

Accu-Chek tests recall

ROCHE Diabetes Care, in consultation with the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA), is undertaking a recall for product correction of its Accu-Chek Mobile glucose tests due to the potential for a commonly used antibiotic to interfere with blood glucose test results.

It has been found that the antibiotic ceftriaxone can interfere with the way the measurement is made and may lead to incorrect low blood glucose readings.

Ceftriaxone was a broad-spectrum antibiotic used to treat a wide variety of common infections, the TGA said.

Roche Diabetes Care is advising users of the Accu-Chek Mobile meter, a component of the glucose tests, of this issue and will be updating the device's labelling.

The company has said it will offer affected patients a suitable alternative blood glucose measurement system for the duration of treatment with ceftriaxone at no charge.

The company said other Roche blood glucose measurement systems were not affected by the recall.

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

Cross-Atlantic parleys

DG Health and Consumers (European Commission), the European Medicines Agency (EMA) and the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) discussed collaboration opportunities at a bilateral meeting exploring future work-sharing in London from 31 Mar to 01 Apr.

These meetings take place approximately every 18 months but did not involve Australia on this occasion.

MA: CPI shows PBS works

MEDICINES Australia (MA) has said the CPI growth in pharmaceutical prices for the March quarter showed the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme's (PBS) safety net worked.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) said pharmaceutical products had one of the most significant price rises for the March quarter at 6.1%, behind only tobacco prices at 6.7%, which was due to the "cyclical reduction in the proportion of patients who qualify for subsidies under the Medicare Benefits Scheme and PBS at the start of each calendar year."

MA ceo Dr Brendan Shaw said the rise in CPI for March should be considered in the context of the December CPI, when prices fell by 1.6%, due largely to patients reaching the PBS 'safety net threshold' and paying reduced or no co-payments.

"As each calendar year progresses, more people reach the PBS safety net threshold.

"On 1 January each year, the safety net is reset and consumers resume paying the normal PBS co-payments until they again reach the safety net threshold.

"That is why the pharmaceutical component of the index rises again in the first quarter of each calendar year."

The growth in prices was a product of government policy rather than any change in pharmaceutical company pricing, he said.

"What it shows is that the safety net is working."

The ABS CPI statistics for the March 2013 quarter showed a rise of 7.6% for pharmaceutical products and a drop of 3.5% for the December 2012 quarter, and a rise of 14.1% for the March 2012

quarter, with a drop of 5.6% for the December 2011 quarter.

This March quarter increase was the lowest in 16 years, Shaw said, which could reflect the impact of PBS price cuts as a result of price disclosure over the past few years.

FDA approves Sylvant

THE US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved Sylvant (siltuximab) to treat patients with multicentric Castleman's disease.

It was the first FDA approved treatment for patients with the disease and demonstrated its commitment to approving drugs for rare diseases, FDA Centre for Drug Evaluation and Research Office of Hematology and Oncology Products director Richard Pazdur said.

Fe⁺⁺ deficiency a risk

IRON deficiency is a risk for many women of reproductive age; and in particular a risk for female athletes due to diets deficient in iron, increased iron losses, and reduced absorption of iron from subclinical inflammation, according to the authors of a recently published meta-analysis.

The study analysed 22 randomised controlled trials and was published in the *Journal of Nutrition*, finding that iron supplements were associated with increases in oxygen consumption (VO2 max) and a lower heart rate at both maximal and sub-maximal exercise efforts.

"Perhaps not surprisingly, the benefits were found to be most pronounced in iron-deficient women and in trained women," said Carl Gibson, ceo of the Complementary Healthcare Council of Australia (CHC).

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UK skin cancer on rise

CANCER research data from the UK has shown more than 13,000 people develop malignant melanoma each year versus only around 1,800 people per year in the 1970s.

The present day diagnosis rate is around 17 people in every 100,000, compared with three per 100,000 in the mid 1970s.

According to the BBC News Health, the rise is partly due to rising popularity of package holidays to Europe from the late 1960s as well as the use of sunbeds.

