

## CPD/CPE points fixed

THE second BioCeuticals Research Symposium, 11-12 Apr in Sydney has now been approved for CPD & CME points with PSA, NHAA, ATMS, ANTA, CAA and COCA.

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## 10,000 fighting stroke

'AUSTRALIA'S Biggest Blood Pressure Check' saw more than 10,000 checks performed in one day.

A quarter of these were referred on to GPs, the National Stroke Foundation (NSF) said.

Ceo Dr Erin Lalor said most of these had no idea that they were at high risk of stroke.

Chemmart Pharmacy partnered with NSF to host the event, held on 02 Apr, to raise awareness of the risks associated with stroke.

The checks were performed in six locations around Australia, including Sydney's Martin Place and Melbourne's Federation Square, as

well as Chemmart pharmacies.

Federation Square saw more than 880 checks performed, according to Pharmacy Guild of Australia Victoria branch president Anthony Tassone.

Anyone who didn't make the event can go to Chemmart pharmacies this month as part of the Blood Pressure Challenge.

They will have their blood pressure checked and fill out a questionnaire to help identify if they are at risk of stroke-related conditions and if so, be referred on to a GP.

## EMA SME incentives

THE European Medicines Agency (EMA) has introduced fee incentives for post-authorisation activities to support small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) who develop medicines for human and veterinary use.

These include total or partial fee exemptions for extension, renewal or transfer of marketing authorisation and the post authorisation annual fee.

To read more, [CLICK HERE](#).

## TGA FOI docs release

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has released a series of documents under Section 11C of the Freedom of Information Act 1982.

They are available for downloading and printing by [CLICKING HERE](#).

## The salt of the earth

ONCE valued so highly it behaved as a currency, salt (NaCl) continues to play an important role in our lives, according to the biennial World Congress of Cardiology 2014 in Melbourne from 04 to 07 May.

The Heart Foundation of Australia is spotlighting the congress presentation focusing on the hypertensive impact of too much salt in our diets.

A key topic will be the setting of national targets to reduce premature mortality related to cardiovascular disease, such as dietary salt guidelines.

The World Health Organization recommends that adults should have no more than 5g of salt a day but in most countries, the average person consumes between 9g and 12g a day.

## 755 NSW jobs to go

FURTHER to the release of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia's Employment Expectations Survey (PD 03 Apr), NSW was the state with the most expected pharmacist job losses at 755.

The Pharmacy Board of Australia has previously reported that NSW has the most registered pharmacists at 30.58% of the country's total, or 8,428.

Victoria was second at 525 expected job losses, followed by Queensland at 443.

The survey also included respondent feedback.

One such comment from a Tasmanian pharmacy said it had been about to move from the equivalent of 1.25 pharmacists to two, but had had to shelve plans and reduce hours for assistants.

To read the survey, [CLICK HERE](#).

## WIN A HYDRALYTE PRIZE PACK

Every day this week **Pharmacy Daily** is giving ten lucky readers the chance to win a Hydralyte prize pack, to ensure you stay hydrated whilst travelling.

### Travelling?

Send dehydration packing with Hydralyte

### The Risks:

- Travellers' Diarrhoea (up to 50% of those travelling to a high risk destination will suffer)
- Long Haul Flights (dry cabins)
- Increased Sun Exposure
- Increased Physical Activity
- Excessive Alcohol Consumption (alcohol acts as a diuretic)

The World Health Organization recommends all travellers' first aid kits contain an Oral Rehydration Formula (such as Hydralyte)

To win, be one of the first ten people to send in the correct answer to the question below to: [comp@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:comp@pharmacydaily.com.au).

**True or False: Hydralyte remains a Pharmacy Only Range.**



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### Jobs of the Week

- **Sole Pharmacist** - Southern Highlands, NSW (Job# 2010401)  
Early career opportunity to align with progressive customer focused group.
- **Pharmacist** - Devonport & North West, TAS (Job# 2010492)  
Join a great team in a beautiful place offering career growth opportunities.
- **Pharmacist/PIC** - Darling Downs region, QLD (Job# 2010484)  
Get work/life balance with 5.5 days per week in a laid-back country town.

