



## Friday's Comp winner

**FRIDAY'S** winner of Designer Brands' latest foundation range was **Melanie Spina** from Nanango Pharmacy.

This week, **Pharmacy Daily** is giving five readers the chance to win a Fabulicious nail care pack. See **page two** for details.

## Australia Post for PBS payment outsourcing

**AUSTRALIA** Post has confirmed it will submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) for the Department of Health's call for the provision of claims and payments for Medicare and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (**PD** 08 Aug).

As first reported by the *Australian Financial Review*, Australia Post ceo Ahmed Fahour confirmed the company would pitch at a conference in Melbourne last week.

In a statement sent to **PD**, Australia Post said it was a proven trusted services provider and had a demonstrated track record delivering important services to the community.

"We will be responding to the expression of interest by the Department of Health."

The Minister of Health Peter Dutton has said the call for EOIs came as the Department sought to simplify and streamline systems, and that the Government was committed to cutting red tape in the health system.

He said current IT systems that managed the payment processes were dated.

Submissions close 22 Aug.

## \$922m musculoskeletal meds

**MUSCULOSKELETAL** conditions such as arthritis are the fourth most expensive group of diseases, with \$922m spent on prescription pharmaceuticals for these conditions, a report from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) has found.

Spending on these diseases in total was \$5.69b in 2008-09, or 9% of total health care spending, the report found, with prescription pharmaceuticals taking up 16% of this spend.

Osteoarthritis had the largest proportion of spending on musculoskeletal conditions in 2008-09 at 29% or \$1.64m, of the total, followed by back problems at \$1.18m or 21%.

Rheumatoid arthritis had the largest proportion of pharmaceutical spend on musculoskeletal conditions in 2008-09, at 30%, followed by 'other' musculoskeletal conditions at 22% and osteoporosis at 21%.

AIHW spokesperson Louise York said spending varied across different conditions, with 77% of spending for rheumatoid arthritis on pharmaceuticals, or \$273m, and 63%, or \$193m, for osteoporosis, compared with 6%, or \$98m, for osteoarthritis, and 13%, or \$153m, for back problems.

She told **PD** that this higher proportion of spend for rheumatoid arthritis and osteoporosis was likely due to the treatments for these conditions being largely pharmaceutical, as well as the expense of the newer biologic disease-modifying anti-rheumatic

drugs (bDMARDs) used in rheumatoid arthritis, AIHW said.

About 79,000 bDMARDs were dispensed in the report time period and almost \$143m in benefits were paid, AIHW said.

Overall, estimates for pharmaceutical expenditure on musculoskeletal conditions was an underestimate of the real costs involved, due to various sections of data not being captured by the report, it said.

Expenditure on musculoskeletal conditions was greatest for people aged 65 to 74 at \$1.24m but per person expenditure was highest for those aged 75 to 84 at an average of \$1,007 per person, it found.

## Feedback on rare disorders meds

**FEEDBACK** on PHARMAC's consultation regarding a draft RFP for the supply of medicines for rare disorders has supported trialling the proposed approach of a commercial process to fund these medicines (**PD** 09 May).

The organisation said most submissions felt NZ\$5m per year of contestable funding over five years was not enough, and that some submissions highlighted a lack of clarity as to whether funding was ongoing after the five years.

PHARMAC said medicines listed would continue to be available as long as people continued to benefit from them.

A number of prerequisites have been updated, which can be accessed by **CLICKING HERE**.

## Diabetes youth survey

**DIABETES** Australia has launched the Diabetes MILES Youth survey, which encourages those aged 10 to 19 years old and their parents to give their opinions about how diabetes impacts them and what help they would like to see in the future.

Results would be used to improve self management services and facilities, Diabetes Australia said.

Access the survey by **CLICKING HERE**.

## EPSI reminder

**THE** Department of Health and the Pharmacy Guild of Australia are reminding pharmacies about the electronic prescription scanning incentive (ePSI) - see **page three** for more details.

## High BMI increases cancer risk

**HIGH** body mass index (BMI) is associated with increased risk of developing 10 common types of cancer, according to new research published in the *Lancet*.

Reported first by *BBC News*, the research looked at the largest study of its kind, with more than 5m adults from the UK involved.

It found associations between BMI and 17 of the 22 cancers studied, with higher BMI "roughly linearly" associated with increased risk of uterine, gallbladder, kidney, cervical, thyroid cancers and leukaemia, while positive associations were recorded between BMI and liver, colon, ovarian and postmenopausal breast cancers, although these were non-linear or modified by individual factors, the research found.

The research estimated that a one kg per square metre population-wide increase in BMI would result in a further 3,790 patients in the UK developing one of these 10 cancers.

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

## FDA on fake Ebola products

**THE** US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has warned consumers about products sold online claiming to prevent or treat the Ebola virus.

The FDA said since the outbreak in West Africa, it had received complaints about various products and reminded consumers there were no approved vaccines or drugs to prevent the disease.

**MEANWHILE** the FDA has approved a new use for Avastin (bevacizumab), to treat patients with persistent, recurrent or late-stage cervical cancer.

