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Not so Vigorous

THE TGA has warned consumers about the consumption of Vigor Tea, which has been found to contain the undeclared derivative substance of sulfoaldenafil, despite product packaging claims that it is a herbal product.

e-Health review flagged

FEDERAL health minister Peter Dutton has confirmed a review of the "struggling" Personally Controlled Electronic Health Records program.

The investigation will be chaired by Richard Royle, Executive Director of the UnitingCare Health group in Queensland, who's also vice president of the Australian Private Hospitals Association and is overseeing the country's "first fully integrated digital hospital" in a pilot project at Hervey Bay.

Dutton said that a year after the scheme had been introduced only a fraction of Australians have established a record, and for those who have just a few hundred doctors have added a Shared Health Summary.

"This defeats the purpose of having a national, electronic system that is meant to help save lives.

"The government fully supports the concept of electronic health

records but it must be fit for purpose and cost effective," he said.

Dr Steve Hambleton, president of the Australian Medical Association and Andrew Waldock, Chief Information Officer of Australia Post will also assist in the review.

The review encompasses the patient experience, clinician experience and that of pharmacists and other health care professionals, other current and potential stakeholders and the role of the private sector in providing solutions.

Public submissions will be sought, with the review to report back by the middle of next month.

RGH on Ossification

THIS week's Repatriation General Hospital Pharmacy E-Bulletin gives a brief review of Heterotopic Ossification, which is the formation of lamellar bone within soft tissue.

It can present as loss of mobility, swelling, heat, erythema, local pain and fever, and is sometimes mistaken for other conditions such as DVT or infection.

A range of treatments are used including bisphosphonates.

The bulletin is available at no charge by **CLICKING HERE**.

TGA update on PIP's

PIP silicone gel filled breast implants are reported to have a higher prevalence and earlier incidence of implant ruptures than other silicone breast implants.

The TGA has highlighted the EMA updated report from the European Commission's Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks (SCENIHR) which has moderated its position in light of more data.

The TGA has also conducted a "detailed investigation" and report - **CLICK HERE** to access the report.

PHARMACY OF THE YEAR 2014

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No ASMI code change

THE Australian Self Medication Industry will not make any changes to its Code of Practice this year, it was announced last week.

The move follows the annual review of the Code by ASMI's Marketing and Ethics Subcommittee.

WIN A COPY OF AUSTRALIAN PHARMACY LAW AND PRACTICE

This week *PD* is giving five lucky readers the chance to win a copy of 'Australian Law and Practice 2nd Edition' valued at \$89.95.



'Australian Pharmacy Law and Practice 2E' is the key law and ethics resource. Including a wealth of new content, all chapters are mapped to the National Competency Standards Framework for Pharmacists 2010.

To win, be the first person to send in the correct answer to the question below to:

comp@pharmacydaily.com.au.

What are all the chapters of the book mapped to?

Hint! Visit www.elsevierhealth.com

Heart Foundation - statins

THE National Heart Foundation has come out strongly condemning the ABC *Catalyst* program along with other medical authorities (*PD* 30 & 31 Oct), academics and NPS MedicineWise, for the danger of the potential impact of the unbalanced program shown last Thu.

The Heart Foundation is urging people not to change their medication or ignore their cholesterol levels.

CEO Dr Lyn Roberts said the program has caused confusion in the community and she was worried it may be putting lives at risk.

"We know patients are already contacting their GPs and health professionals anxious about their heart health on the basis of the program.

"The Heart Foundation and the wider medical community are concerned that people may have been misled and might stop taking their statins without consulting their doctor," Dr Roberts said.

"The conclusions presented in the ABC *Catalyst* program are not supported by the Heart Foundation or the vast majority of the medical and scientific communities across the country and internationally.

"High cholesterol remains a major risk factor for heart attack, stroke and peripheral vascular disease and having multiple risk factors places you at higher risk.

"We are shocked by the disregard of the evidence and we are considering our next course of action," Dr Roberts said.

Heart Foundation's Chief Medical

Adviser Professor James Tatoulis said that after a heart attack, treatment with a statin is standard, evidence-based management.

"Cholesterol-lowering drugs, known as statins, are the most commonly prescribed drugs in Australia and are a very effective way of reducing the risk of having a heart attack, particularly for people who have heart disease," Prof Tatoulis said.

"Some of the largest studies ever conducted in medicine have demonstrated that statins decrease further heart attacks and save lives."

APC releases Intern practice questions

THE Australian Pharmacy Council has released a full 125-question Intern Written Examination practice paper, in response to requests from pharmacy interns for more practice questions.

The paper comes with a comprehensive answer sheet, which interns can use as a resource to aid in their exam preparation.

The content and layout is the same as that used in the real computer-based exam, but unlike the practice paper in the actual examination all questions are delivered by computer and are randomised.

APC said it now intends to release practice papers regularly each year.

The practice paper can be accessed online by **CLICKING HERE**, while **CLICK HERE** to view the practice paper answers.

Nipro meter recall

NIPRO Australia has announced the recall of some models of its TRUEtrack and TRUEbalance blood glucose meters, which are being replaced with updated devices.

