

>1m adverse reports

THE European Medicines Agency's (EMA) system for reporting adverse reactions, EudraVigilance, received more than one million post marketing expedited adverse drug reaction reports in 2013.

This was a 26% increase compared with 2012, the highest ever annual figure, the EMA said.

The highest increase was in the European Union, which the EMA said showed the efforts of the regulatory network in encouraging reporting of adverse reactions in medicines.

Vitamins & glaucoma

A STUDY has found higher intakes of vitamin B6, vitamin B12 and folate were linked to lower homocysteine levels, which significantly reduced the risk of glaucoma by reducing vascular damage, oxidative stress, and extra cellular matrix alterations.

The US based cohort study was published online in *JAMA Ophthalmology* this month and assessed about 80,000 men (all health professionals) and 40,000 women (all registered nurses) between 1980 and 2010.

CLICK HERE to read the paper.

T1 diabetes rates stable

TYPE 1 diabetes rates in Australia have avoided the trend to increase in other countries, remaining relatively stable from 2000 to 2011.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare released its 'Incidence of insulin-treated diabetes in Australia 2000-2011' report, which showed there were 2,367 new cases in Australia in 2011, or 11 new cases per 100,000 people.

This compared with between 10 and 12 new cases per 100,000 people each year from 2000 to 2011.

However, the Institute said the rate was still high compared with some countries, and above the OECD average for type 1 diabetes per 100,000 children.

People aged 18 or under made up half of new cases in 2011 and rates peaked in the 10 to 14 years age group at 32 cases per 100,000 people, five times higher than for the 40 to 44 years age group.

Type 1 diabetes rates were higher in males at 13 in every 100,000, compared with eight, and higher in people living in major cities or regional areas, compared with remote areas.

The incidence was lower for

indigenous Australians from 2006 to 2011, at seven per 100,000 compared with 10.

To read the report, **CLICK HERE**.

Stribild on PBS

STRIBILD (elvitegravir 150 mg/ cobicistat 150 mg/emtricitabine 200 mg/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 300 mg), an Integrase Inhibitor based single tablet regimen treatment for HIV, is now available on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.

The tablet is taken once daily and Gilead has said it could prompt earlier HIV treatment.

PSA on TGA modules

PHARMACEUTICAL Society of Australia national president Grant Kardachi said the Therapeutic Goods Administration's tender to provide online modules on pharmacovigilance was to be welcomed.

In addition to helping reduce medication errors and increasing the quality use of medicines, education on pharmacovigilance would result in more data on adverse events becoming available.

"The more people can report, the better data we get which in turn means we can direct programs and strategies to this area.

"Reducing adverse events and increasing the quality use of medicine is a priority for the profession to improve health outcomes and reduce the economic pressure on the health system."

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MEDICINES Management 2014, the 40th SHPA National Conference, being held in Darwin, is now open for registration.

Abstract submissions close 16 May and early-bird registration 04 Jun.

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Love your lungs at 65

ALMOST two in three Australian seniors may be jeopardising their 'golden years' by not protecting against a lung infection, despite being at increased risk, the Lung Foundation Australia has said.

This week is Pneumonia Awareness Week, and accordingly the Foundation has released research titled 'Love your lungs at 65', which said 94% of Australians aged 65 to 74 did not recognise age as a risk factor for pneumonia.

The research, conducted online in April among 752 people aged 65 to 74, found less than 50% understood that vaccination could defend against pneumococcal pneumonia, which was responsible for 82% of pneumonia cases in those over 65 years old.

The Foundation is encouraging people aged 65 and over who are 'at risk' of contracting pneumonia to speak to their doctors about protecting against infection.

Prenatal vit D value

RECENT research has highlighted that inadequate maternal vitamin D levels during pregnancy may affect tooth calcification, predisposing enamel hypoplasia and early childhood caries (ECC).

The study, 'Prenatal Vitamin D and Dental Caries in Infants', evaluated the effect of vitamin D in 207 women prenatally using Univariate Poisson regression analysis.

The study was published in *Pediatrics* and the women had a mean age of 19 years old, plus or minus five years.

CLICK HERE to read the study.

Pfizer-AZ acquisition

BRITAIN'S AstraZeneca (AZ) may be about to join a long line of companies that the US pharma giant Pfizer has bought over the last 15 years.

Reuters reported that Pfizer Inc, the largest pharmaceutical manufacturer and marketer in the world, had again approached AZ in an attempt to takeover the British company only to have its US\$100b offer fail, but in speculation of

increased offers to come, both Pfizer and AZ shares were up on the NYSE this week.

If a subsequent bid meets approval of the AZ board and shareholders, the company would join Warner-Lambert, Pharmacia, Searle, Wyeth and other companies to be bought out by Pfizer.

Pfizer ceo Ian Read told *Reuters* there were no firm commitments.

"We see the UK as an attractive place to do science and manufacturing. Jobs and investment tend to follow incentives.

"You need to look at this restructuring in the context of an industry responding to society's request for increases in efficiency and productivity."

Both companies have pipeline products in the oncology and immunology therapeutic areas.

An acquisition would follow another shake up in industry structure, the three part deal between GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) and Novartis (**PD** 23 Apr), which saw GSK purchase Novartis' global vaccines business for US\$5.25b and divesting its oncology portfolio to Novartis for \$US16b.

