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Friday's Comp winner

FRIDAY'S lucky winner of the Fabulous nail care pack was **Juliana Kobryn** from Blooms The Chemist, Springwood.

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

For details see **page two**.

Roche's \$8.3b deal

ROCHE has reportedly said it will buy biotechnology company InterMune for US\$8.3b in cash, the *Wall Street Journal* reported.

The move was a bid to boost its respiratory business through InterMune's pirfenidone, used for the treatment of idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis, the publication reported - **CLICK HERE** for more.

Herd immunity threat

PHARMACIST Ben West has written an open petition letter calling for Minister for Health Peter Dutton to make holding up-to-date vaccine records a compulsory requirement for school and childcare entry in Australia.

The letter argues that "compulsory vaccination of school age children (barring proven health or religious, not conscientious exemptions) will enormously help the fight towards eradicating, or controlling, many preventable diseases."

The petition cites the recent measles breakout in Victoria due to lack of immunisation uptake.

Association of Children's Welfare Agencies ceo Andrew McCallum said it was a difficult situation but it was to be hoped that education would be the primary source of proving the efficacy of immunisations.

He could understand that there was an expectation from parents that risk of exposure to preventable diseases be minimised by vaccination.

The Association would adhere to the Children's Guardian's requirements that all children in care be vaccinated, he said.

The Australian Vaccination-skeptics Network office was closed at time of writing.

CLICK HERE to read the letter.

Pharmacists' asthma upskill

A PROJECT by the Woolcock Institute of Medical Research to adapt an educational program for GPs to community pharmacy improved the confidence of participating pharmacists when it came to counselling paediatric asthma patients.

The Practitioner Asthma Communication and Education (PACE) for Pharmacy program involved 44 pharmacists in central Sydney trained in groups to improve communication in the management of the condition, including assessing a child's clinical pattern of asthma and making informed referrals to the GP regarding prescribing.

Results were published this month in *International Journal of*

Clinical Pharmacy and found that more than 70% of pharmacists reported being more confident in helping the patient or carer make asthma management decisions and in setting and reviewing short and long term goals for management.

Nearly 40% on average reported higher levels in use of communication strategies when counselling a paediatric asthma patient and 62% talked patients through the use of new medication.

More than half more regularly provided an inhaler device demonstration when dispensing a new medicine, more frequently reviewed long term goals and checked whether medications were tailored to asthma patterns, the study found - **CLICK HERE** for more.

NAPSA and SHPA partner up

THE Society of Hospital Pharmacists (SHPA) and the National Australian Pharmacy Students' Association (NAPSA) have built on links between the groups, committing to share pertinent information with student members and consider proposals that would help students and the profession.

The commitment also includes an agreement from SHPA that it would offer NAPSA members professional development opportunities, as well as working together on other projects, the SHPA said.

The partnership allowed it to engage with students at the early stages of their career and highlight the "many career options" for pharmacists, the SHPA said.



SHPA president Professor Michael Dooley (**pictured** left) said the organisation was excited about the formalised partnership, while NAPSA president Sam Turner (**pictured** right) said it was a "fantastic step forward" for NAPSA.

"This is our first ever formal agreement with SHPA and a way for us to expand the opportunities we can provide our members whilst studying at University."

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PBAC on docetaxel

THE Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee has released its July recommendations.

These include that all docetaxel and paclitaxel products be changed from Authority required to unrestricted listings.

The Committee also recommended that the listing of strontium be amended so that it was placed in a second line setting where the patient was unable to use other osteoporosis treatments due to contraindication or intolerance, following the addition of a black box on product information (*PD* 04 Apr), and so that returning it to a telephone Authority would be appropriate.

The Committee also recommended that MS treatment alemtuzumab be listed as Authority Required Section 100.

CLICK HERE to read more.

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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



Baby Bathing Tips

TO HELP minimise dryness and avoid sensitivities to topical products, suggest new parents look for unscented, low-foaming products that contain a short list of simple, easy-to-understand naturally derived ingredients.

A bath/wash/shampoo product may be sulphate-free, however, it may still create foam bubbles, which can strip the baby's skin of its natural oils, leading to dryness and even eczema so despite how organic or natural a brand claims to be, low or no bubbles may be the best option.

