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Teething tablets

HYLANDS is today promoting its Baby Teething Tablets, which dissolve instantly and contain no artificial flavours, dyes or parabens. See **page four** of *Pharmacy Daily*.

Hospira Inflectra tick

HOSPIRA has confirmed that the European Union has approved its Inflectra (infliximab) biosimilar for Remicade, which is the first biosimilar monoclonal antibody therapy authorised in the EU.

The company said the drug will be launched "at the earliest opportunity taking into account any relevant patent protection".

Sales of J&J's Remicade, which is used to treat a range of conditions including rheumatoid arthritis, were worth over \$2 billion in Europe last year, with Hospira estimating that the launch of biosimilar monoclonal products in the EU will deliver savings of up to €20.4 billion (A\$29b) by 2020.

Hospira holds the rights to Inflectra in a number of countries including the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, under a 2009 agreement with South Korean biopharmaceutical company Celltrion.

Sigma profit declines 38%

SIGMA Pharmaceuticals this morning announced its results for the six months to 31 July, with the overall outcome significantly impacted by a provision for doubtful debts in relation to the Harrisons pharmacy group which went into administration earlier in the year (**PD** 05 Apr).

Overall sales revenue was up 3.1% to \$1.46 billion, and the after-tax profit result was \$16.3 million, down 37.6% on the \$26.1m figure for the corresponding period in 2012.

"Sigma has delivered a solid performance in a difficult trading environment with PBS growth virtually non-existent and retail conditions subdued," according to ceo and md Mark Hooper.

The report estimates PBS growth for the period at 2%, and "allowing for the impact of the further PBS price reforms implemented since the prior comparable period, the sales revenue increase would have been 6%".

Sigma has expensed \$4.06 million in relation to the Harrisons collapse which is based on the "current estimated recovery from Sigma's claim for inventory on hand but unpaid at the time receivers were appointed".

The result was also hit by a \$3.68 million expense relating to the settlement of litigation with Vifor in connection with Sigma's injectable iron product, Ferrosig.

Sigma confirmed that following the settlement it had retained the rights to sell the Ferrosig product in the Australian market.

Hooper said the company had reaffirmed its commitment to reinvesting in its business, as it heads into "what is expected to be a stronger second half."

"This investment will strengthen core efficiency, while providing improved support for its pharmacy customers in an ever challenging landscape," he said.

Hooper also confirmed the ongoing expansion of Sigma's private and exclusive range, with a doubling of the number of products in the pipeline.

He said despite the environment Sigma had undertaken a number of important initiatives to grow sales, including the "industry leading Amcal and Guardian e-commerce platforms" which launched in the last few months (**PD** 10 Jul).

Chairman Brian Jamieson said the company had enhanced its market share, "which is a strategically important outcome given the flat PBS growth confronting the whole industry".

The company said it would be looking to the new government to provide greater certainty in the sector, including timely consultation on industry issues, strengthening of the CSO and limiting further changes to the PBS.

ASMI training special

THE Australian Self-Medication Industry is offering a limited-time discount of 20% for groups of 15 or more people signing up at the same time for its new Online Induction Course (**PD** 21 Aug).

CLICK HERE for more details.

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Hey man, don't run

EXERCISING by regular users of cannabis may lead to positive drug tests, according to new University of Sydney research.

Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the main intoxicating ingredient in marijuana, has an affinity for fat, and the study found that when the drug users exercised at a level that caused fat to be metabolised there was a significant rise in blood THC - enough to make the difference between a positive or negative test.

Travel Specials

WELCOME to *Pharmacy Daily's* travel feature. Each week we highlight a couple of great travel deals for the pharmacy industry, brought to you by *Cruise Weekly*.

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CATHAY Pacific has launched "earlybird fares" for travel to Europe next year, starting from as low as \$1608 return.

Sale fares are available in economy, premium economy and business class on more than 70 weekly flights from Australia to Europe, and the offer includes the ability to add a stopover in Hong Kong at no extra charge.

Bookings made via travel agents may also include a side trip to Asia or China from just \$211, with the bargain deals available for bookings made before 31 December and travel between March and November next year.

