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## 4 weeks to CPEXpo

THERE are just four weeks until the PSA's Clinical and Practice Expo which takes place at Sydney's Hordern Pavilion 31 May-02 Jun.

The event offers up to 38 CPD points, with day passes from \$127 and significant opportunities for education, networking and updates to "invigorate your professional practice".

For details see **page three**.

## FDA Valproate alert

THE US FDA has warned pregnant women not to use medications including valproate sodium, most commonly used for migraines.

According to an FDA update, these drugs can cause decreased IQ scores in children whose mothers took the medication during pregnancy.

Valproate products already have a boxed warning for foetal risk, including birth defects, with a recent review finding further evidence of the IQ risk, leading to the strengthened warnings.

## Pholcodine reassurance

THE Australian Self Medication Industry this morning moved to reassure consumers that cough medicines and lozenges containing pholcodine can continue to be used, as directed, for the treatment of non-productive cough.

It follows recent media coverage of calls by an allergy group calling for restrictions on the availability of pholcodine-containing cough medicines, on the basis that a

small group of patients may be at increased risk of anaphylaxis when using neuromuscular blocking agents for some types of surgeries.

ASMI Scientific and Regulatory Affairs Director, Steve Scarff, said the organisation is concerned that the statements may cause "undue alarm and confusion," with no new risks identified for pholcodine.

"This issue is around immune sensitivity to unrelated chemicals and does not relate to a drug interaction," he said.

"Pholcodine has been used as a cough suppressant since the 1950s. It has an established safety profile and remains an efficacious pharmacy-only cough suppressant option," Scarff added.

## Pfizer Viagra direct

PFIZER has launched a new website in the USA offering home delivery of Viagra, including three free tablets, a 30% discount on repeats and a "quick and convenient" distribution method via CVS/pharmacy.

A prescription is required, and the website also offers comprehensive information about the erectile dysfunction medication including the dangers of counterfeit drugs.

See [www.viagra.com](http://www.viagra.com).

## Lyme campaign

AWARENESS raising events for Lyme disease will take place across Australia this Fri and Sat, with patients mobilising in Adelaide, Brisbane, Hobart, Melbourne, Perth, Sydney and regions.

The protesters want to inform the public of the "real and present danger" of Lyme disease, urging education of the health sector on the accurate diagnosis and effective treatment of Lyme and other tick-borne infections.

It's part of a global campaign involving almost 30 countries, with one of the key issues being the huge expense of antibiotic treatment for Lyme disease and its co-infections, which can cost about \$1200 for a three week supply. See [www.lymeaustralia.com](http://www.lymeaustralia.com).

## PD's Friday winner

CONGRATULATIONS to the winner of last Friday's A'kin competition in *Pharmacy Daily*, Desiree Elkhoury of Flinders Medical Centre.

## WIN THE LATEST FROM SUKIN!



Every day this week, PD is giving two lucky readers the chance to win Sukin's hottest NEW skincare products.

Sukin's NEW Rose Hip Hydrating

Day Cream, combines rose hip oil and pomegranate to help combat dry skin and prevent the signs of premature ageing, along with Kakadu plum, naturally rich in vitamins to leave skin looking radiant, smooth and hydrated. To win, be the first person to send the correct answer to the daily question below to: [comp@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:comp@pharmacydaily.com.au)

Which vitamin is Kakadu Plum naturally high in?

Hint! Visit

[www.sukinorganics.com](http://www.sukinorganics.com)

Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winners, Georgia Kilpatrick of Health World Limited and Sandra Bowles from Broadford Pharmacy.

Pharmacy Daily is Australia's favourite daily pharmaceutical industry newsletter, read by more than 10,000 people across the industry each day.

# Pharmacy DAILY

**We are currently recruiting for two roles to support our ongoing strong growth.**

## News Reporter

This is a permanent part-time role, working five mornings per week from our offices in Epping, NSW. The successful applicant will be an experienced writer with a good sense for news, preferably with knowledge of the pharmacy industry. As well as sourcing the latest pharmacy industry news you will be helping with the production of the newsletter so desktop publishing experience (Adobe Indesign) will be well regarded. On-the-job training will be provided.

## Business Development Manager

Pharmacy Daily is seeking a Business Development Manager, to promote our popular newsletter to pharmacy suppliers. This is a part-time contract role with flexible hours, which would ideally suit someone with pharmaceutical or medical industry sales experience. Duties will involve sourcing new business from advertisers and developing relationships with clients with the aim of further growing the business.

Salary for both roles will be commensurate with experience. Join our fun friendly team working to keep the pharmacy industry informed. Applications due by Friday 10th May to [jobs@traveldaily.com.au](mailto:jobs@traveldaily.com.au).