Now the fifth most common cancer, malignant melanoma kills more than 2,000 Great Britain residents every year.

Hosp Pharmacy check

HOSPITAL pharmacists in Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston have been able to demonstrate the value of pre- and post-discharge medication reviews.

Pharmacists who contacted patients within 72 hours of discharge discovered that more than half of the patients had medication-related issues, *Drug Topics* reported.

A separate evaluation period showed that 35% of patients had medication issues when reviewed by a pharmacist prior to discharge.

The research was headed by Laura Carr, PharmD who presented findings from the hospital's STAAR (State Action on Avoidable Rehospitalizations) initiative, based on data collected between July 2010 and July 2013.

Call for pharma vax info

MEDECINS Sans Frontieres (MSF) has called on pharmaceutical companies to publish new information about when vaccines can be used outside the cold chain.

The cold chain, or the requirement to keep vaccines between 2 and 8°C, meant in developing countries, the logistics of transporting vaccines was a "considerable obstacle" and the difficulty in getting vaccines to places was a cause of low immunisation rates in some countries, MSF said.

There was growing evidence that some vaccines could leave the cold chain for certain periods of time, called the Controlled Temperature Chain (CTC), the organisation said.

MSF research arm Epicentre conducted a study in 2012 and 2013 of the Serum Institute of India's tetanus toxoid vaccine in a CTC at temperatures of up to 40°C for up to 30 days.

The study compared the vaccine's effectiveness in women aged between 14 to 49 years of age

Bupivacaine Inj recall

HOSPIRA Inc. in the US has announced a voluntary nationwide recall for one lot of 0.25% Marcaine (Bupivacaine HCl Injection, USP), 10 mL, single-dose vial.

The recall is due to a confirmed report of discoloured solution with visible particles embedded in the glass, which Hospira has attributed to a supplier's glass defect.

The defect is not known to affect Australian supplies.

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in Chad, with a total of 2,129 participants.

Two groups of women received the vaccine, either after being kept in a strict cold chain, or out of the cold chain, for up to 30 days.

MSF said the study showed both groups of women were adequately protected against tetanus, with the vaccine in CTC non-inferior with respect to seroconversion, Epicentre director of epidemiology Dr Rebecca Grais said.

She hoped the result would encourage clear guidelines on more flexible use of the vaccine in CTC conditions so more people in remote areas could be immunised.

"In the immediate term, the onus is on the pharmaceutical companies to generate data and take the initiative with regulatory bodies so that their vaccines can be licenced for use outside of the strict cold chain.

"Longer-term we want the next-generation vaccines to be developed and licenced with ambitious heat stability targets so that this problem is avoided from the outset."

NICE ticks 2 cancer Rx

THE UK National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has given the go ahead for afatinib (Giotrif from Boehringer Ingelheim) indicated for lung cancer to be paid for by the NHS, and people newly diagnosed with the blood cancer multiple myeloma would now be guaranteed access to Bortezomib (Velcade by Janssen).

NPS judging panel

THE judging panel for the National Medicinewise Awards 2014 has been announced.

The judges are University of South Australia's Professor Lloyd Sansom, GP Dr John D'Arcy, NPS MedicineWise director Debra Kay and NPS MedicineWise executive manager Karen Kaye.

The awards recognised outstanding Australian contributions to quality use of medicines and medical tests and were awarded biennially, NPS said.

Entries close today and the winners will be announced at the Symposium dinner on 22 May.

CVS Pharmacy sued

AS a result of allegedly seeking health insurance rebates "for invalid prescriptions of controlled substances that would inevitably land on the black market," according to the *Courthouse News Service*, the US pharmacy chain CVS Pharmacy is being sued by Fox Rx and 18 states.

CVS Pharmacy is accused of violating the False Claims act by submitting claims to Medicare for controlled substances such as codeine and oxycodone, which require a registration number issued by the Drug Enforcement Agency.

