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PBAC Mar agenda

THE Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee has released the agenda for its meeting in Mar 2013, with comments sought by 13 Feb 2013 on 56 submissions relating to new drugs, changes to listings and re-submissions. See www.pbs.gov.au.

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Diane 35 France suspension

THE French medicines agency has announced the suspension of marketing authorisation for Diane 35 (cyproterone acetate 2mg, ethinylestradiol 35 micrograms) and its generic equivalents.

In France the drug is only approved for the treatment of acne, but it's also available across other states in Europe for the treatment of acne in women who want to receive oral contraception as well as for the treatment of other skin conditions.

The French medicines agency (ANSM) has suspended Diane 35 following a review of known data.

ANSM said it considers that the medication carries a risk of thromboembolism, which has been well known for many years, while its "effectiveness in treating acne was only moderate and alternative treatments for acne are available".

The agency also noted that Diane 35 and its generics were widely used off-label as a contraceptive.

ANSM is asking the European Medicines Agency to carry out a

ASMI strategy role

THE Australian Self-Medication Industry is advertising for a Strategy Manager - Complementary Medicines, a newly established role within the ASMI Secretariat.

The North Sydney-based position will see the successful applicant establish, develop and manage the direction of the organisation's complementary medicines strategic plan, with applications closing Fri 08 Feb.

Europe-wide review of the drug.

Pending this investigation, women who are currently taking Diane 35 or one of its generics are advised not to stop the medicine.

HMR action urged

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia has suggested an immediate moratorium on all Home Medicines Reviews, due to a "very large overexpenditure" in the program.

According to a release from the Guild this morning, the rapid overexpenditure has demonstrated the unsustainability of the program as it currently operates, "putting at risk the patient benefits from other parts of the Fifth Community Pharmacy Agreement".

The Guild says that at the current spending rates there's an estimated potential overspending of more than twice the annual budget for the program.

"The Guild has longstanding concerns that the HMR model and, in particular the Direct Referral Pathway, is unsustainable, given the potential high demand for this service," the statement said.

The excess spending is largely attributable to the emergence of "aggressive business models" where part of the fee is paid to medical practices to secure access to their patients, with reviews occurring inside the medical centre.

"We cannot allow the HMR program or the role of Accredited Pharmacists to be compromised," the Guild said, with an urgent govt decision being sought.

Energy Slim off ARTG

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration has cancelled the registration of Energy Slim (Aust L 174861) after a compliance review.

The product's sponsor, World Class Physiques Pty Ltd, "failed to comply with notice under section 31 of the Act requiring it to provide information about whether the product should have been listed".

The Energy Slim cancellation is effective from 04 Jan 2013.

FDA orphan approval

THE US Food and Drug Administration has approved Kynampro (mipomersen sodium) injection as an addition to lipid-lowering medications and diet to treat patients with a rare type of high cholesterol called homozygous familial hypercholesterolemia.

Also known as HoFH, it's an inherited condition which affects about one in a million people across the USA.

It occurs when the body is unable to remove LDL-C from the blood, causing abnormally high levels of circulating LDL-C.

Last month the FDA also approved Juxtapid (lomitapide) to reduce LDL-C, total cholesterol, apolipoprotein B, and non-HDL-C in patients with HoFH.

Kynampro is administered once per week, with the FDA also requiring four postmarketing studies for the drug.

The FDA is also mandating a long-term registry of patients with the condition to determine the long-term safety of the drug, and an enhanced pharmacovigilance program.

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UNDECIDED romantics who have yet to decide how to spoil their loved one on this Valentine's Day need wonder no more with this offer from the 4 1/2-star Rydges in Western Sydney.

Located in Campbelltown, a short 45-min drive from Sydney, couples can enjoy a night of luxury and a three-course dinner from \$255 per couple per room.

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To book, phone (02) 4645 0500.

