

Pat Clear winner

MEDICINES Australia has given the 2013 Pat Clear Award to Sara Pantzer, Head of Government Affairs and Policy at Amgen Australia, recognising her key role in shaping the policy landscape for the Australian Medicines Industry.



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Pharmacy alprazolam alert

PHARMACIES are being warned of an increased demand for alprazolam (Xanax and its generic equivalents) in the lead-up to its rescheduling as S8, which will become effective from the beginning of February 2014.

According to an update from the Victorian Department of Health, the publicity around the rescheduling is likely to see more of the drug requested, both by "those who have been using it appropriately in addition to those who have been misusing, abusing and diverting it".

Alprazolam is currently the S4 poison most subject to the presentation of forged scripts, and pharmacies are being advised to immediately implement the verification procedures for S8 poisons, to detect and deter unlawful attempts to obtain it.

The department said that when temazepam capsules were at peak levels of abuse and misuse, ram raids of community pharmacies were frequently reported, with pharmacists advised to "review current storage locations for alprazolam so that members of the public in the pharmacy cannot readily determine where alprazolam preparations are located or that stock levels are sufficient to invite incursions by potential offenders".

Once alprazolam becomes a Schedule 8 poison, all existing stocks must be stored in a compliant safe or drug cabinet, and prescribing will become subject to requirements for S8 permits.



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Hydrocodone tick

THE US Food and Drug Administration has approved Zohydro ER (hydrocodone bitartrate extended-release capsules) which is the first FDA-approved single entity extended release hydrocodone product.



CORRECTION

Prestige Premium Deals, United Prestige Clearance, United Prestige Group, Mr Andrew Christopher and Mr Kenneth Bridge made a number of statements in respect of Aspen Pharmacare Australia (**Aspen**) and the Bio-Oil product which they formally retract and correct as set out below.

1. Aspen does not know and cannot provide any comment as to whether Prestige Premium Deals, United Prestige Clearance, United Prestige Group, Mr Andrew Christopher or Mr Ken Bridge legally import Bio-Oil into Australia.

2. No agreement exists or has ever existed between Aspen, Geneva Laboratories and Prestige Premium Deals, United Prestige Clearance and United Prestige Group authorising or entitling Prestige Premium Deals, United Prestige Clearance or United Prestige Group to sell Bio-Oil in Australia.

3. Aspen does not endorse, approve or authorise the importation of Bio-Oil into Australia, for sale and/or promotion, by itself or with any other product, by Prestige Premium Deals, United Prestige Clearance, United Prestige Group, Mr Andrew Christopher or Mr Kenneth Bridge.

4. Aspen has no association or dealings with Prestige Premium Deals, United Prestige Clearance, United Prestige Group, Mr Andrew Christopher or Mr Kenneth Bridge.

Script shopping

MEDICARE Australia says that pharmacists who are concerned about a customer "doctor shopping" can contact the Prescription Shopping Program Information Service (PSIS) as part of their consultation with the patient.

People who are listed in the program are not excluded from getting the medicines they need from the PBS.

The service is accessible 24/7 by calling 1800 631 181; for more information see the PSIS website by **CLICKING HERE**.

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Walgreens accused of privacy violations

US pharmacy giant Walgreens has been accused of being in violation of America's Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), due to a new patient servicing model which transfers the pharmacist from behind the dispensary to a workstation in front of the counter.

According to *InformationWeek Healthcare*, a report issued by union-funded *Change to Win Retail Initiatives* (CtW), used data from 100 observations of 50 stores throughout Florida, Illinois and Indiana in the USA, and the organisation subsequently filed a complaint to US Health and Human Services alleging numerous breaches of HIPAA.

The problem centres around Walgreens' 'Well Experience' model which places the computer screen and mobile devices such as hand held tablets in view of the public, with confidential information exposed.

According to CtW, in 80% of stores visited, HIPAA-protected confidential patient information was left unattended and potentially visible to customers in the pharmacy area.

Vitamins for kids urged

THE Complementary Healthcare Council of Australia says the country needs to be "more ambitious about giving every kid the best start in life," with complementary medicines currently absent from Australia's preventive health agenda.

CHC ceo Carl Gibson was responding to a UK report which suggested the extension of an existing scheme, which provides free vitamins A, C and D to children aged six months to four years from low-income families.

The *Our Children Deserve Better, Prevention Pays* report from England's Chief Medical Officer, Dame Sally Davies, urges the UK National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence to look at the cost effectiveness of giving these three basic vitamins to all children aged under five years.

Davies said extending the scheme



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EU on nicardipine

THE European Medicines Agency has concluded that intravenous nicardipine should only be used to treat acute life-threatening high blood pressure and to control hypertension after an operation, with other indications for the drug no longer recommended.

Standards feedback

THE Pharmacy Board of Australia, along with other National Boards for other health professions, is seeking input on the English language skills and criminal history registration standards, which are currently under review.

Under the National Law, the consultation is part of a scheduled review of the standards after three years experience with national health practitioner registration.

The English language skills registration standards sets minimum requirements for practitioners to make sure they can communicate effectively and provide safe care, while the criminal history registration standard sets out what National Boards will consider when deciding whether a health practitioner's criminal history is relevant to the practice of their profession.

"Our job in setting standards is to balance safety with workforce issues," said a spokesperson for the National Board.

