

Sanofi wins awards

HIGH profile Sanofi Consumer Healthcare brands Nature's Own, Cenovis and Gastrolite have taken out awards in their categories in the Nielsen 2014 Product of the Year awards, for performance, value for money and consumer satisfaction.



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GMiA issues policy plea

THE Generic Medicines Industry Association has warned that the current government policy of accelerated price disclosure will result in "numerous unplanned consequences" which will "further burden Australian taxpayers in their support of the PBS into the future".

In an open letter to pharmacists across Australia issued yesterday afternoon (**PD** breaking news) the GMiA board stresses that the organisation isn't seeking a government handout, but rather "health policy that supports a stable, viable generic medicines industry because this is in Australia's paramount interest".

The letter, headed "The Generic Medicines Industry in Australia Needs You to be Our Advocates", warns that budgetary pressures, misinformed public debate and media commentary regarding generic medicines could lead to Federal politicians being pressured into policies that could permanently damage the Australian pharmaceutical industry.

"We ask for your support to ensure the truth about our industry is heard," the letter states.

Key issues canvassed include the higher savings than budgeted from existing policies, which have realised \$4 billion since 2010 - twice the original forecasts.

GMiA says it's critical to support a viable generic medicines industry because PBS medicine prices fall when generics enter the market.

However "the presence of potentially invalid patents are damaging our PBS," with the



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successful challenge to the patent of rosuvastatin set to save the govt hundreds of millions of dollars.

The GMiA warns that accelerated price disclosure is impacting the investment environment in Australia, which in turn makes patent challenges more difficult.

"While a weakened generics sector would be welcomed by pharmaceutical companies with patented medicines, this is not in Australia's national interest.

"We support an adequate return for innovation...we don't support rewarding potentially invalid patents," the letter states.

The issue of biologicals was also raised, which in the future will further dominate the PBS.

"As pharmacists you are aware of the impact of evergreening... our politicians should be focused on establishing health policy that addresses these issues and significant savings to the PBS will indeed follow," the letter warns.

The GMiA letter is signed by Kate Lynch; Apotex md Roger Millichamp; Hospira vice president Mark Crotty; Wayne Marinoff, Aspen head of generics; Alphapharm md Stephen Fraser; and Ronald van der Pluijm, Actavis Australia/NZ vice president.

Omega-3 attacks AD

A SWEDISH study has demonstrated a positive impact on markers for Alzheimer's Disease (AD) from a daily dose of 2.3 grams of omega-3 supplement.

Dr Freund Levi of Karolinska University Hospital, Huddinge, Sweden and colleagues conducted the study as a sub-study of patients included in the larger double-blind, placebo-controlled OmegAD study, which also observed that in patients with mild AD.

"Together, these findings support the hypothesis that increased oral intake of omega-3 fatty acids leads to their accumulation in central nervous tissues and may affect nervous system physiology as well as the pathogenesis and progression of Alzheimer's disease, particularly in very mild Alzheimer's disease," they concluded.

Another recent study at the University of South Australia found that omega-3 supplements diminished shortening of telomeres, a marker of accelerated ageing, in elderly patients with mild cognitive impairment.

According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, dementia is the second leading cause of overall burden of disease in Australia for people aged over 65 years.



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APC adds modules

THE Australian Pharmacy Council (APC) has developed a set of four online e-learning modules to support interns in their preparation for the Intern Written Exam.

The modules have been developed in response to intern feedback and cover all aspects of the Intern Written Examination experience, from examination format and content to the candidate experience on the day of the examination.

There is also a module specifically designed to support those candidates who have been unsuccessful in sitting the examination.

CLICK HERE to access the modules.

Hepatitis care move

US pharmacy giant Walgreens has announced an expansion of a pharmacist-led hepatitis C program which will now be available in more than 100 pharmacies across America.

The outlets feature pharmacists "specially trained on next generation oral therapies" and aim to help patients achieve an improved quality of life through medication adherence.

