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BENSON Medical Services is today promoting its Snoreben product, manufactured in Australia as an effective non-surgical solution to help patients breathe better and sleep at night.

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Kava anxiety study

A **UNIVERSITY** of Melbourne study published in the *Journal of Clinical Psychopharmacology* has reported on a world-first clinical trial which found that Kava significantly reduced the symptoms of people suffering anxiety.

Popular in South Pacific nations as an inebriate, Kava is a medicinal plant which "offers a potential natural alternative for the treatment of chronic clinical anxiety," according to lead researcher, Dr Jerome Sarris.

"Unlike some other options it has less risk of dependency and less potential for side effects".

The study was funded by the NHMRC and Integria Healthcare, the manufacturer of MediHerb and Thompson's Kava products.

Pradaxa DAA alert

NPS Medicinewise has reminded pharmacists that dabigatran (Pradaxa) should be dispensed and stored in original packaging only, to protect from moisture and humidity.

Repackaging into DAAs can expose the capsules to moisture or humidity, leading to product breakdown and loss of potency.

SHPA blasts Guild, 5CPA

THE Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia says this week's controversy over the Senate Committee report into chemotherapy (**PD Mon**) has revealed the lack of transparency surrounding the Fifth Community Pharmacy Agreement.

In a statement issued yesterday, the Society said that despite the Guild's arguments that chemo funding is not part of the agreement, "the Senate Committee found that the paper trail and the Guild's own announcements showed that agreements between the Commonwealth and the Guild were intended to result in a cut to chemotherapy funding, and that any monies required to support chemotherapy services should be found from within the 5CPA".

The SHPA said this shows that "again and again the notion of funding of pharmacy services through an agreement negotiated by a single pharmacy organisation is revealing its shortcomings.

"In the past year in addition to the chemotherapy issue we have also seen a crisis in HMR funding, delays in implementing the hospital referral pathway for HMRs, and the restrictions on rural CE allowance to accredited Group 2 CPD," the statement said.

In particular, the SHPA said that decisions that affect the interests of Australian consumers, the Australian healthcare system and the pharmacy profession as a whole "are made by a single pharmacy organisation with limited membership criteria."

The Society said it believes that a single pharmacy organisation cannot adequately represent the entire profession and the interests of consumers across all sectors where medicines are supplied.

MEANWHILE in relation to the chemotherapy issue, the SHPA says that current business rules discriminate between patients based on the ownership of the pharmacy and the hospital where they are treated.

SHPA has proposed an alternative "revised and transparent model" that clearly identifies the four component costs of chemotherapy: the cost of the medicine, the cost of consumables, the preparation and reconstitution fee, and pharmacy professional services fees.

The proposal also includes a revision of the business rules for PBS claiming, including offering the Chemotherapy Pharmaceuticals Access Program (CPAP) to both public and private hospital pharmacy providers.

SHPA says it will seek to work with DoHA on the \$1.2m chemotherapy review (**PD** yesterday) to ensure the services can be "reasonably and adequately funded."

\$41m profit for GSK

GLAXOSMITHKLINE says the local Pharma industry appears to be in a negative cycle, after reporting its 2012 figures earlier this week.

GSK's 2012 sales in Australia amounted to \$1.452 billion, and while sales were up marginally overall, with a 9% growth in exports to \$521 million, the \$41m pre-tax profit was lower due to changes in the Pharmaceutical business.

The changing industry and PBS reform saw GSK divest itself of its Classic Brands division (comprising 25 non-promoted and genericised products) plus several OTC brands to Aspen and restructured its Vic-based pharmaceutical division.

"Our pipeline of new medicines has the potential to transform GSK's future and as such the divestment of these brands allows us to focus more on bringing new medicines to Australian patients," said Geoff McDonald, GSK's general manager Pharmaceuticals Australia.

The Consumer Healthcare division saw sales rise to \$355m, with 18% growth in Panadol Osteo and a good performance from specialist oral health brands, while sales also rose in the Opiates division where demand for medicinal poppies continues to expand.

Pharmaceutical Society of Australia

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Travel Specials

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SAVINGS of up to \$4,470 per couple are available on a series of Discover the World Cruising itineraries this year.

The 'two for one' cruise fares are offered on the 8 day *Romantic Rivas* cruise in France and Italy, as well as the 8 day *Treasures of South Italy and Malta*, for selected departures in June, August and October 2013.

The trips are aboard the 67 metre *Variety Voyager* mega yacht - call 1800 623 267.