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## Guild Update

### Chemotherapy

**THE** announcement by the Federal Government of additional funding for the provision of chemotherapy medicines has been welcomed by the Guild.

This commitment is important to ensure these vital medicines continue to be available for cancer patients.

The Executive Director of the Guild, David Quilty, said the Guild appreciated that the Government had worked hard to find an interim solution to this matter at a time when the fiscal environment is extremely difficult.

"We also welcome the fact that this interim funding has been found from outside the Community Pharmacy Agreement.

"This means that the vast majority of community pharmacies which are not involved in the provision of chemotherapy medicines will not be disadvantaged," Mr Quilty said.

The new funding which will be provided from 1 July until 31 December is an acknowledgement that the viability of private chemotherapy service delivery had been put at risk by the impact of price disclosure cuts from last December on some chemotherapy drugs, and that previously cross-subsidised chemotherapy services were in danger of being rendered uneconomic.

Mr Quilty commended the approach taken by the chemotherapy medicine providers over the past six months, as they continued to provide services for the benefit of patients.



The Pharmacy Guild of Australia

## Chemmart assistants soar

**PHARMACY** assistants working across the Chemmart group are proving a valuable driver of professional services, having booked more than 8000 influenza vaccinations already this year.

That was one of the figures cited at last weekend's biannual Chemmart Pharmacy Assistants conference which took place in Melbourne.

More than 250 people attended the event, where keynote speaker and "international marketing guru" Amanda Stevens described pharmacy assistants the 'superheroes' of the business.

"Chemmart Pharmacy Assistants play an important role when representing the respected Chemmart Pharmacy brand.

"They need to ensure they consistently live the brand and deliver the most important aspect of the marketing mix - a great customer experience," she said.

The conference also heard that during the group's annual campaign to raise awareness of heart disease in March more than 15,000 customers had their blood pressure checked.

Chemmart Pharmacy executive director Jonathan Layton said this year's event had a record number

### IVD consultation

**THE** TGA is seeking comments from interested parties on a consultation paper about *Proposed amendments to the new regulatory framework for In Vitro Diagnostic medical devices* - see [tga.gov.au](http://tga.gov.au).

of attendees, up 40% on the 2011 conference.

"Chemmart Pharmacy believes strongly in its Wellbeing Services strategy but it would not be possible without the committed execution from our assistants," Layton said.

"The conference is an opportunity to thank the people at the coalface and provide them with the support and knowledge they need to provide appropriate solutions to their customers," he added.

It's the largest branded pharmacy assistant conference of its kind in Australia, and this year also saw the launch of the Chemmart Pharmacy Retail Manager of the Year award.

### Antibiotic intervention

**INTERVENTIONS** to reduce antibiotic prescribing for hospital patients can improve clinical outcomes and cut antimicrobial resistance, according to a Cochrane review covered in this month's *Medical Journal of Australia*.

The updated meta-analysis and review which was first published in 2005, found that 84% of interventions targeted antibiotic prescribing such as the route of administration, choice of antibiotic and the timing of the first dose, while the rest aimed to reduce exposure of patients to antibiotics by looking at the decision to treat or the duration.

Four interventions intended to increase effective prescribing for pneumonia were associated with a significant reduction in mortality.



### DISPENSARY CORNER

**RODENTS** apparently have a use other than spreading disease.

Scores of them have been on show this week in the US town of Bedford in New England, during the American Gerbil Society's annual pageant.

Contestants had to demonstrate their agility by racing through a course and making their way through various obstacles.

Apparently it's fun for all the family, with Donna Anastasi, who's vice president of the society, saying the sport of gerbil agility is very enjoyable, "easy and affordable and something you can do with your kids".

**A SURVEY** in the UK has found disgracefully low levels of exercise, with 25% of adults polled admitting they walk for no more than one hour per week.

Shockingly, the study also found a further 43% who walked for less than two hours per week - despite 93% of respondents agreeing that walking was good exercise.

Walking group The Ramblers described the findings as an "inactivity pandemic".

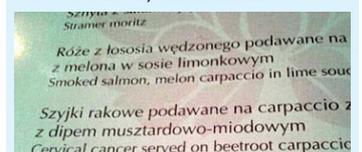
**TRAVELLERS** in Poland should check the menu carefully when they eat out, according to a British tourist who discovered one restaurant offering "cervical cancer served on beetroot carpaccio".

Owen Durray was on holiday in the town of Poznan, and eating at a seafood restaurant called Bee Jays in the main street.

"I wanted something fishy but I didn't expect this," he said, adding that he quickly lost his appetite when he read the menu (below).

A spokesman for the restaurant said the meal was actually a crayfish dish.

"We will be having a word with our translator," he added.



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