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## Aussie vaccinations

AUSTRALIANS visiting friends and relatives (VFR's) overseas are significantly less likely to get vaccinated than other travellers, despite having the highest risk of infection, according to new research from Sanofi Pasteur.

The study was conducted among 1,042 Aussies aged 18+ who had travelled overseas in the last 5 years.

According to the results, up to 86% of VFR's are not getting appropriately vaccinated when travelling to countries with high risk of disease including Asia and India.

This was in comparison to 73% of travellers who were travelling for other reasons including holiday, leisure or business.

Worryingly the research suggested that almost one in three travellers believe that Aussies visiting friends and relatives in developing countries are less likely to become sick during their stay, compared to those who aren't visiting friends and relatives.

Moreover the survey also found that more than 28% of travellers believe that Australians who have ancestors from developing countries are likely to have that same genetic protection to diseases which are common in that country.

Speaking about the results, National Medical Advisor for Travel Doctor, Dr Tony Gherardin, said "VFR's tend to disregard health warnings as they believe their heritage and connection with the region gives them some kind of immunity.

"The reality is these immunities won't stay intact after years of separation from an area," he added.

## Complementary concerns

COMPLEMENTARY and alternative medicines are a significant issue in cancer management, due to their capacity to cause harm, rapidly increasing use, availability, variety, and in some cases high financial costs, according to the Cancer Council.

The comments come as part of a new position statement from the Cancer Council on Complementary and Alternative Therapies.

"There is much controversy and debate about the use of complementary and alternative therapies," the position statement said.

"This is primarily due to the substantial gap between consumer beliefs around complementary and alternative therapies, and the evidence supporting their safety and effectiveness.

"While there is evidence to support the use of some complementary therapies, alternative therapies are typically unproven or have been shown to be ineffective.

"In some cases, use of

complementary and alternative therapies can be harmful, as some therapies may interact with conventional medicines or with each other," the statement added.

As such, the Council said that patients considering the use of complementary or alternative therapies should discuss this use with their medical practitioner.

The Council made several recommendations as part of its position statement including a call for the TGA to take a more active role in warning consumers about false claims made in relation to the benefits of complementary and alternative medicines.

The Council also recommended that the National Health & Medical Research Council fund further scientific studies to examine the safety and efficacy of promising and commonly used complementary and alternative cancer medicines, so that people who have been diagnosed with cancer and healthcare providers can differentiate between those that are not beneficial or are dangerous, and those that may be beneficial.

In addition, the Council recommended that healthcare practitioners routinely talk to cancer patients and survivors in a non-judgmental manner about the use of complementary and alternative therapies; and also encouraged patients who are considering using non-conventional therapies to make an informed choice (including asking about the efficacy, risks, contraindications and cost of the therapy).

## Today in PD's pages

TODAY'S *Pharmacy Daily* features two pages packed with news, plus a full page on p3 from the PSA regarding its upcoming Clinical and Practice Expo at the Hordern Pavilion Sydney.

## Australian babies

A NEW maternity indicators report released today by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare has found that the proportion of babies born weighing less than 2,750 grams at or after 40 weeks fell from 2.1% to 1.8% between 2004 and 2009.

Titled *National Core Maternity Indicators*, the report includes data for 2004 through to 2009 across 10 clinical indicators, including rates of caesarean section, induction of labour and small babies born at or after term.

The report will act as a baseline for measuring the effects of changes in the quality of maternity services across Australia following the introduction of the 2010-2015 National Maternity Services Plan in 2010.

"Some good news is that we have seen a higher proportion of women (80%) attending antenatal care during the first trimester, and a drop in the proportion of babies born weighing less than 2,750 grams at or after 40 weeks," said Professor Elizabeth Sullivan from the AIHW's National Perinatal Epidemiology and Statistics Unit.

"Rates of smoking in pregnancy in Australia also dropped-from 16.7% to 14.5% between 2004 and 2009," Sullivan added.

## Sleep in a beverage

NATURE'S Own has launched Australia's first natural sleep aid in powdered drink formula.

Complete Sleep Calming Hot Drink contains lactium, lemon balm, and Chamomile.

Lactium is a bioactive peptide to help alleviate stress, while lemon balm may help relieve tenseness, restlessness and irritability and chamomile is used to calm the nervous system.

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## Fair work module

**PHARMACISTS** can now access a new e-learning module from the Guild Pharmacy Academy, titled *Fair Work Act: Making sure your pharmacy is compliant*.

The module is available at myCPD to help pharmacies make sure they are complying fully with the requirements of the Fair Work Act.