The products are mainly used for self testing by patients with diabetes, and the recall follows notification that a small number of the meters may have been incorrectly calibrated with the wrong unit of measure.

A miscalibrated meter would use mg/dL instead of mmol/L, which is the standard unit used here.

There had been no reports of adverse events related to the issue in Australia as at 23 Oct 2013.

Pharmacies which supply the meters are being advised to check the lot numbers of any devices in stock, with further information available by calling 1800 451 737.

A full list of the affected serial numbers can be accessed by **CLICKING HERE**.

Formula vending project canned

A TRIAL scheme which allowed people to buy baby formula via automatic dispensing machines in Beijing pharmacies has been suspended.

According to the *Beijing Youth Daily*, the project was in operation in five chemist shops in the Chinese capital but has now been dropped by the China International Trade Association which had launched the pilot program.

No reason was given for the suspension.

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Weekly Comment

Welcome to PD's weekly comment feature. This week's contributor is **Patrick Davies, President of the National Pharmaceutical Services Association (NPSA).**



Industry comes together through adversity

Last week New South Wales was in a state of emergency. Authorities had the power to forcibly remove people, cut electricity and water supplies, and shore up or demolish buildings. Numerous roads and highways were also closed as part of efforts to control multiple out-of-control fire fronts.

Despite the widespread devastation caused by bushfires, critical medicines continued to get through to pharmacies across the State.

CSO wholesalers Symbion and Sigma Pharmaceuticals kept a constant watch on the situation and continued providing pharmacies in affected areas with essential deliveries.

Where roads were closed, alternative routes were taken or delivery was arranged to nearby pharmacies where the order could be picked up when the roads re-opened.

This is another example of how the industry goes the extra mile to negotiate a reliable solution and ensure patient care remains paramount, regardless of the challenges.

It further underlines the importance of the Community Service Obligation, which ensures the delivery of PBS medicines by CSO wholesalers across Australia in a timely, affordable and secure way.

CHF anti-agreement push

THE Consumers Health Forum has reiterated its concerns about the Fifth Community Pharmacy Agreement, with the CHF annual report posing a number of questions including "why is it that a \$15 billion dollar agreement to support community pharmacy is lacking in basic elements of good governance: accountability, participation, predictability and transparency."

AHPRA report

THE 2012/13 Annual Report of the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) and the National Boards has been published.

The report details the work of the National Boards and AHPRA in implementing the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme over the 12 months to 30 June 2013.

There are now more than 590,000 health practitioners registered to practise in Australia – an increase in all professions and more than ever before – with one in 20 working Australians a registered health practitioner.

27,339 pharmacists were registered at the end of June 2013, an increase of 5.4 per cent since national registration data was first published in June 2011.

429 notifications (concerns/complaints) were received about pharmacists of whom only three lost registration.

The full report is accessible via the website at www.ahpra.gov.au.

The organisation presented the report at its annual general meeting last week, saying that it's proud to be "turning up the heat on political and public awareness of the inequity and the dysfunction" which is apparent in the \$100 billion Australian health system.

"That means we are asking very hard questions of Government and standing some tough ground with the vested and powerful interests that are both responsible for providing us with high quality care and for reaping world class profits," wrote CHF chair Karen Carey.

As well as questioning the governance of the 5CPA, another issue highlighted is the recent controversy around the dextropropoxyphene medications such as Di-Gesic and Doloxene.

"Why is it that Australia's medicines regulator can act to protect the public by removing a drug from sale because of safety concerns, and a corporate legal challenge can put it back on the shelves," the CHF asked.

During the year the CHF has run major campaigns on complementary medicines, high health costs, universal ambulance access, and more.

A major effort is also underway in which CHF is collaborating with NPS MedicineWise to undertake the *Community Quality Use of Medicines and Medical Tests* project, which aims to promote better understanding of health issues and effective health decisions.

CLICK HERE to view the report.



DISPENSARY CORNER

COMPUTER manufacturer Dell has admitted that some of its laptops smell like cat pee, but denies that it's a safety issue.

According to the *BBC*, a number of customers have complained about the odour emitted by Dell Latitude 6430u Ultrabooks, saying it smells like feline urine.

Engineers say the stench, which has since been resolved, was due to an issue from the manufacturing process.

"The smell is not related to cat urine or any other type of biological contaminant, nor is it a health hazard," said a Dell support technician.

MOVE over, Movember.

58-year-old Ram Singh Chauhan from Jaipur, India has been officially named as the owner of the world's longest moustache.

Chauhan, who's been cultivating his facial hair for the last 43 years, says his spectacular 'tache is his "most prized possession."

"It has taken me a long, long time to get it to 14 feet. it's not been an easy task," he said.

"I haven't used a shaving blade on my moustache, or trimmed it since 1970.

"Growing a moustache is like taking care of a baby - you really need to nurture it," he added.

The incredible mo made a cameo appearance in the James Bond film *Octopussy*, and he spends about two hours a day grooming it.

Despite all of its care, the mo's growth has slowed drastically in recent years but is still way ahead of other contenders.

The feat has now been recognised by the Guinness Book of World Records (below).



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