The move is partly due to the growing number of Americans who now have access to health insurance due to the new Affordable Care Act.

As well as identifying hepatitis-C associated health concerns, the pharmacies can provide care for other conditions often suffered by these patients including diabetes or high blood pressure.

'Less is more' states NPS

NPS Medicinewise has released its 16th Annual Evaluation Report, with claims that a 7% relative decrease in prescribing of high-dose statins and 10% decrease in anti-dementia drugs are a positive outcome for the group.

The results were subsequent to two therapeutic programs: 'CVD risk: guiding lipid management' and 'Balancing benefits and harms of antipsychotic therapy' claiming that "there were improvements in

knowledge and practice changes among health professionals."

There were 22,349 unique health professionals participating in NPS MedicineWise programs during the year, with 57% of registered GPs participating in an NPS MedicineWise intervention.

NPS MedicineWise also increased its online presence with 1.2 million visits to its website and 1.3 million Twitter and Facebook views in the 2012-13 financial year.

NPS MedicineWise ceo Dr Lynn Weekes says the report outlines the organisation's success in creating both health and economic impacts.

"I'm proud of the good work we have done in the past financial year to enable people to make the best decisions about medicines and other medical choices to achieve better health and economic outcomes," said Dr Weekes.

"I'd like to acknowledge the tremendous work and effort that goes into achieving these results and thank NPS MedicineWise staff, member organisations, program partners, advisory groups and many others who make this work possible," she added.

NAPSA blasts caps

THE National Australian Pharmacy Students' Association (NAPSA) has urged the govt to extend the budget for medication management programs funded under the Fifth Community Pharmacy Agreement in the wake of the changes announced 12 Feb.

NAPSA President, Xavier Agostino said "We currently have a situation where the demand for evidenced based professional services such as Home Medicine Reviews and MedsChecks cannot be met.

"The finite pool of funding available to provide these services is simply too shallow to meet the needs of patients".

"The new capping arrangements have left pharmacy students feeling further disheartened about the employment opportunities that will be available to them in the future."

Agostino also warned that these changes have also forced pharmacy students aspiring to a career as consultant pharmacists to reassess their career pathway.

New Chemsave Max

CHEMSAVE has announced the official launch of its new Chemsave Discount Max Program.

According to Michael Dixon, ceo and founder of Chemsave, the program is designed for those pharmacies looking for a more aggressive, price-focused, discount marketing offer.

It takes everything that Chemsave has to offer, and then "amplifies it in terms of branding, buying, promotions, catalogues, ranging and website pricing," he said.

"With the introduction of Chemsave Discount Max, Chemsave members now have 3 distinct membership options to choose from, options which are designed to suit every pharmacy in Australia."

Pictured below is the new Discount Max frontage.



WIN WITH PLUNKETTS

Every day this week **Pharmacy Daily** is giving two lucky readers the chance to win a **Plunketts Superfade UV Day Shield SPF30+** - a daily facial moisturiser which helps prevent pigmentation and sun damage.

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To win, be one of the first 2 people to send in the correct answer to the question below to: comp@pharmacydaily.com.au.

What is the percentage of hydroquinone in Superfade Cream?

Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner **David Cheung** from **Kingaroy Pharmacy**. The correct answer was **Australia**.



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Antidepressant switch

THIS week's edition of the RGH Pharmacy E-Bulletin gives an overview of recommendations for patients changing between antidepressants such as SSRIs and SNRIs due to drug half-lives and withdrawal symptoms.

CLICK HERE to view the bulletin.

Guild Update

New e-script incentives

AMONG the Agreement programs announcements last week was confirmation of a new incentive payment to eligible community pharmacies to boost the uptake of electronic prescriptions.

The Electronic Prescription Scanning Incentive (ePSI) is an allocation from the existing Electronic Transfer of Prescriptions (ETP) budget in the Agreement to better drive the uptake and rates of scanning of electronic prescriptions.

