

Pharmacy Alliance

TODAY'S issue of *Pharmacy Daily* has three pages packed with the latest pharmacy industry news, plus a full page from Pharmacy Alliance promoting the benefits of joining its 400-strong membership. See **page four** for details.

John Black
Owner of
McDonalds Amcal
Pharmacy Casino NSW



"...Now we do around 300 scripts a day, so this is a staggering saving of about 300 minutes or 5 hours of labour because of the Rowa automation and that is me being quite conservative."

John Black
Owner of McDonalds
Amcal Pharmacy
Casino NSW



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Di-Gesic supply warning

ASPEN Australia has advised pharmacists that it is "unexpectedly out of stock" of Di-Gesic (dextropropoxyphene HCl 32.5mg/paracetamol 325mg), and it is not clear at this stage when supply will resume.

It's the latest twist in the long-running saga which has seen Aspen strenuously (and successfully) appeal against a TGA decision to cancel the registration of medications containing dextropropoxyphene (**PD 16 Sep**).

However Aspen says that the fact that it is out of stock is not related to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal ruling in favour of keeping dextropropoxyphene painkillers on the ARTG made last month, or to the consequential special conditions relating to supply of Di-Gesic which will come into effect in ten days time.

In an update issued on Friday the company said it believes that stock of Di-Gesic may still be available at pharmaceutical wholesalers and at pharmacies.

To complicate matters further, Aspen is also currently out of stock of Doloxene (dextropropoxyphene napsylate 100mg).

Both medications are subject to new conditions under the AAT ruling, which require prescribers to provide a letter to pharmacists confirming that they are aware that the products are only approved for patients who are not able to be adequately treated with other mild analgesics, and that they have warned the patient about the appropriate use of the product.

The AAT has also ordered regular monitoring of pharmacists and wholesalers to ensure that the special conditions are being complied with.

Aspen said it will separately communicate details about the special conditions to prescribers, pharmacists and wholesalers as soon as the conditions come into effect, and well in advance of the implementation of the scheme.

"Until the new conditions are implemented, doctors may continue to prescribe Di-Gesic after carefully considering the indications, warnings and contraindications in the Product Information and Consumer Medicines Information," the company advised.

Pharmacists may dispense Di-Gesic - where it is available - under normal S4 dispensing practices.

Pradaxa dispensers

THE NPS has reminded pharmacists and patients that Pradaxa (dabigatran) "should be dispensed and stored in the manufacturer's original packaging to protect from moisture" which could affect the potency of the novel anticoagulant.

A US FDA Drug Safety Communication published in 2011 stated that pill dispensers (i.e. Dose Administration Aids) should not be used for dabigatran.

Capsules must also not be opened, chewed or crushed because of potential to increase bleeding risk.

New Bayer chief

BAYER has appointed Olivier Brandicourt as ceo of its healthcare division, replacing Wolfgang Plischke effective from 01 Nov.

Brandicourt was until recently head of Pfizer's Emerging Markets and Established Products divisions.

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Actavis completes a successful month of road shows

Last week saw the completion of the Actavis/GuildLink/medAdvisor Road Shows in capital cities across Australia.

Thank you to all who attended these events and congratulations to the many pharmacies who have signed up to the medAdvisor/MemoCare programmes.

If you missed out and want to know more, contact your Actavis Account Manager or email marketing.au@actavis.com



Blood glucose iphone

NOW available from Sanofi-Aventis is iBGStar, a device which plugs into an iPhone to help maintain connection with family and physician.

Especially targeted for children with type 1 diabetes, the device, working in conjunction with the Diabetes Manager App (free on iTunes) helps patients test and track their blood glucose using 'Dynamic Biochemistry', emailing the results direct to parents/carers and paediatrician.

The product is claimed to be especially helpful for children with many extra curricular activities.

For more details see the website at www.bgstar.com.au.

Indian pharmacy crisis

"NUMEROUS" pharmacies across India are reportedly shutting down under the new formula-based pricing policy of the Drug Price Control Order (DPCO) which was introduced in May this year.