Consumers want generics

A **SIGNIFICANT** majority of consumers surveyed in a recent poll of pharmacy customers said they always chose the generic version of a medication if it was available.

The Canstar Blue-commissioned study summarised responses from over 1900 Australians who had made a pharmacy purchase over the last six months.

"Almost three quarters of the respondents to our survey said they believed prescription medication was too expensive," said Canstar Blue spokesperson Rebecca Logan.

"Relevant to our finding was that 70% always chose the generic version...generics often being cheaper than the branded version on offer," she said.

"And further, 76% thought they should not have to pay for a doctor's visit to have a script renewed," Logan added.

Other intriguing findings from the survey were that almost a third of respondents said they knew their pharmacist by name, and more than half took advice from their pharmacist on what over-the-

counter medication they could take before resorting to a doctor's visit.

30% said they prefer to 'self-medicate' than visit a doctor's surgery.

The survey also highlighted differences between different demographic groups, with 36% of 'Baby Boomers' confident about asking for certain medications at the pharmacy, contrasted with just 10% of 'Generation Y' consumers.

Baby Boomers were half as likely as Gen X or Y respondents to self-medicate (20%, versus 41% and 42% respectively).

FDA approvals

THE US Food and Drug Administration has approved the cobas EGFR Mutation Test, a companion diagnostic for the cancer drug Tarceva (erlotinib).

It's the first FDA-approved companion diagnostic which detects epidermal growth factor receptor (EGFR) gene mutations, which are present in about 10% of non-small-cell lung cancers.

The test is being approved with an expanded use for Tarceva as a first-line treatment for patients with these cancers who have certain mutations in the EGFR gene.

The FDA has also granted approval for Numalize, a new nimodipine oral solution to treat patients experiencing symptoms resulting from subarachnoid haemorrhage.

Nimodipine was previously only available as a liquid-filled gel cap.

€40.6m Sanofi fine

SANOFI has been ordered to pay €40.6m in penalties for a "smear campaign" in France targeting generic versions of Plavix.

The French competition authority alleged that Sanofi's sales force criticised the generics when talking with pharmacists and doctors in 2009 and 2010, as well as urging medical practitioners not to allow substitution on prescriptions.

Plavix was the most costly medicine for France's health system in 2008, costing €625m.

Sanofi said it's "reviewing all the points to prepare an appeal".

DISPENSARY CORNER



ONE day spiders may not be as feared as they are now, with scientists in Brazil citing promising research into a potential spider venom immunisation.

In experiments the researchers created a synthetic protein, which protected rabbits from the effects of the poison of the *Loxosceles* spider which each year hospitalises almost 7,000 people annually.

The report in the *Vaccine* journal said that rabbits which were immunised using the protein were protected from skin damage at the site of the spider bite, as well as from haemorrhaging.

UNICEF has officially declared the tiny island of North Tarawa as the Pacific region's first "open defecation-free" or ODF destination.

North Tarawa is part of Kiribati, and has a population of about 5,000 people - most of whom used to go and poo on the beach.

UNICEF spokeswoman Nuzhat Shahzadi said the move was a major breakthrough for the island nation, where up to 70% of people in many communities still practice open defecation.

"North Tarawa Island can look forward to significant reduction in diarrheal diseases and lower infant and under five mortality rates as a result," she said.

Kiribati president Anote Tong has set a target date of December 2015 for the entire country to become ODF.

THE makers of a popular British renovation product have launched special underpants which aim to minimise "unsightly cracks".

Polyfilla, which is used to prepare walls for painting, said the innovation has a higher, more secure waistband to protect the wearer's modesty.

And the company also reported a survey which found the average Briton is exposed to a backside more than three times a week, with builders the main culprits.

WIN AN INNOXA BEAUTY ESSENTIALS PACK



This week *Pharmacy Daily* is giving five lucky readers the chance to win an **Innova** beauty essentials pack including classic and new products across the Innova range.

NEW Innova Anti-Ageing & Firming facial serum - improves skin complexion to promote radiant looking skin. Specially formulated with anti-ageing ingredients to help fight signs of ageing.

NEW Antioxidant lip glaze - a nourishing lip glaze with high gloss and shine contains botanical and antioxidant rich ingredients to repair and condition lips.

To win this great prize, be the first person to send in the correct answer to the question below to: comp@pharmacydaily.com.au.

Which Innova Foundation has 5 benefits in 1?

Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner, Lindsay Scott from Broken Hill Health Service.