Australia's largest and longest running specialist pharmacy employment agency



## No vax for 35-49 yos

A SURVEY from the Influenza Specialist Group has found that 67% of 35 to 49 year olds would not, or would have to think about, visiting their GP for an annual flu shot, while 18% of the same age group understood that vaccination was the best way to protect themselves from getting the flu.

Influenza Specialist Group director Professor Robert Booy said that, provided pharmacists received the best quality training with regards to vaccination administration, particularly in the event of adverse reactions including performing resuscitations, and kept GPs informed if a vaccination were administered, pharmacists providing such vaccinations could help with awareness and uptake.

There had not been enough awareness raised among young Australians as to influenza vaccinations, who tended to think they were "impenetrable" when it came to being healthy, Booy said.

The survey was conducted online in March among 753 Australians.

## TGA Protos black box

SERVIER has updated the product information of Protos (strontium ranelate) following a Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) review.

Protos was the subject of a review in early Feb (PD 05 Feb), following a decision by the European Medicines Agency (EMA) to further restrict the use of the osteoporosis medication to use only in patients who cannot be treated with other medicines.

A black box warning has been added to the product information for the medication, which is in line with the EMA's recommendation that Protos only be used when other medications for osteoporosis were considered unsuitable.

The black box warning relegates the product to second-line use and re-emphasises the contraindications and precautions, and highlights the need for regular monitoring.

Other sections of the PI and the Consumer Medicines Information (CMI) have also been updated to

spotlight these elements.

Servier Australia said healthcare professionals would receive updated information on the prescribing information.

It quoted Osteoporosis Australia medical director Professor Peter Ebeling as saying that, for patients who met the revised criteria, strontium ranelate remained an effective therapy, particularly for those at high fracture risk.

Pharmacists can refer patients to the new information by **CLICKING HERE**.

## Opioid pharmacology

AN ARTICLE titled 'Revisiting old friends: update on opioid pharmacology' has been published in the *Australian Prescriber*.

The article talks about opioid uses, the need to be careful when switching from one to another and the need to be aware of the limitations of conversion tables.

To read it, **CLICK HERE**.

## TGA calls for input

THE Therapeutic Goods

Administration is inviting public submissions around scheduling proposals for amendments to the current Poisons Standard.

**CLICK HERE** for details and to submit.

## FDA OTC regulation

THE US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has said its existing OTC drug review process was outdated and it is looking for ideas for a new and improved process.

A meeting was held last week with consumers, health care professionals and manufacturers.

FDA Center for Drug Evaluation and Research managing director Janet Woodcock said the organisation heard a variety of ideas for change as well as that some stakeholders felt things did not need to be altered.

The FDA was still looking for suggestions until 12 May, Woodcock said.

## April MIMS Monthly Medicine Update

### NEW PRODUCTS

Opsumit (**macitentan**) is a dual ETA and ETB endothelin receptor antagonist that prevents the binding of endothelin (ET)-1 to its receptors. Macitentan displays high affinity for and sustained occupancy of the ET receptors in human pulmonary arterial smooth muscle cells and has physicochemical properties favouring penetration into lung tissue, particularly in disease conditions. Opsumit, as monotherapy or in combination with approved pulmonary arterial hypertension treatments (phosphodiesterase-5 inhibitors or inhaled prostanoids), is indicated for the treatment of the following conditions in patients with WHO functional class II, III or IV symptoms. Idiopathic pulmonary arterial hypertension; heritable pulmonary arterial hypertension; pulmonary arterial

hypertension associated with connective tissue disease; and pulmonary arterial hypertension associated with congenital heart disease with repaired shunts. Opsumit is contraindicated in women who are or may become pregnant; women of childbearing potential who are not using reliable contraception (women must not become pregnant for at least 3 months after stopping treatment with Opsumit); hypersensitivity to the active substance or to any of the excipients; patients with severe hepatic impairment (with or without cirrhosis) and in patients with baseline values of hepatic aminotransferases (aspartate aminotransferase and/or alanine aminotransferase) greater than 3 times the upper limit of normal. Opsumit is available as 10 mg film coated tablets in blister packs of 30's.