The new indication is for use in combination with other drugs.



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## Weekly Comment

Welcome to **PD's** weekly comment feature.

This week's contributor is **Catherine Cervasio, Dip. Aromatherapy, Infant Massage Instructor, Founder - Aromababy Natural Skincare**



### Promoting Healthy Baby Skin in Pharmacy

**MOST** parents now understand that residues from topical creams can be absorbed into the bloodstream and may also be triggers for rashes, eczema or irritation. With this in mind, here are some great ways to equip you with information in order to be a source of support for new parents.

- Petro chemically derived ingredients such as mineral oil are reported to occlude the skin and reduce the skin's ability to 'breathe'.<sup>1</sup>
- Sulphates are commonly used as foaming agents. They are found in many shampoos and baby bath products. Products (non rinse-off) with concentrations over 1% (accounting for the majority of commercially available products) may induce skin or eye irritations.<sup>2</sup> These surfactants may also strip natural fatty acids, moisture and amino acids from the skin causing dryness and roughness (eczema).

- Propyl paraben, used as a preservative, has been found to impact on sperm production in rats, according to a report by The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). Parents are often seeking to avoid baby products which utilise parabens as a preservative system.<sup>3</sup>
- Some reports indicate that 'bubble baths' are best avoided to prevent urinary tract infections.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Skin Sense, 1993 pg 100, G Gewirtzman MD, Lifetime Publishing.

<sup>2</sup> Cosmetic Ingredient Review, *The American Journal of Toxicology*, 1983.

<sup>3</sup> EFSA Release Sept 2004.

<sup>4</sup> Well-connected UTI, Nidus Information Service, 2003.

## Medication problems in prisoners

**THE** most commonly managed problems at prison health clinics related to medication/vaccination, according to a bulletin released by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW).

The report found that during the two week data collection period in 2012, more than 4,000 prisoners in custody visited a prison clinic, or 26% of males and 38% of females, and of the more than 9,000 problems managed, about 21% were related to medication/vaccination, representing almost one in 10 prisoners.

This was followed by general health assessments at 14%, pathology at 8% and psychological/mental health related at 7%.

The bulletin said the data period coincided with the time of year when flu vaccinations were generally administered in prisons, which could have skewed data.

Nurses were the most likely healthcare practitioners to deal with medication and vaccinations at 25% of problems managed, compared with GPs at 8%.

Almost 22,000 prescribed medications were administered on the first day of the collection period - **CLICK HERE** to read more.

## Med device increased audit requirements

**THE** Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has said it will audit all applications for medical devices that use supporting evidence from one of eight European notified bodies.

This follows a *British Medical Journal* article, 'How a fake hip showed up the failings of the European device regulation', which questioned whether the bodies were likely to be more interested in repeat business than patient safety.

The TGA said it had received applications using supporting evidence from three of these bodies and that the audits would be conducted to help the TGA obtain its own evidence of the quality of certificates and reports issued by the notified bodies.

For a full list of the notified bodies, **CLICK HERE**.

## Pharmacy Board site

**THE** Pharmacy Board of Australia has updated its websites with new homepage designs.

The Board has said it will continue to review and improve its sites over the next 12 months, with stakeholder consultation.

To have your say, **CLICK HERE**.

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## DISPENSARY CORNER

**AS IF** cancer drugs weren't already very expensive...

Research published this month in *Nanoscale* has found that tiny pieces of gold may help improve the treatment outcomes for aggressive cancers of the brain.

Scientists from St John's College Cambridge created minuscule nanospheres of gold - four million times thinner than a human hair - and coated them with chemotherapy drug cisplatin.

They tested the nanospheres on samples of glioblastomas extracted during brain surgery, and found that radiotherapy excited electrons in the golden core which triggered the breakdown of DNA in the cancer - in turn allowing the cisplatin to attack the weakened tumour.

Human trials of the "double-whammy" innovation are expected as soon as 2016, the research said.

**ONE** of the best ways to improve reading is to practice...music!

A surprising finding from Northwestern University in the US reveals that learning to sing or play a musical instrument can result in significantly improved reading skills in disadvantaged children.

A year of music lessons was found to lift reading scores in nine and ten-year-olds, in comparison to another cohort of children who weren't involved in music.

Music was also found to improve language and hearing skills.

**DOWNLOAD** the FREE *Pharmacy Daily* iOS App, **CLICK BELOW**.



## Win a Fabuluscious Nail Pack

This week **Pharmacy Daily** is giving five readers the chance to win a Fabuluscious nail care pack.

Fabuluscious is a range of professional, salon-quality nail treatments and beauty products, designed for the girl who likes to look fabulous all the time. The extensive range covers all sorts of nail related beauty challenges caused by brittle, dry and flaky nails. All products are made in Australia, free of any nasties and not tested on animals.

To win, be first to send in the correct answer to:

**comp@pharmacydaily.com.au.**



**Are Fabuluscious nail care treatments made in Australia?**



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Contact your vendor to find out your current scanning rate.



Australian Government  
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