According to *The Economic Times*, since implementation of the new government drug pricing reforms, the price of around 150 drugs has dropped by 20-25% on average, (and in some cases by up to 80%) with pharmacies forced to keep prices at specified prices reducing profit margins from the current level of around 16%.

Up to 120 pharmacies in Mumbai alone have closed since the price enforcement, the report claims.

CHC, PSA support rural pharmacy plan

THE Pharmaceutical Society of Australia says the new Grattan Institute "Access all Areas" report (**PD** yesterday) reinforces its long-held belief that pharmacists must be more fully integrated into the health system as a whole.

PSA national president, Grant Kardachi, said "quite simply, pharmacists' skills and knowledge in medication management are greatly underutilised.

"Pharmacists can provide a wide range of professional services - working in collaboration with others - which can assist doctors and relieve pressure across the whole health sector,

and importantly improve health outcomes and ease cost pressures on the health system," he said.

Kardachi said the report underscored the urgency of acting right now to ensure the sustainability of the health system.

"We have severe doctor shortages in many rural and regional areas where there is often a pharmacist with the skills and knowledge to help resolve minor ailments that patients may present with."

He said the PSA looks forward to working with the new Coalition government to facilitate the speedy introduction of greater pharmacist involvement to improve access to health services across the country.

MEANWHILE the Consumers Health Forum also congratulated the Grattan Institute for the report released, saying that it "provides fresh thinking to conquer the chronic scarcity of doctors in remote areas".

CHF ceo Carol Bennett said that the costly investment in incentives to encourage more doctors to go bush had failed to solve the problem, with the report proposing expanding the role of pharmacists and physician assistants to enable them to deal with routine cases.

RGH on dapagliflozin

THIS week's RGH Pharmacy E-Bulletin focuses on dapagliflozin in management of Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus.

Another drug in the same class, canagliflozin, was discussed previously in an earlier E-bulletin this year (**PD** 04 Jun).

The Bulletin discusses dosing, bioavailability and precautions.

To access the bulletin **CLICK HERE**.

UK Natzon recall

BRITAIN'S Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency has asked patients to check whether they have been dispensed cartons of opioid withdrawal drug Natzon 0.4mg sublingual tablets.

Two batches of the product have been affected by an error at the carton printers, and may contain Buprenorphine 8mg instead of the Natzon medication.

Buprenorphine was introduced to the Australian market in 2006.

There is no suggestion that Australian supplies are affected at this stage.

PAC 13 Mental Health

LIVING with mental illness will be the focus of the Friday 11 Oct afternoon session at the PSA's PAC13 this year.

While 1 in 5 Australians will experience mental illness in any year, almost half of all Australians will experience mental illness in their lifetime.

Stephanie Frazer, artist & journalist will paint a personal picture of the reality of living with mental illness.

She will include her experiences of managing her condition and seeking support, with suggestions for pharmacists regarding how to support those with mental illness.

The theme for PAC13 is ONE profession, ONE focus, ONE voice focusing on unity in the profession, in the delivery of services and in the goal of better health outcomes.

To register, go to psa.org.au/pac.

Dream Pharmacy Job

Come join our vibrant community pharmacy that sets the standard for service in the Snowy Region. The NSW ski fields are at our doorstep as are kilometres of walking and mountain biking trails and an Alpine lake filled with trout suiting all boating pursuits. The combination of being part of a genuine Primary Health Care team and a contemporary Rural lifestyle, makes this a life changing career opportunity.

Full time PIC role working 3 week days and half day Saturday/Sunday. The winter roster has longer days with weekends off for skiing with your friends.

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Guild Update

Applications for 2014 pharmacy scholarships open soon

The Australian Government and the Pharmacy Guild of Australia are pleased to announce that the 2014 Rural Pharmacy Scholarship Round is open this month. Students from rural and remote locations who are studying pharmacy or are intending to study pharmacy are invited to apply through the Pharmacy Guild for scholarships worth up to \$40,000.

The Rural Pharmacy Scholarship Scheme provides financial support to encourage and enable students from rural and remote communities to undertake undergraduate or graduate studies in pharmacy. Up to 30 fulltime scholarships are available annually valued at \$10,000 per annum over a four year period (\$40,000 per student over a four-year period). Applicants can be in any year of undergraduate or postgraduate study and the qualification studied must lead to registration as a pharmacist.