The program takes approximately 1.5 hours to complete and has been accredited for three Group 2 CPD credits upon successful completion of assessment.

See [www.mycpd.org.au](http://www.mycpd.org.au).

## 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*.

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**Captain Cook Cruises** new Winter Warmer sale offers passengers savings of up to 25% off most three-, four- and seven-night Murray River Cruises.

CCC's Murray River cruises take place onboard the *PS Murray Princess*, a modern replica of the paddle wheelers that cruised the Murray in the 1800's.

The deal is available between June and August, with three-night Discovery Cruises priced from \$666pp (normally \$888pp). See [captaincook.com.au](http://captaincook.com.au).

**Adventure World** has reduced the price of an 8-day Alaskan Northern Passage voyage by \$140pp.

Priced from \$2,837pp the package includes 7-nights on board the *Wilderness Explorer*, most meals, taxes, port charges and fees and sightseeing at the Northern Passages and Glacier Bay National Park.  
Call 1300 320 795.

## GMiA strikes out at patents

**THE** Generic Medicines Industry Association has expressed its concern over "regular misuses of pharmaceutical patent and regulatory systems" saying the result is "unfortunate and inappropriate barriers to generic medicine market entry in Australia".

The comments follow the decision brought down by the Federal Court earlier this week to revoke patents on AstraZeneca's Crestor (rosuvastatin), leading suppliers of generic medicines a step closer to launching a generic version of the drug.

According to GMiA, misuses of patent and regulatory systems mean that the supply of generic medicines in Australia is being inappropriately delayed, together with the resulting significant cost savings to the government and the public.

"GMiA members believe the Australian legal framework should be changed to appropriately balance the protection of truly innovative medicines together with

processes which enable stakeholders to challenge patents of questionable validity," GMiA said in a statement.

"While sponsors of generic medicines have been successfully able to overturn these three rosuvastatin patents in the Federal Court, the cost and time associated with such legal action are substantial.

"Given the existing legal framework and the size of the Australian market, only weak patents related to the most profitable pharmaceuticals are likely to be challenged," GMiA added.

According to GMiA the cost of these 'bad patents' to the public and to government is "too significant to ignore".

"GMiA strongly recommends reform to redress this balance," GMiA said.

"Reforms are required to avoid delays in generic medicine market entry and thereby reduce the costs of pharmaceuticals to the government," GMiA added.



## DISPENSARY CORNER

**EXTREME** nature!

British fishing enthusiast, Steve Townson, has fulfilled a lifelong dream of nabbing one of the largest freshwater fish in the world, a 113kg arapaima.

Arapaima are a protected South American species, and thus Townson worked on a catch and release policy, using a 900g piranha as bait.

The monster fish was caught in the River Essequibo in Guyana.



Townson and his arapaima

## Disability centre

**SYDNEY** University is gearing up to launch a new centre tonight, aimed at increasing the social and economic inclusion of Australians living with disabilities.

The Centre for Disability Research and Policy is aimed at assisting national and regional efforts to redress the imbalances faced by people living with disabilities equalising their opportunities for employment, education and social inclusion.

At present, around as many as 19% of Australians have a disability, whilst 15% experience disability lasting five years or longer and are living with long-term physical, sensory, intellectual or mental disability or chronic health conditions.

"This new centre is about enabling people with disabilities to realise their potential and participate productively in society," said Centre Director, Professor Gwynnyth Llewellyn.

"Many people with impairments tell us that it is not the condition itself which hinders their progress, but rather the way society restricts them from controlling and planning their own life," Professor Llewellyn added.



## WIN A HELLO KITTY PACK

This week *Pharmacy Daily* is giving five lucky readers the chance to win a **Hello Kitty** prize pack, valued at \$55.70 each.

Hello Kitty Cosmetics, the epitome of sophisticated cuteness has arrived! Playfully packaged, European designed and formulated, this full cosmetic range oozes quality and style. The iconic Hello Kitty brand brings the product to life with her dynamic spark and whimsical charm. Hello Kitty is a cult favourite and a brand that transcends generations like no other brand. We heart Hello Kitty and think the NEW range is just perfect.

For your chance to win, simply be the first person to send in the correct answer to the question below to: [comp@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:comp@pharmacydaily.com.au)

How many shades of Kohl Eye Pencil are there in the Hello Kitty Cosmetics collection?

Hint! Visit [www.heritagebrands.com.au/hello-kitty](http://www.heritagebrands.com.au/hello-kitty)

Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner, **Michael Venn** from **Murray T Martin Pharmacy**.





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