See your travel agent to book.

PBA paracetamol concern

THE Pharmacy Board of Australia has expressed "serious concern" at the practice of some pharmacists to make paracetamol available for purchase in "dump bins".

The move follows the TGA decision which reduces the maximum pack size of paracetamol sold in Australian retailers other than pharmacies from 25 to 20 effective this month (**PD 27 Aug**).

In a communiqué issued following the most recent Pharmacy Board meeting in late August, members noted that the larger pack sizes are typically made available in large bins in some pharmacies, and are freely available in the same way as non-medicinal items.

"Pharmacists have a professional obligation to ensure that the sale of Schedule 2 poisons (Pharmacy Medicines) and Schedule 3 poisons (Pharmacist Only Medicines) to

members of the public includes the provision of appropriate advice," the communiqué said.

The Board said it therefore believes that it's inappropriate to promote the sale of scheduled medicines by "dump binning", "particularly when there is a well known record of presentations to hospital accident and emergency departments from misuse of paracetamol".

At the meeting the Board also discussed the current review of its registration standards, Code of Conduct and guidelines for pharmacists in preparation for consultation.

The board, together with other National Boards, will soon be taking input from the public on the English Language Skills and Criminal History registration standards, which are largely common across the Boards.

Other registration standards, including those covering Recency of Practice, Continuing Professional Development and Professional Indemnity Insurance, will be published progressively for consultation later in the year.

The 30 Aug board meeting took place during a National Scheme combined meeting of all 14 Boards.

Heart Foundation chief to depart

DR Lyn Roberts, National Heart Foundation of Australia ceo since 2001, has announced that she will leave the organisation on 31 Dec.

National president Peter Sexton said Roberts had been a tireless champion of the heart health of all Australians, and under her leadership the Foundation had embraced new activities that have had a "real and lasting impact".

"She has led the Heart Foundation with skill, tenacity and passion, keeping it firmly focused on our sole mission - reducing premature death and suffering from heart, stroke and blood vessel disease," Sexton said.

Roberts said she is taking some time out to spend with her family and friends before considering her future career.

Walgreens buys 76

US pharmacy giant Walgreens has confirmed an agreement with privately owned company Kerr Drug to acquire a network of 76 retail pharmacy stores as well as its specialty pharmacy business.

The outlets are located across the state of North Carolina, along with a distribution centre, with the business having turnover last year of around US\$380 million.

Walgreens said the Kerr Drug operations were an "exceptional addition" to its portfolio.

CEO Greg Wasson said "we are closely aligned with the important task of expanding the healthcare role that community pharmacists can have with their patients, and we share the common goal of stepping out of the traditional drugstore format to create a new experience for our customers".

Kerr Drug was founded in 1951, with its pharmacies offering "resource centres" staffed with pharmacists and pharmacy students from local colleges.

The company's president said that Walgreens was the perfect partner to help Kerr "continue its journey as a patient-oriented company dedicated to expanding the role of the pharmacist as an integral part of health care".

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Online recall system launches

YESTERDAY GS1 Australia launched "GS1 Recallnet Healthcare," a new system which allows the coordination of healthcare recalls and withdrawals.

The online therapeutic goods recall management system is designed to improve the speed and accuracy of the recall process, and has been developed in partnership with the National E-Health Transition Authority.

Other working group participants in the development of the product include the TGA, ACCC, state and territory health department representatives plus pharmaceutical and medical device suppliers, wholesalers and industry associations.

Using GS1 Recallnet Healthcare, manufacturers, distributors, wholesalers, hospitals and state based health authorities can now initiate, receive and exchange information relating to healthcare recalls and withdrawals.

The system is available online 24/7, "thus enabling the fast and efficient removal of unsafe or unsuitable products from the

supply chain, retailers, hospitals and the wider marketplace".

The project covers all recall and non-recall notifications processed in Australia that apply to the supply of therapeutic goods, direct notifications from sponsors, direct and structured feedback from recipients to sponsors, and integration of data, machine to machine integration, integration with the National Product Catalogue and additional reporting tools.