Essential oil and fragrance free for young babies is suggested by some neonatal experts. What does this mean? Although a product may claim to be 'natural' or 'organic', no smell (no essential oils) is preferable initially.

Babies generally have little if any hair. Encourage parents to minimise the early washing of hair. Instead use the bath water to gently wash a baby's hair and scalp once every three or four days during the early weeks, or use plain water only.

Because shampoos are used directly on the scalp, they have a more concentrated effect. Reducing the frequency of washing a baby's hair may help to avoid a dry, flaking scalp which can lead to cradle cap.

Letter to the Editor

PHARMACEUTICAL Society of Australia ceo Dr Lance Emerson has written this Letter to the Editor regarding the PBS co-payment:

Evidence given by health department officials to the Senate committee this week that raising the costs of medicines will not deter consumers from having their prescriptions filled is disingenuous at best and misleading at worst.

The Senate is inquiring into proposals to raise fees for drugs subsidised under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, a move aimed to save \$1.3 billion over four years.

Under the plan, fees for PBS medicines will rise by \$5 a script for general patients and 80 cents a script for concessional patients, with the safety net threshold also rising.

However, the Health Department's statements runs contrary to research and was, to be frank, jaw dropping.

It is no wonder that Greens Senator Richard Di Natale described it as "embarrassing for the department," and indicated it was contradicted by the evidence from various studies. "We're with the flat earth society here," Senator Di Natale said.

Supporting other evidence presented, the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia's submission stated "there is a danger of patients

foregoing some of their necessary medications due to cost".

PBS patient co-payments are a feature of the PBS. Increases have generally occurred annually based upon increases in the Consumer Price Index but there have also been sizeable ad hoc increases in excess of inflation, such as is proposed in this year's Federal Budget.

Raising the cost of medicines for consumers will lead to short-term savings.

However, as the co-payment increases, so too will the number of consumers ending up in hospital and nursing homes, with the attendant extra costs to the health system and ultimately to taxpayers. It's as simple as that.

We welcome any comments. If you would like to weigh in on this or other subjects, you can email us at info@pharmacydaily.com.au.

API supports PSS

PHARMACISTS' Support Service (PSS) has received a donation of \$5,000 from API.

The funds will help develop the service, including further training and support for the volunteer pharmacists who provide it.

API ceo and md Stephen Roche said pharmacists were critical to strong, viable community healthcare.

DISPENSARY CORNER



URINE, you're out.

Friday's Dispensary Corner generated a flurry of creative and somewhat scary responses relating to home remedies for athlete's foot.

One well travelled pharmacist said that some families in Kentucky still use fresh cow manure (yes, just walk through it!) as a cure, while Malcolm Allen tells us that his father and fellow soldiers in WW2, as well as he in his own national service days, used their own urine to cure their foot tinea.

Google Scholar reliably informs us that in India, cow urine therapy is a "promising cure for human ailments" including application by drinking or footbath, with scholarly research published in the *Global Journal of Pharmacology* and the *IOSR Journal of Pharmacy* claiming antibacterial and antifungal activity - [CLICK HERE](#) and [HERE](#).

TAPE measure contest.

This is one weight loss method you won't want to recommend - an overenthusiastic mother of a teenage beauty queen contestant secretly fed the wanna-be queen with a pill containing tapeworm eggs in an effort to slim her down, *Orange News* reported.

The Florida woman initially thought her daughter's bulging stomach was due to pregnancy, but received a shock when, upon defecation, she released a bowl full of tape worms.

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WIN A SPOTNER PACK

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

New Spotner Agespot Corrector Pen revolutionises the treatment of age spots. Spotner's precision pen applicator and unique formulation combine to visibly reduce the appearance of age spots. With a simple twice daily treatment, results may be seen in as little as two to three weeks.

Spotner is available in two varieties, Spotner Hands & Body and Spotner Face & Decolleté, a gentler, more delicate formulation for those more sensitive areas.

To win, be first to send in the answer to: comp@pharmacydaily.com.au



What is the main benefit of Spotner's precision pen applicator?