Social cocaine risks

UNIVERSITY of Sydney research has found that people who use cocaine 'socially' are at greater risk of developing cardiovascular disease.

The findings, published in *PLOS ONE*, showed that social cocaine users had increased aortic stiffness, increased systolic blood pressure, and greater left ventricular mass, compared with the non-users, which are risk factors for premature cardiovascular events.

The acute side effects of cocaine, including myocardial infarction (heart attack) and myocardial ischaemia, were well known, the study said.

MEANWHILE new research findings published in *The Journal of Neuroscience* has demonstrated that while long term marijuana use has well understood risks, it is now clear that neural changes are evident even from limited exposure such as recreational use.

These changes result in "related disruptions in behaviour" the study found - **CLICK HERE** to read.

IF YOUR CUSTOMERS ARE TAKING A COURSE OF ANTIBIOTICS

a probiotic such as Inner Health Plus may assist in maintaining the balance of good bacteria.

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Monash gets grants

MONASH University's Institute of Pharmaceutical Science, Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences and the PHI-Monash Institute of Medical Research have received two grants from the US National Institute of Health, worth \$10m, to develop treatments for infections caused by antibiotic resistant bacteria.

The international team would focus on new therapies, which was important given the decline in discovery of new antibiotics, Monash University said.

This was a significant public health problem, Fulbright scholar Suzanne Schultz has said (**PD** 13 Mar).

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For more information, visit: www.lapurete.com.au.

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

Which university ran the clinical trials on Okuru?

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Created using a special formulation of senna leaf, buckthorn bark, psyllium seed, dill seed and liquorice powder, Herb-a-lax capsules are a convenient, gentle, yet effective natural laxative which also help relieve wind and bloating. Herb-a-Lax was deliberately pulled from grocery five years ago when Blooms Health Products committed to being a pharmacy and health-food only brand.

Stockist: 1800 181 323

RRP: \$9.95 for a bottle of 90 caps

Website: www.bloomshealth.com.au

Bayer's Bepanthen Scar Treatment for red and raised scars

Scars can be distressing and affect your self-confidence, especially in social situations.

Bepanthen Scar Treatment has been developed using scientific recommendations for scar management to help prevent the formation of a red and raised scar and to help treat scars that are already red and raised. It has a unique triple action which is important for optimal scar treatment. 1. The innovative massage roller helps break down excess collagen 2. The moisturising formula (including Pro-Vitamin B5) assists by moisturising and reduces scar redness and itching 3. The silicone gel forms a protective barrier over the scar to help lock in moisture. Suitable for adults and children over three.

Stockist: Sigma, Symbion and API

RRP: \$19.95

Website: www.bayer.com.au



NEW VOOST effervescent - the easy way to swallow your vitamins

Do you have difficulty swallowing tablets and capsules? New **VOOST effervescent**s, now available in Australia, are one of the simplest and most pleasant ways to get your daily dose of vitamins and minerals. The new range includes magnesium, vitamin C, vitamin B complex, calcium + D3 and an everyday multi vitamin. They come in great flavours like blood orange, natural citrus and apricot peach. Use only as directed. Vitamins should not replace a balanced diet. Not a substitute for good nutrition.



Stockist: 1800 678 302

RRP: \$5.95

Website: www.vitaminhaus.com.au

Airssential AiroPact Nebuliser: the perfect travel companion

Travelling with an asthmatic condition can sometimes be a pain with bulky equipment and medication. Airssential Home Healthcare Solutions have solved this problem with the **AiroPact Nebuliser** which integrates simplicity of use with the convenience of portability. Specifically designed for travel with a rechargeable battery back, AC universal charging transformer, a DC car charger and a carry bag, the compact AiroPact Nebuliser is perfect for those travelling Australians wanting to enjoy their twilight years without the hassle of other asthmatic devices.

Stockists: 1800 026 426

RRP: \$299.00

Website: www.airssential.com.au



DISPENSARY CORNER

FACEDEMENTIA.

Alzheimer's Research UK has released a pretty clever app, called FaceDementia, which allows users to experience what life is like living with Dementia through Facebook.

The website connects with the user's Facebook page, erasing photos, status updates and other details.

It works by letting photos slip away, displaying old statuses and then jumbling them, or displaying your friends' photos slowly fading.

It finishes with the option to donate and the statement that Alzheimer's is a disease - and we've beaten disease before.

To experience the app, **CLICK HERE**.

ONE dose of fiction, daily.

For the literature lovers out there, the medicines mentioned in various works of fiction might either inspire you or drive you mad with the implausibility. So to scratch that itch, [Wikipedia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_fictional_medicines) has an (incomplete) list of fictional medicines, ranging from the deus ex machina, never-seen-again Adara's Rose from fantasy series the *Belgaraid*, which miraculously cures an irritating emperor, to the alas, improbable Skele-Gro in the *Harry Potter* series, as well as the could-happen-someday Stim packs from the *Fallout* games and the effectively-in-practise biofoam from *Halo*.

GOODBYE knob, hello lever.

Vancouver has passed a local building standard that bans the use of door knobs as a fitting, insisting instead on levers.

According to the *Telegraph*, the elderly, disabled and children have difficulty manipulating the wrist-twisting door knob.

The amended building code will apply to all new buildings erected from March 2014.

So much for the trick of putting vaseline on the door knob!