

Africa codeine change

AUTHORITIES in South Africa have announced that from the start of next year patients will be required to provide identification when purchasing over-the-counter medications containing codeine.

The Codeine Care Initiative, backed by the Pharmacy Society of South Africa, will create a central real-time database to track all purchases, and will eventually expand via a Misused Substance Database to cover a range of commonly abused substances, including ingredients used in some sleeping tablets.

The move aims to "introduce an innovative solution to assist pharmacists to make an informed decision around the recommendation and sale of these products," according to the Self-Medication Manufacturers Association of South Africa.

Cancer Council response

THE Cancer Council of NSW says it's not opposed to complementary therapies, clarifying its position statement which generated a strong response from the industry earlier this year (**PD** 08 Mar 2013).

Both the Australian Self-Medication Industry and the Complementary Healthcare Council reacted to the Cancer Council document, each robustly criticising its negative implications about complementary medicines which ASMI said "play a central part in Australia's healthcare system".

However Cancer Council spokesman Luke Alexander told

PD that although the position statement does highlight some potential risks with complementary and alternative therapies, "we have a large section on their benefits".

Alexander said the document also highlights research showing that complementary and alternative therapies use among cancer patients and survivors reduced stress and depression levels, as well as other benefits such as acupuncture's effect in reducing chemotherapy-induced vomiting.

"Cancer Council NSW has dedicated resources about complementary therapies," he said, with one of the organisation's most comprehensive support booklets (77 pages in length) dedicated to providing an overview of complementary therapies in cancer care and clarifying the difference between complementary and alternative therapies.

Alexander said he was keen to clarify the Council's position, contradicting any suggestions that it is against complementary therapies and highlight the wide range of resources it offers to patients considering them.

See www.nswcc.org.au.

Board audit alert

PHARMACISTS are being reminded that auditing of compliance with mandatory registration standards may occur at any time, and not just as part of the normal registration renewal process.

A communiqué from the Pharmacy Board of Australia details the recent pilot audits which were designed to determine the frequency, size and type of audits required and establish an ongoing audit methodology.

Pharmacists should ensure that evidence of activities which meet the requirements of the standard are retained for three years.

"Auditing of all professions has commenced...if you are selected for audit you will be notified in writing and requested to provide evidence that you meet the requirements of the standard," the update adds.

Prosolution problem

THE TGA has found that a product labelled as 'Prosolution Tablets' contain the undeclared prescription substance tadalafil, which is the active ingredient in Cialis.

TGA investigations have shown that a number of people in Australia have bought the product online, with consumers warned to stop taking the tablets immediately and return any remaining tablets to their local pharmacy for safe disposal.

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FINAL year pharmacy students may now go online to apply for provisional registration prior to their graduation.

The online graduate application service at the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency website enables students to apply four to six weeks before completing their course, in the aim of smoothing the path from study to work - **CLICK HERE**.

WIN A DB PRIZE PACK



This week **PD** is giving 5 lucky readers the chance to win a DB Ultimate prize pack.

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PBS chemo review update

SUBMISSIONS made to the government enquiry into the funding of chemotherapy have now been made public, with the probe set to report to the Minister for Health this month.

Between 01 Jul and 31 Dec 2013 an additional \$60 per PBS chemotherapy infusion is being provided, with the review set to make recommendations for longer-term arrangements.

Submissions have been made by a number of groups including

the National Pharmacies, the SHPA, Slade Pharmacy Services, APhS, the Community Pharmacy Chemotherapy Services Group and other health organisations.

A submission from Sydney Adventist Hospital director of pharmacy Steve Crago estimates that the hospital will have a shortfall of as much as \$1 million by the end of the year between fair and appropriate remuneration for supply and delivery at current service levels.

And a Pharmacy Guild submission urges that the immediate shortfall in remuneration for preparation and dispensing be "adequately and permanently addressed".

CLICK HERE for the submissions.

MEANWHILE the Consumers Health Forum says that recent consultations as part of the Review of Funding Arrangements for Chemotherapy Services have shown that the current system is having a negative impact on patients.

The CHF was funded by the Department of Health and Ageing to conduct the consultation which included face to face meetings in Sydney and Adelaide as well as teleconsultations and an online survey.

"Consumers clearly articulated that current arrangements are having a negative impact on their experience of chemotherapy treatment, and in some cases, their outcomes for this treatment," the CHF said.

The organisation has submitted its report on the consultation process to the Department, along with a range of recommendations.

Board disquiet at dextropropoxyphene

THE Pharmacy Board of Australia says it's worried about the ramifications for pharmacists in relation to the decision by the Administrative Appeals Tribunal in favour of Aspen Pharmaceuticals which has allowed medications containing dextropropoxyphene to remain on the market.

According to the ruling, amongst other things, Aspen must enter into contracts with pharmacists (other than hospital pharmacists) who wish to continue to supply Di-Gesic and Doloxene.

Aspen is required to write to pharmacies setting out in detail the obligations that pharmacists must comply with if they wish to continue dispensing the products.

The Board noted the decision with concern, given that products containing dextropropoxyphene have been removed from the market by medicine regulators in a number of countries," according to a Board communiqué last Fri.

Biomedical telemetry

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration has advised medical device sponsors, hospitals and health professionals that changes to radio frequency (RF) spectrums in Australia could affect a small number of biomedical telemetry devices used in hospitals.