Fox Rx claims that between January 2008 and 2010, one out of every five of the claims submitted by CVS for the drugs lacked such a number.

There are over 7,000 CVS Pharmacy member pharmacies in the United States.



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WELCOME to Pharmacy Daily's travel feature. Each week we highlight a couple of great travel deals for the pharmacy industry.

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For some Swedish inspiration, head to Stockholm's main Sveavägen Boulevard, home to Miss Clara.

Built in 1910, the former Ateneum school for girls has been transformed by the ever-enterprising Nobis Group into a sleek Scandinavian bolthole.

For those with China at the top of their wish list, **The Waterhouse at South Bund**, designed by Neri & Hu should be your first port of call.

Maintaining the building's original 1930s facade, the hotel pushes boundaries with sleek interiors that harmoniously blend the antique with the contemporary.

If the sun-soaked beaches of Thailand are your ideal, **Indigo Pearl** on the northwest coast of Phuket is the perfect tropical retreat.

The hotel featuring an award winning spa, four restaurants, snooker hall and poolside café welcomes with authentic Thai hospitality.

For more details and pricing, go to www.designhotels.com.

Pharmacy structure OK

PHARMACY Guild of Australia executive director David Quilty said the community pharmacy sector in Australia is serving the public well, following an article in *The Australian* which said the 6CPA was a "cartel" agreement (**PD** 17 Apr).

In his *forefront* article titled 'Don't try and fix something unless it's broken', Quilty spoke of the Federal Treasury's release of its Issues Paper for its Competition Policy Review, which made reference to pharmacy advice/dispensing services as an example of a constraint on the supply of services, the *Australian* article and the Guild's response, which spoke about the high levels of public trust in pharmacies.

Quilty said recent survey results such as the latest Roy Morgan Image of Professions survey and the Menzies Nourish biennial national survey, showed satisfaction ratings that outranked "virtually every other profession or business sector."

These results had been confirmed

by the Price Waterhouse Coopers (PwC) consumer research project conducted as part of the Fifth Community Pharmacy Agreement (**PD** 20 Mar), which showed 98% of people could easily access a pharmacy and 90% were satisfied with the service, he said.

"These repeated votes of public confidence are testament to the fact that Australia's system of community pharmacy continues to serve Australians exceedingly well."

The Department of Health had not responded to requests for the survey at time of writing.

TGA presentation

THE TGA has posted an overview presentation of its developments.

The presentation was delivered to the AusMedTech 2014 conference on 01 Apr.

Topics covered in the presentation include the organisation's roles, financials and regulatory framework.

CLICK HERE to access the text.



DISPENSARY CORNER

FAR be it from us to judge.

Look, typos happen. But in another publication's announcement of the GSK and Novartis deal (**PD** 23 Apr), a misspelling of GlaxoKlineSmith as Galxo spawned one of the better comment threads in history; one commenter asked "Who is this Galxo you speak of?", to which user 'mojoangel' replied "I think he was a minor baddie in the Marvel comic universe, but I could be wrong."

DON'T try this at home.

In one of the more amazing healthcare happenings, a Washington man became a maths and physics expert after being punched in the back of the head.

Jason Padgett worked in his father's furniture shop until a mugging in 2002 knocked him unconscious and caused a brain injury which flooded the left side of his brain with neurotransmitters, changing its structure and leading to his eventual diagnosis of acquired savant syndrome, the *Daily Mail* reported.

Padgett began to recognise fractals and returned to university, writing a book called 'Struck by Genius', in which he said he believed he was the proof that such powers lay in all of us, the publication reported.

A ROSE by any other taste.

A rose by any other name would smell as sweet, and maybe taste as good - a study found that 10 Chinese edible flowers contained phenolics that have been correlated with a reduced risk of cardiovascular disease and certain cancers, *Science Daily* reported.

Published in the *Journal of Food Science*, the study suggested edible flowers had the potential to be used as an additive to food to help prevent chronic disease.

However, further research was required, the publication reported.

CLICK HERE to read the study.



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