

## Wockhardt MHRA ban

**THE** UK Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency has withdrawn a good manufacturing practice certificate covering the Chikalthana, India facility operated by Wockhardt, meaning drugs made there cannot be exported to Britain.

## ASMI responds on Vitamin D

**THE** Australian Self-Medication Industry says a University of Auckland meta-analysis of the effect of vitamin D supplements on bone mineral density should not discourage Australians from taking a preventative approach to osteoporosis.

The study, published in *The Lancet* this month, found that there were no benefits from taking vitamin D in healthy adults, with lead author Ian Reid saying "our data suggest that the targeting of low-dose vitamin D supplements only to individuals who are likely to be deficient could free up substantial resources that could be better used elsewhere in healthcare."

However ASMI has urged caution in interpreting the results, highlighting variation in sample sizes and the wide range of daily vitamin D doses that were investigated in the meta-analysis.

ASMI regulatory and scientific affairs director, Steve Scarff, said "what we don't want to see is people, now and in the future, cutting vitamin D out of their supplement routine and potentially making themselves vulnerable to future fractures."

## TWC urges pharmacy rebates

**TERRY** White Chemists founder and chairman Terry White yesterday urged new federal health minister Peter Dutton to broaden the Medicare provider base to allow rebates to be claimed for in-pharmacy professional services such as flu immunisations.

Speaking at the TWC annual conference on the Gold Coast, White highlighted the ongoing evolution of the health sector in Australia and how the Terry White Chemists group was ideally positioned for a pivotal role in the new landscape.

"Terry White Chemists is on a trajectory that will lead community pharmacy into an expanded patient focused model with huge professionally rewarding opportunities," he said.

"At TWC we have refocused our attention on what it is that people expect from their local pharmacist in terms of care, attention and trust," White added, saying that the group had weathered the attack on pharmacy by supermarket giants and "warehouse-style" pharmacies.

"Some pharmacies have moved dangerously close to becoming two-dollar shops... these pharmacies will miss the opportunity to play an increased

role in preventative health care and health management," White added.

Dutton, who also addressed the Terry White Chemists conference, was told that pharmacists look forward to working closely with him to assist in one of the government's most challenging areas.

White urged the minister to "act in the interests of the health of the nation to preserve access to freely available pharmacy advice and to support advanced community pharmacy health services.

"The Medicare provider base includes a range of allied health professionals and it makes sense to include pharmacists in that, particularly given identified trends towards the convenience and value that pharmacy offers," he said.

**Pictured** above at the conference are, from left: Pharmacy Guild executive director David Quilty; federal health minister Peter Dutton; Terry White; and Guild National President and TWC board member Kos Sclavos.



## EU OK for CHCs

**THE** European Medicines Agency has confirmed that benefits of all combined hormonal contraceptives continue to outweigh their risks, after a review of possible higher risks of venous thromboembolism in connection with taking the medications.

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## Guild Update

### Guild Pharmacy Academy Update

A NEW Heart Foundation, online, CPD-accredited module is now available.

The 'BeAWARE Pharmacy, the warning signs of heart attack' module is accredited for two Group 2 CPD credits with successful assessment.

After completing the module, learners will

- understand the basic principles of: heart attack, angina and cardiac arrest
- understand and identify the warning signs of heart attack and what to do
- understand the important role pharmacy staff play in identifying and educating customers with cardiovascular heart disease on the warning signs of a heart attack
- understand the key principles for obtaining information quickly and accurately when customers may be experiencing the warning signs of a heart attack
- understand why it's important to call Triple Zero (000) and be able to describe what happens when you call.

The module will take learners up to one hour to complete, however it can be completed in multiple sittings. To access module navigate to 'Featured Courses' section located on our website.

Please make sure your pop-up blocker is disabled before launching any online courses on myCPD.

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact the Guild Pharmacy Academy on 03 9810 9930 or email [guildpharmacyacademy@guild.org.au](mailto:guildpharmacyacademy@guild.org.au)



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## Aussies missing the beat

A NEW survey released today has demonstrated that while 90% of Australians know if their blood pressure is high, only 42% know what their heart rate is, or if it is regular or not.

An irregular heart rate or heart arrhythmia is commonly a sign of atrial fibrillation (AF), a major risk factor for stroke.

The survey of >1,000 Australians which was sponsored by Bristol-Myers Squibb (BMS) and Pfizer also showed that 1 in 4 identify stroke as a major health concern alongside cancer and diabetes, but 34% did not know it could be prevented, and 48% do not know how stroke occurs.

At the same time, almost 60% had not hear of AF even though it affects an estimated 500,000 Australians and of the 45,000 first-ever strokes each year, a third have AF to blame.

Atrial Fibrillation Association founder and ceo, Trudie Lobband, encourages Australians to know their heart rate and regularly check their pulse to monitor for changes.

"The survey shows a significant lack of awareness about heart health and how it applies to stroke prevention," Lobband said.

"We were quite surprised to find that more than a third of those

surveyed did not know if their heart rate was 'normal'."

The survey coincided with a visit to Australia by Michael Ezekowitz, Professor of Medicine at Thomas Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia and Director of AF Research at the Cardiovascular Research Foundation NY.

In a series of presentations and webinars to health care professionals, Ezekowitz said that the advent of novel anticoagulants (NOACs) mean that millions of patients worldwide with AF will benefit from "significant stroke reduction".

August saw the first PBS listing of the NOACs with the once-a-day Xarelto (rivaroxaban) (PD 17 Jul) followed in September by Eliquis (apixaban) and Pradaxa (dabigatran) (PD 13 Aug).

Professor Ezekowitz also outlined the pharmacist's role in counselling their AF patients whether they are on warfarin or a NOAC.

He emphasized that compliance is critical and that patients need to be educated about its importance and to take the therapy very seriously.

He recommended they wear a medical alert bracelet and be thoroughly schooled on how to use their medication.

### RGH E-Bulletin

THIS week's edition of the Repatriation General Hospital Pharmacy E-Bulletin gives an overview of the relationship between drugs and food.

It cites a range of possible interactions such as altered rates of absorption, reduced or increased absorption, alteration of drug metabolism and enhanced tolerability of drugs.

To view the bulletin [CLICK HERE](#).

### New AusPARs

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration has published new Australian Public Assessment Reports covering the assessment process for Sanofi-Aventis Australia's Lyxumia (lixisenatide), Novartis Pharmaceuticals' Afinitor (everolimus), Mundipharma's Folutyn (pralatrexate) and Celgene's Vidaza (azacitidine).

[CLICK HERE](#) to view the AusPARs.

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