The spectrum changes are being managed by the Australian Communication and Media Authority (ACMA) and are connected with the transition from analogue to digital television services which is scheduled to commence next month.

"For many years the ACMA has had in place arrangements that authorised low-power biomedical telemetry equipment to utilise unused television channels," a TGA update advises.

Most modern equipment operates in the 2.4GHz or higher frequency band, however some items supplied in Australia and potentially still in use may operate in the 520-820MHz band.

New TV services will soon fall across the 608-614MHz band which could disrupt some older devices, with the TGA contacting sponsors of potentially affected equipment to provide further information about the issue.

Clinolipid approval

THE US Food and Drug Administration has approved Clinolipid (lipid injectable emulsion) for intravenous feeding in adult patients, providing a source of calories and essential fatty acids for patients who are unable to eat or drink.



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Guild Update

Access all areas

RECENTLY the Grattan Institute released an important report outlining an array of opportunities to deliver better primary health care services in rural Australia.

Titled 'Access all areas: new solutions for GP shortages in rural Australia', the report made clear that "the first step is to make much better use of pharmacists' skills".

It rightly points out that the role of pharmacists in Australia is far more limited than in many other countries.

Focussing on seven rural Medicare Local areas with the worst GP shortages, the report advocated a significantly enhanced role for pharmacists to address primary health care deficiencies.

It recommends that, with the agreement of GPs and patients, pharmacists should be able to provide repeat prescriptions to people with simple, stable conditions.

It also recommends that pharmacists should be able to provide vaccinations and work with GPs to help patients manage chronic health conditions.

The reports make clear that these enhancements are readily achievable.

The Guild considers this report to be an important breakthrough in terms of recognising the ability of pharmacies to play an enhanced primary health care role in local communities.



The Pharmacy
Guild of Australia

Dispensing error concerns

THE Pharmacy Board of Australia has expressed concerns about a number of recent pharmacist errors which in two instances resulted in patient fatalities.

According to a communiqué from the Board issued on Friday, the Notification Committee had highlighted errors involving drugs with a narrow therapeutic index, including digoxin and methotrexate.

The errors, according to the Board, resulted from a number of contributing factors including failure to scan the barcode at the end of the dispensing process and the inclusion of confusing directions on labels.

In the digoxin case the 250mcg strength was supplied rather than the 62.5mcg prescribed.

"The consequences of such mistakes should be well known to all pharmacists," the Board said.

"The families of the victims of these errors do not accept excuses of 'I was too busy,' given that taking action to address excessive workload and counselling including final checking by a pharmacist are clearly addressed in professional practice standards and Board guidelines," the statement added.

Criminal history scans

NATIONAL Boards have launched a new round of public consultation on international criminal history checks to assess applications for registration as a health practitioner in Australia.

The Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law), requires each National Board to consider the criminal history of applicants for registration, whether the criminal history occurred inside or outside Australia.

Chair of the Forum of Chairs of National Boards, Dr Mary Russell, Chair of the Occupational Therapy Board of Australia, said the National Boards aimed to balance public protection with the need for responsive and timely application and assessment processes for health practitioners seeking registration in Australia.

The National Boards are seeking feedback on this complex issue.

Details are published in a consultation paper - **CLICK HERE**.

Feedback on the consultation is due by Thursday 31 October 2013.

Creating intervention

THE Pharmaceutical Society of Australia is presenting a special workshop at PAC13 for pharmacists to successfully perform, record and claim clinical interventions under the Fifth Community Pharmacy Agreement Pharmacy Practice Incentives, even on, or especially on, the busiest of days in their pharmacy.

The barriers and enablers to conducting clinical interventions will be workshopped so participants learn from each other's experiences, as well as sharing useful tips and suggestions.

The workshop will be facilitated by pharmacist Simon Carroll who is currently the PSA's Senior Professional Practice Pharmacist, in which position he leads a team of pharmacists and project managers in developing PSAs resources.

He has also specialised in presentations on clinical interventions and was closely involved in the development of clinical interventions CPD modules.

PAC13 will be held at the Brisbane Convention Centre from 10-13 October 2013.

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

DISPENSARY CORNER



FORGET cremation or burial - the way of the future is freeze-drying, according to a Channel Island politician.

Rob Duhamel, who's currently the Planning and Environment Minister for Jersey, says that the technique, which involves freezing a body using liquid nitrogen and then vibrating it to reduce the corpse to powder, is much more environmentally friendly than other options.

Freeze drying would also help resolve the issue of diminishing space at cemeteries, he said.

DON'T discard those damaged bills from the till.

A US man has been given \$500 by the US treasury, after claiming that his dog ate the original bills.

His not-so-golden retriever, apparently took the cash out of his car while he was at lunch.

"He's been notorious for eating paper products," Wayne Klinkel told news agency *Reuters*.

"I knew right away what happened," he added.

In an act of amazing attention to detail and determination, Klinkel collected the dog's droppings in a plastic bag and after some weeks of vacillation went ahead with a plan to resurrect the cash.

Using a bucket of soapy water, an old metal mining screen and a hose he painstakingly picked out the particled \$100 notes and reassembled them one by one.

The Treasury Department offers reimbursement for some proven cases of damaged currency, and six months after submitting the stinky claim he received a fresh \$500 cheque last week from the Mutilated Currency Division.

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