Students are also able to apply for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Pharmacy Scholarships. Applications for these scholarships can be made at any time throughout the year.

Applications open on 14 October 2013 and close 31 January 2014. To apply click [here](#).



The Pharmacy
Guild of Australia

Tasman e-Health alliance

AUSTRALIAN health IT firm Healthcare Software (HCS) has launched a strategic alliance with NZ-based Sysmex which will see the companies offer an integrated clinical suite promising to deliver "complete electronic medical record functionality".

HCS, based in Tasmania, provides a collection of decision support tools "for the benefit of care providers within the hospital including pharmacists, doctors, nurses and allied health professionals."

The company's systems can also provide patient support in the community via aged care workers, GPs and community pharmacists.

The expertise of Sysmex focuses on clinical information management, medication management and laboratory information systems, and together the companies say their integrated range will enable a "best of breed" approach to the implementation of electronic medical records.

HCS software includes a clinical pharmacy system called HCS Medicines, and the company

also recently launched the new Tasmanian Electronic Medicines Formulary - said to be the first of its kind in Australia - which is a single online portal which aims to help health professionals to make "cost-effective, evidence, based decisions when prescribing, administering and dispensing medicines to patients in Tasmanian public hospitals".

Pharmacists can access the Formulary to regularly review and update it with new information about medicines and their availability, and as well as providing a central portal the system is estimated to result in cost savings of \$500,000 annually.

Sysmex software includes the Eclair clinical information system, which is used as the basis for New Zealand's TestSafe clinical data repository.

HCS ceo John Elkerton said that a key strength of the alliance is that both firms "bring a depth of clinical expertise from pharmacy and the lab respectively - we're not just IT developers".



DISPENSARY CORNER

NOT quite the honeymoon suite...

Romance was definitely in the air at a hospital in Switzerland last week, which ended up being where a newly-wed couple spent their first night together.

Unfortunately they were in separate (but adjacent) beds, after a horse-drawn coach which was taking them to their reception overturned en route, leaving them trapped in the wreckage.

Apparently the horses pulling the carriage bolted after a rabbit startled them, with the pair extricated by rescuers and taken to the hospital by ambulance.

Guests waited in vain at the reception hotel, but were relieved to hear that the bride and groom were not seriously injured.

FITNESS may end up being a hazard for joggers around Tokyo's Imperial Palace, who have been formally warned to improve their manners or risk a fine.

Officials say they've been dealing with a spate of rudeness, with visitors to the ceremonial building reporting being crashed into by runners from behind.

"In some cases, the victims were jeered at or yelled at by joggers," said one local councillor.

New signs have been erected highlighting several rules including yield to pedestrians, run counter-clockwise and "be polite".

HORTICULTURALISTS in the UK have come up with a way to make sure you get your daily vitamin intake - a new plant which grows both tomatoes and potatoes at the same time.

Dubbed the TomTato, it's the outcome of a cherry tomato bush being grafted to a potato vine, with the BBC reporting that although it's not the first time such a hybrid has been attempted, "taste had previously been a problem".

The tomatoes and the potatoes ripen at the same time - **CLICK HERE** to see it on YouTube.

Win a Nature's Treats Gift Box from Burt's Bees

Pharmacy Daily has teamed up with Burt's Bees this week and is giving 5 lucky readers the chance to win a Nature's Treats Gift Box.

Treat your skin from head to toes with nature's best ingredients. Gift box contains: Lemon Butter Cuticle Crème 17g, Shea Butter Hand Cream 50g, Nourishing Milk & Honey Body Lotion 70g, Acai Berry Lip Balm 4.25g.

With Burt's Bees, what you see is what you get. To us, the word "natural" means only one thing. It means "harvested from nature." And that is what we are. This selection of products contains the best natural ingredients to hydrate and nourish your lips, hands & body.

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

**Name 3 of the nourishing ingredients in
Shea Butter Hand Cream**

Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner, **Rebekah Hodson** of **Aztec Australia**. The correct answer was: soften your cuticles and nourish brittle nails.





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