Under the ePSI, at least \$800 will be payable to community pharmacies on meeting a target of 15% of original prescriptions electronically scanned from a Prescription Exchange Service (PES) by March 2014, and at least \$1200 being payable based on meeting a 30% scanning target by September 2014.

The measure will encourage more pharmacies to adjust their workflow to facilitate the scanning of barcodes on all electronic prescriptions, producing safer and more efficient dispensing for patients.



The Pharmacy
Guild of Australia

'Don't be a fool' campaign

COMMUNITY pharmacies are being encouraged to play a key role in community-based bowel cancer screening programs in light of research that suggests they are currently missing out on a major commercial and public health opportunity.

Professor Peter Carroll will present at the upcoming APP conference in Queensland and outline a strategy for turning bowel cancer screening into a professional and rewarding category for pharmacists.

Last week Bowel Cancer Australia and Let's Beat Bowel Cancer launched their "Don't be a fool, test your stool" campaign.

Supporting materials have already been distributed to pharmacists nationally to encourage them to promote faecal immunochemical tests via their pharmacies.

"This is exactly the kind of campaign that pharmacists should be supporting," said Carroll.

"There are about 7 million Australians aged 50 years and over and official guidelines suggest they should be screened for bowel

cancer at least every two years.

"There will be ads and PR driving consumer awareness and community pharmacists are uniquely positioned to help their customers to get screened"

The call for pharmacists to support the campaign has coincided with the publication of a new meta-analysis last week that shows faecal immunochemical tests (FIT) are "highly specific and have high overall diagnostic accuracy for detecting colorectal cancer."

To order kits call Clinical Genomics on free call 1800 556 575.



TGA EU consultations

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration has launched a series of consultations on whether Australia should adopt several European Union guidelines.

The closing date for the consultation is 28 Mar 2014, with 11 EU guidelines under consideration.

These include guidelines on the evaluation of medicinal products indicated for bacterial infections, on the clinical evaluation of antifungal agents, on the evaluation of anticancer medicinal products, and on clinical investigation of medicinal products in the treatment or prevention of diabetes mellitus.

Biological guidelines are also included, such as on the quality of biological active substances produced by transgene expression in animals and in higher plants, plus a guideline on similar biological medicinal products containing monoclonal antibodies.

There's also a guideline on ADHD products and pandemic influenza marketing - **CLICK HERE** for details.

DISPENSARY CORNER

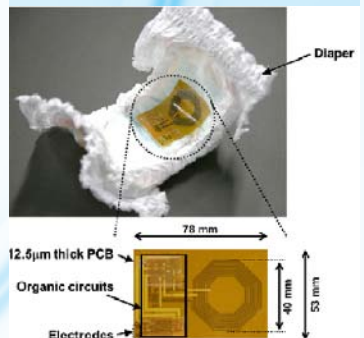


YES, there's an app for that.

Researchers from the University of Tokyo have developed a new super-thin electronic sensor which can be used to alert parents when they need to change their babies' nappies.

"Thin enough to be comfortable, but robust enough to transmit valuable data," the groundbreaking gadget could easily be used to initiate text messages to the smartphones of carers to tell them when their young charges are wet.

First announced in July last year, the technology was initially touted as being able to be implanted to monitor body temperature or other physical characteristics - but "now they've applied their research to a truly worthwhile problem - knowing when a diaper is soiled without having to undress the wearer first," according to a CNET report.



A ROSE by any other name...

A US judge has approved a request by an Ohio woman to change her name from Sheila to Sexy to more closely reflect her personality.

According to the *Columbus Dispatch*, the 41 year old's husband and teenage daughters approved of the name change.

She claimed that she was "fun and free-spirited and thought the change would make her complete."

"I've always hated Sheila," she said, adding "now I am free from that ugly name".

Other options she considered were Sparkle and Sinder.