A consultation paper includes a summary of research commissioned by the Boards on English language skills for health practitioners, to support evidence-based policy setting.

The English language and criminal history registration standards consultation closes on 23 Dec 2013, with written submissions sought by email - **CLICK HERE** to view the consultation paper.

would protect more children and save the health system money.

Gibson echoed the sentiments, saying the CHC is heartened by the UK report and its "recognition of the enormous potential for complementary medicines to demonstrate savings from disease prevention and health promotion."

"Preventive health is an essential move towards improving the cost-effectiveness of the Australian healthcare system and alleviating pressure on the government's health budget," he added.

A key step would be research and education on the cost-effectiveness of consumer and government spending on complementary medicines, which Gibson said "must be a priority for Australia"

Assistant winners



ITHERAPEUTICS ceo Peter De Lorenzo presented a \$500 travel voucher to Kayleen Harch of Gatton's Plaza Discount Drug Store Qld (above) at this year's PA2013 Conference on the Gold Coast.

Kayleen attended the PA Conference 2013 in order to be eligible for this prize.

Earlier, Lynn Mumtaz of Terry White Chemists Caloundra was also awarded a \$500 travel voucher for being the first to complete 59 education modules on the iTherapeutics for Pharmacy web site between 1 August and 30 September 2013.

Orphan drug addition

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration has added Shire Australia's Firazyr (icatibant) solution for injection to its list of orphan drugs, indicated for ACE-1 induced angiodema.

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Weekly Comment

Welcome to **PD's** weekly comment feature. This week's contributor is **Paul Rowe**, Managing Director of The Business Squad.



Real Life Retail Tips

Having worked as a consultant to pharmacy for over 15 years, I have picked up on a few tips to success. No matter what you're pharmacological qualifications and experience, the world of retail is often challenging, so here are a few tips to help you survive and thrive:

1. Have (and keep) a sense of humour – at the end of the day you must be able to laugh a little at the situations, people or challenges that arise in a retail setting.
2. Speak English – not 'medicine' – Your patients often don't understand technical or medical names, terms and instructions. Lay things out clearly and help them understand. Communication is the key as is patience.
3. Know your patients – say 'hello', make small talk and try to be involved in their lives at a professional level. This will build trust, which in turn builds repeat custom.
4. Do something else – get a hobby, take time out, detach yourself sometimes in order to be a better retail pharmacist. This isn't always easy to do, particularly if you own the pharmacy, but it is important to try.
5. Remember to do all of the above all the time! Successful retailing is an art form and you are the artist, play your part well!

Sensaslim founder jailed

PETER Foster, the controversial figure behind several weight loss products including Sensaslim (**PD** 02 Dec 11) and TRIMit, has been sentenced to three years in prison for contempt of court.

The conviction relates to a former ruling against Foster, who in 2005 was restrained for five years from "being directly or indirectly knowingly concerned in the promotion or conduct by a corporation of any business relating to weight loss, cosmetic or health industry products or services of any kind" after his company Chaste Corporation, which promoted TRIMit through a network of distributors, went into liquidation.

Contrary to this order, the ACCC alleged that Foster subsequently became involved in the Sensaslim business which had a similar model, enlisting resellers and making false claims about the weight loss efficacy of the product.

Last month the Federal Court found that Foster was "directly knowingly concerned" in the Sensaslim operation, in breach of the court orders.

Justice Logan found that Foster

had engaged in a deliberate course of conduct which saw him have an "intimate involvement from inception with and control of Sensaslim's operations".

The Sensaslim saga included a defamation case brought by the company against academic Ken Harvey (**PD** 14 Feb 12) which was later struck out, as well as the eventual TGA deregistration of the weight loss spray and the collapse of the company.

In his sentencing judgement the judge said it was "difficult to envisage a more flagrant and deliberate breach," with Foster's conduct having denied investors in the Sensaslim scheme the benefit of making an informed decision.

The sentence includes 18 months to be served and 18 months suspended, while Foster is also restrained for a further three years from involvement in the weight loss, cosmetic or health industry.

Foster's colourful career has included several convictions and settlements including some relating to products such as Bai Lin Tea for weight loss, and a "high contour treatment" called Biometrics.

DISPENSARY CORNER



SEASONAL Affective Disorder will hopefully be less of a problem in the Norwegian town of Rjukan this winter, after authorities erected a system of giant mirrors to direct sunlight onto the local streets.

The 'Solspeil' (or Sun Mirror) project involves three huge reflectors which are controlled by computers, mounted on the mountains around the town which is nestled in a valley about 150km west of the capital Oslo.

The project, which goes live later this week, is the culmination of a century-old vision from Rjukan's founder, who proposed the idea in the early 1900s but wasn't able to implement it due to technology limitations of the time.

Currently the nearby Gaustoppen mountains completely block the sun for five months of the year.

The mirrors will direct giant beams across the town which will act as an "artificial sun" to help citizens boost their Vitamin D.

AND while we're on the subject of Norway, a discount store in Oslo has apologised over a retailing blunder which saw it selling realistic severed hands and feet, as part of its Halloween product range.

The Europris bargain outlet packaged the fake plastic body parts in polystyrene trays, similar to those used by butchers to sell meat (**below**).

The move prompted a flurry of complaints from outraged parents including a storm of protest on social media.

"It's such a shame that we have an American tradition so violently forced down our throats," wrote one furious commentator.



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