IF CRUISING is more your style, P&O Cruises are offering a nine-night sail around the idyllic islands of the South Pacific aboard the Pacific Pearl, with fares priced from \$692 pp.

Included in the price are all main meals, a wide variety of entertainment including stage shows, comedy and live music.

The vessel offers a private Oasis Retreat for adults only, multiple pools and a big outdoor screen to enjoy live sports on while cruising the high seas.

Visit www.travel.com.au to reserve your luxury cabin.

OR FOR a luxury hotel stay at a wide range of destinations, think of Starwood Hotels and 50% off rates if booked by 11 Feb.

To see the rates available, visit www.bit.ly/superstarwood.

Compounding guide soon

THE Pharmacy Board of Australia has confirmed that it will shortly release revised guidelines for complex compounding, which will be made available for general consultation before finalisation.

According to a communique issued by the Board relating to its most recent meeting in Jan, the Compounding Working Party is currently in the process of liaising with officers from the Therapeutic Goods Administration as well as the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Manufacturing Authority in relation to compounding.

An indicative curriculum for compounding courses has also been prepared, with a consultant engaged to map the National Competency Standards for Pharmacists against identified competencies for complex compounding.

The communique also details other board activities, including the referral of a small number of cases to jurisdictional tribunals where pharmacists were "found to have

breached legal and professional responsibilities relating to the possession and supply of Schedule 8 Poisons.

MEANWHILE the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency is currently in the process of establishing a Community Reference Group, as part of the implementation of the National Boards' community engagement strategy.

The group will complement the role of community members of National Boards, by providing consumer/community perspectives and advice to AHPRA.

The Community Reference Group will consist of ten members, with applications closing on Mon 11 Feb - details at www.ahpra.gov.au.

AND pharmacists holding general registration who did not renew by 30 Nov have until today to make a fast track application.

From tomorrow (01 Feb 2013) those who have not applied must lodge a fresh application for general registration.



DISPENSARY CORNER

A SCHOOL in the UK has banned students from wearing "onesie" pyjamas, after a craze saw them wearing the giant jumpsuits to class due to freezing temperatures.

The principal of Chailey School in East Sussex said teachers were surprised at the new trend which came after the children were told they could wear warmer clothes to deal with the cold weather.

He wrote to parents saying "it is not appropriate or acceptable - as has occurred in a few cases - for students to wear onesies," with other clothing such as jumpers, jackets, hats and gloves preferred.

A BROKEN bottle of cough syrup led to suspicions of murder, after British police were alerted to a vehicle which "appeared to have blood pouring from the boot".

A concerned witness tailed the car driven by 60-year-old Pat Major after she was spotted stuffing something into the rear of her vehicle which then dripped red liquid onto the roadway.

When officers caught up with the woman they discovered that the mysterious ooze was blackcurrant cough mixture - and the "blood-soaked body" was actually squashed shopping bags.

THIS may give some people an excuse to avoid eating their vegetables.

Leafy greens such as spinach and lettuce accounted for the most food-borne illnesses across the US between 1998 and 2008, according to a new report from the Centers for Disease Control.

The study looked at almost 5000 illness outbreaks which caused 130,000 hospitalisations and deaths over the decade.

23% of illnesses were blamed on salads, while 14% related to dairy products, and poultry was the third most common source of illness or hospitalisation.

The CDC stressed the report was not meant to discourage people from eating healthy foods.

WIN MICHEL MERCIER'S BRUSHES PACK

Every day this week, **Pharmacy Daily** is giving one lucky reader the chance to win **Michel Mercier's** Brushes Pack.

A normal brush design is a one level brushing surface, resulting in a high pressure while brushing the hair.

The Michel Mercier's Brush patent lies in a unique geometric

distribution of its 428 bristles of varying heights, which disperse the pressure placed on hair during brushing. The result is a far more pleasant brushing experience.

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



How many bristles does the Michel Mercier Brush have?

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Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner, **Monika Smith** of **Priceline Pharmacy**.