Mekinist (**trametinib dimethyl sulfoxide**) is a reversible allosteric inhibitor of mitogen-activated extracellular signal regulated kinase 1 (MEK1) and MEK2 activation and kinase activity. MEK proteins are critical components of the extracellular signal-related kinase (ERK) pathway. In melanoma and other cancers, this pathway is often activated by mutated forms of BRAF which activates MEK and stimulates tumour cell growth. Trametinib inhibits activation of MEK by BRAF and inhibits MEK kinase activity. Trametinib inhibits growth of BRAFV600 mutant melanoma cell lines and demonstrates anti-tumour effects in BRAFV600 mutant melanoma animal models. Mekinist in combination with dabrafenib is indicated for the treatment of patients with BRAFV600 mutation positive unresectable stage III or metastatic (stage IV)

melanoma and as monotherapy is indicated for the treatment of patients with BRAFV600 mutation positive unresectable stage III or metastatic (stage IV) melanoma and in whom either there is intolerance to BRAF inhibitors or BRAF inhibitors cannot be used. Mekinist is available as 0.5 mg and 2 mg film coated tablets in packs of 30's.

### NEW INDICATIONS

Enbrel (**etanercept**) is now also indicated in juvenile idiopathic arthritis under the following conditions.

Active polyarthritis (rheumatoid factor positive or negative) in children and adolescents, aged 2 to 17 years, who have had an inadequate response to one or more DMARDs;

active extended oligoarthritis in children and adolescents, aged 2 to 17 years, who have had an inadequate response to, or

who have proved intolerant to, methotrexate;

active enthesitis related arthritis in adolescents, aged 12 to 17 years, who have had an inadequate response to, or who have proved intolerant to, conventional therapy; and in active psoriatic arthritis in adolescents, aged 12 to 17 years, who have had an inadequate response to, or who have proved intolerant to, methotrexate.

### SAFETY RELATED CHANGES

Enbrel (**etanercept**) has not been studied in children aged less than 2 years.

Caution should be used when Tykerb (**lapatinib as ditosylate monohydrate**) is administered to those who have or may develop prolongation of the QTc interval.

*This list is a summary of only some of the changes that have occurred over the last month. Before prescribing, always refer to the full product information.*



## Events Calendar

**WELCOME** to *Pharmacy Daily's* events calendar, opportunities to earn CPE and CPD points.

If you have an upcoming event you'd like us to feature, email [info@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:info@pharmacydaily.com.au).

**4-6 Apr:** Australian Fitness & Health Expo; Melbourne; see: [www.fitnessexpo.com.au](http://www.fitnessexpo.com.au)

**5 Apr:** Clinical Trials Seminar; Melbourne; for more info go to: [www.shpa.org.au](http://www.shpa.org.au)

**11-12 Apr:** 2nd BioCeuticals Research Symposium; Sofitel Sydney Wentworth; see: [www.bioceuticals.com.au](http://www.bioceuticals.com.au)

**12-13 Apr:** Pharmacy in Focus; Orange; for details go to: [www.psa.org.au](http://www.psa.org.au)

**12-14 Apr:** FIP Fifth Pharmaceutical Sciences World Congress, Melbourne; for details **CLICK HERE**.

**3-4 May:** 4th International Conference on the Science of Nutrition in Medicine and Healthcare Conference; Gold Coast; for more info see: [www.nutritionmedicine.org.au](http://www.nutritionmedicine.org.au)

**5-6 May:** Pharmacy "Essential Financial Skills; Perth; see: [www.fmrcbusdev.com.au](http://www.fmrcbusdev.com.au)

**17-18 May:** Early Career Leadership Seminar; Adelaide; for more info go to: [www.shpa.org.au](http://www.shpa.org.au)

**30 May - 1 Jun:** Clinical and Practice Expo 2014, Sydney; see: [www.psa.org.au/cpexpo](http://www.psa.org.au/cpexpo) or email [cpexpo@psa.org.au](mailto:cpexpo@psa.org.au)

