that whilst three quarters of the women surveyed (76%) enjoy cooking to some degree, many still opt for regular take-away meals like pizza, fast food chain dinners and fish and chips.

"With Australia in the grip of an obesity epidemic, and younger women particularly prone to weight gain, cooking a proper main meal at home could be the answer to improving diet and weight problems in this age group," said DAA Spokesperson Prof Clare Collins.

Professor Collins further backed up her position citing studies which found people who report being more involved in buying and preparing food or who cook more often are more likely to meet nutrition guidelines.

In contrast, Collins said a dislike of cooking is linked with a lower intake of fruit and vegetables, and eating food prepared away from the home and on the run is associated with a poorer diet, higher in total fat and saturated fat.

"Food cooked at home is typically more nutritious than that prepared away from home," Collins said.

Pharmacy Cricket

THE sixth National Pharmacy Cricket Carnival will be played in Canberra from 23 - 26 January 2013.

Games will be played at Canberra Grammar & Kingston Oval with the trophy for the Carnival the famous 'Shield' The Chemists Interstate Challenge Shield 1908 - 2012.

Teams from the various states including a team from Industry will play over the four days.

The Carnival will conclude with a Trophy Presentation Dinner in the Dining Hall of Canberra Grammar.

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ADVENTURE World is offering savings of up to \$150 off six nights of exciting and adventurous activities, perfect for families, in the raw South African bush of the Kruger and Drakensberg regions.

The reduced price package starts at \$1,495 per person, and includes six nights accommodation in Makutsi Safari Springs Main Camp, breakfast and dinner daily, excursions to Kruger National Park and Blyde River Canyon, a local tribal village visit, three game drives in open 4WD safari vehicles, entrance fees and return transfers from Hoedspruit or Phalaborwa airport.

For details call 1300 320 795 or visit www.adventureworld.com.au.

MERCURE Capricorn Resort in Yeppoon on the Coral Coast is offering a sizzling summer deal which is set to entice families looking for a tropical escape.

From just \$149 per room per night, the sizzling Summer Package includes

accommodation in a Superior Room and full buffet breakfast for two adults and two children.

In addition, kids aged 0-16 years can eat until their little hearts content as their dinner meals are free when dining with adults- representing a 30% discount.

The Summer Package offer is valid for a limited time only and must be taken up by the 28 March 2013.

See www.mercure.com.

MS gets funding windfall

AUSTRALIANS suffering multiple sclerosis are set to get a boost with the announcement of \$2.14 million in funding for new research into multiple sclerosis.

Announcing the funding, Multiple Sclerosis Research Australia, said fourteen new grants will be awarded across universities and medical research institutes from all states of Australia.

The funded research will range from the investigation of MS biomarkers to diagnose and monitor MS, to others tackling regenerative medicine.

"Together with the ongoing projects currently receiving funding, the new grants commencing this year bring our research portfolio to a total of 42 projects in social and applied research, immunology, neurobiology, epidemiology and genetics," a statement from the MSRA said.

"The new projects will focus on the factors that may initiate MS, such as the role of infections and

genes, as well as other projects looking to block the ongoing neurological damage.

"Two projects will investigate ways to improve existing treatments available for MS, while another will look at how symptomatic treatment can be enhanced," the statement added.

Swisse at the Open

SWISSE has tapped Aussie tennis star Lleyton Hewitt to lead a new Swisse Wellness multi-media campaign during the 2013 Australian Open.

The TV, print and online campaign will see Hewitt joined by his three children, Mia, Cruz and Ava, and will mark the first above the line campaign to include the Swisse Active range.

Swisse's Men's Ultivite, High Strength Wild Neptune Krill Oil, Joints, Memory + Focus and the Swisse Active range will feature in the campaign.

DISPENSARY CORNER

NOW your pants have the cure.

With all the cellulite creams flying thick and fast through the beauty industry, one would assume that cellulite would be a thing of the past.

However despite the claims, it seems that the beauty industry may have overstated the effectiveness of its so-called remedies.

So it will be interesting to see how pair of jeans whose manufacturer, Wrangler, claims will reduce the texture of cellulite, fares.

The skinny leg jeans, imaginatively titled Smooth Leg jeans, are part of a new range from Wrangler, and are infused with algae extracts, retinol and caffeine, said to cut down unsightly cellulite.

But it does not end there, the Smooth Leg Jeans are not the only new kids on the block, with Wrangler also releasing Denim Spa skinny leg jeans range in two 'flavours' Olive Extract to tone and moisturise skin, and Aloe Vera to soothe sensitive skin.

THE new thing in burgers is horse.

Food and health authorities in Ireland are in a bit of an uproar after routine testing revealed the presence of horse meat in burger meat sold in supermarkets across the country.

According to reports, the levels of horse flesh in the burgers ranged from minute to up to 30%.

And it seems that the horse meat isn't restricted to just one brand of burger in one supermarket chain, with authorities confirming the presence of horse in burgers sold in Tesco, Lidl, Aldi and Spar.

"In Ireland, it is not in our culture to eat horsemeat and therefore, we do not expect to find it in a burger," said the Food Safety Authority of Ireland chief executive Alan Reilly.

WIN A
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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

**When would you use
Reef suncare products?**

Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner, **Maryann Gale** from **Boambee Amcal Pharmacy**.