The first phase of the launch, from now until the end of the year, will focus on readying the industry for the live introduction of the system which is expected for recalls effective from 01 January 2014.

Suppliers will have the opportunity to register with GS1 Recallnet and train in the use of the online portal and update their internal recall procedures to incorporate the online system.

Free registration is available until March 2014 for those who join by 01 October 2013, with a series of introductory webinars planned.

For info see www.gs1au.org.

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More AusPARs out

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration has released a number of new Australian Public Assessment Reports for prescription medicines (AusPARs), detailing the assessment processes for Clobex (clobetasol propionate), Xalkori (crizotinib), Oracea (doxycycline monohydrate), Celsentri (maraviroc) and Aubagio/Teriflunomide Winthrop/Teriflunomide Sanofi (teriflunomide).

See www.tga.gov.au.

Asbestos awareness

NOVEMBER is Asbestos Awareness Month, with Australians encouraged to host a 'Blue Lamington Drive' to raise awareness of asbestos in homes and money for asbestos diseases research and support.

See www.bluelamington.com.

UK inspection change

THE British government has changed its regulatory regime for pharmacy premises, giving the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) principal responsibility for community pharmacy inspections.

Currently other organisations such as the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and local authorities also undertake inspections, with the change expected to see significant savings for pharmacies.

It's part of a move by the govt to reduce red tape, and follows an impact assessment in response to concerns raised by pharmacy about the burdens of inspections.

The GPhC is the independent regulator for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians in the UK, with its remit including approving qualifications, setting standards for conduct and maintaining the register of pharmacists, technicians and pharmacy premises.

A report from the impact assessment found the move would save pharmacy businesses an estimated £20,000 in the first year, and would free up pharmacists to concentrate on delivering a high quality service.

CLICK HERE to view the report.

DISPENSARY CORNER

JUST as a coalition of health groups urges changes to the way that soft drinks are marketed (**PD** yesterday), a brand new product launching in Japan is set to rock the category.

It's the world's first canned hot and fizzy drink - Canada Dry Hot Ginger Ale - and has been produced by the Coca-Cola Company after years of research into new technology which heats up the soda while retaining the carbonation.

Apparently the beverage has a spicy cinnamon and apple flavour, and will go on sale in vending machines across Japan in October.



FACIAL grooming came to the fore last weekend in the US city of New Orleans, where more than 150 international contestants gathered for the fourth annual National Beard and Moustache Championships.

There are awards in 18 categories up for grabs - ranging from the delicate 'Dali', through to the 'anything goes full beard freestyle', with the event sponsored by Just for Men and organised by a group called Beard Team USA.

Other categories included 'Fu Manchu', 'Amish' and 'Musketeer'.

OBESITY crisis?

A South African man is facing deportation from New Zealand, apparently because he's too fat.

Albert Buitenuis is a chef who weighs about 130kg, and appealed two months ago after his work visa renewal application was denied because he "did not have an acceptable standard of health".

NZ Associate Immigration Minister Nikki Kaye denies it's because of his weight, saying the rejection was actually due to osteoarthritis in the man's knee.

WANT TO LOOK 5 YEARS YOUNGER?



This week **Pharmacy Daily** has teamed up with **Plunketts** and every day is giving one lucky reader the chance to win a prize pack including Collagen Lift 50g plus a trial size (8ml) of Glyco Peel, valued at \$49.95.

John Plunkett Collagen Lift Moisturiser contains clinically proven levels of the potent anti-ageing active, Matrixyl 3000. Matrixyl 3000 stimulates collagen production in the skin and has been proven to reduce wrinkles by 45% in just two months and visibly reduce your age by more than 5 years! Collagen Lift has been formulated for normal to dry skin

and can be used both day and night. Pharmacy quality cosmeceuticals at a realistic price – Australian made and owned.

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

How much wrinkle reduction can be seen after 2 months with Matrixyl?

Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner, **Naomi Gould** of **Australian Natural Care**. The correct answer was Australia.



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