**1-3 Jun:** ConPharm 2014; Port Douglas; for more info go to: [www.conpharm14.com.au](http://www.conpharm14.com.au)

**1-3 Jun:** 20th International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2014); Melbourne; see more at: [www.aids2014.org](http://www.aids2014.org)

**3-4 Jun:** Pharmacy "Essential Financial Skills; Melbourne; see: [www.fmrcbusdev.com.au](http://www.fmrcbusdev.com.au)

**20-22 Jun:** National Convention & Exhibition; Sydney; details: [www.nswpharmacy-nce.com.au](http://www.nswpharmacy-nce.com.au)

## Pharmacy AF screening

**RESEARCHERS** at the University of Sydney have published their evaluation of a new screening test for atrial fibrillation (AF) which delivers an ECG (**pictured**) using an iPhone with an attachment and managed by pharmacists.

The test was found to be quick at 30 seconds and accurate at diagnosing unknown AF.

Given that AF predisposes for a third of all strokes, screening Australians aged between 65 and 84, researchers predict that the test could prevent 1228 strokes over 10 years, or 122 strokes each year.

The study, published in *Thrombosis and Haemostasis*, is based on 1000 people aged 65 and over, screened in pharmacies.

The app identified AF in 1.5% of participants, it said, which was predicted from a previous review of all screening studies.

The review found a total incidence of unknown AF of 1.4 per cent in those over 65.

Paper senior author Professor Ben Freedman said if the screening were extended to the general community, the incremental cost-effectiveness ratio would be \$5,988 per Quality Adjusted Life Year (QALY) gained and \$30,481 for prevention of one stroke.

A spokesman for the Pharmacy Guild of Australia said, "We welcome the researchers' prediction that there will be an

increased recognition of the role health providers like pharmacists can play in screening for serious conditions."

National president of the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia Grant Kardachi said the app was a good example of how technology and the pharmacy profession could combine to improve health outcomes for the community.



"Pharmacies are the most accessible health professionals and as more and more pharmacies turn to a model of providing a wide range of professional services, services such as this one will assume greater prominence and importance."

He said the app was an example of Australian health technology at the forefront of international best practice.

## TGA ban and review

**THE** Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has posted a ban on Meizitang Strong Version Botanical Slimming capsules and said that it is reviewing new information about Motilium (domperidone) and its potential effects on the heart.

Go to [www.tga.gov.au](http://www.tga.gov.au) for details.

## FDA approves Oralair

**THE** US Food and Drug Administration has approved Oralair Sublingual Tablets (Allergen Pollen Extract of 5 Grasses) to treat allergic rhinitis (hay fever) with or without conjunctivitis (eye inflammation) that is induced by certain grass pollens in people aged 10 through 65 years.

This is the first sublingual allergen extract approved in the United States.

Helex-A's Oralair was approved for use in Australia in June last year (**PD** 28 Jun 2013).

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## DISPENSARY CORNER

**DIRECTIONS:** drink once in life.

Whether it's just a model or not, people may no longer need the medical profession, with visitors heading to San Isidro basilica in Spain after historians have made the bold claim that a cup on display at the church is the Holy Grail.

The mythical goblet is said to be the cup from which Christ drank at the Last Supper and as such, was a powerful object of good which could heal the wounded - Arthurian legend has it that only those who are truly pure of spirit could find it.

Two historians said Egyptian parchments found at Cairo's University of al-Azhar set them on a three year investigation which culminated with them identifying the goblet, the *Guardian* reported.

While it sounds like an April Fool's joke (and was published on 01 Apr), the *BBC* reported that the *Guardian* was serious.

Considering there are 200 claimed Holy Grails in Europe alone, according to the publication, they'd better sort out which is which - if you've watched 'Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade', you'll know the consequences of drinking from the wrong cup.

**GETTING** too close.

This is always an option if you have a spate of discourteous dog owners outside your pharmacy - a woman in the UK has taken to decorating dog poo with strawberries and cream.

Theresa Ritchie also uses Nutella on the droppings, in an attempt to make lax owners aware that someone is watching them, the *Evening Express* reported.

She said the campaign also showed that the council for her town of Peterhead wasn't picking up the mess, the publication reported.

"I wanted to highlight the problem in an amusing way."