



Monday 03 Mar 2014

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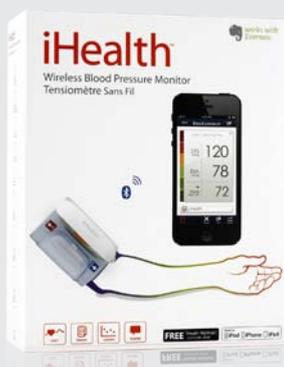
## Calcium L-threonate

**THE** Therapeutic Goods Administration has added the current compositional guideline and submissions received on the draft compositional guideline for calcium L-threonate, which is being evaluated as a new complementary medicine, to its site.

**CLICK HERE** to access.

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## New \$47m FK facility

**FRESENIUS** Kabi Australia is establishing a new \$47 million state-of-the-art pharmaceutical manufacturing centre in Melbourne.

Construction is set to begin on the manufacturing facility, which will focus on infusion therapies, irrigation solutions, I.V generic drugs and compounded oncology products.

The greenfield facility will be built on a 40,000sqm site and will create 120 jobs after entering full operation.

Marking the start of construction, Zita Peach, managing director of Fresenius Kabi Australia & New Zealand and executive vice president South Asia Pacific said, "The site will markedly change the landscape for IV products and oncology delivery in Australia.

"Up until now there has been limited choice for hospitals when it comes to choosing products that are manufactured locally.

"This site will see products being manufactured that have easy handling, drug compatibility, sterility and environmental

characteristics."

Federal Minister for Trade & Investment Andrew Robb said it was welcome news for Victoria's high end manufacturing sector, recognising Australia's research credentials and commitment to innovation, which he said were among the country's strengths.

"This is one of five national investment priorities that were agreed at a recent meeting I hosted with my state and territory ministerial colleagues in trade and investment.

"Working closely with the states and territories, the Australian Government will continue to promote Australia's strengths in industries in which we have a strong competitive advantage, including where we are able to build on Australia's manufacturing pedigree in market niches and create high value, sustainable jobs for Australians."

## FDA side effects open

**US** Food & Drug Administration (FDA) has unveiled a project named openFDA to create transparency and accessibility around drug side effects, *BusinessWeek* reported Thursday.

The project will allow software companies to create search functionality across the database to support clinicians, pharmacists and consumers.

FDA chief information officer Taha Kass-Hout predicted that once the information was easier to use, more developers would create programmes to access the data.

## RGH update on Vit D

**THE** Repatriation General Hospital Pharmacy E-Bulletin has provided an update on the use of vitamin D supplementation saying that "it is now widely recognised that a significant proportion of people may have inadequate vitamin D serum concentrations."

The update focuses on published data and dosing matters.

**CLICK HERE** to access.

## AHPRA members

**THE** Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency will call for expressions of interest from pharmacists who wish to be included on a list of approved persons for appointment to panels.

Further information would be published on the Pharmacy Board of Australia's (PBA) website in early March, the PBA said.

## US nutrition labelling

**THE** US Food & Drug Administration (FDA) has proposed to update the Nutrition Facts label for packaged foods to reflect the latest scientific information, including the link between diet and chronic diseases such as obesity and heart disease.

The proposed label also would replace out-of-date serving sizes to better align with how much people really eat, and it would feature a fresh design to highlight key parts of the label such as calories and serving sizes.

"Our guiding principle here is very simple: that you as a parent and a consumer should be able to walk into your local grocery store, pick up an item off the shelf, and be able to tell whether it's good for your family," said First Lady Michelle Obama.

"So this is a big deal, and it's going to make a big difference for families all across this country."

The rectangular box, introduced in 1993, defining the nutritional contents of foods has since become one of the world's most recognized graphics, with countries around the world including Australia adopting their own version.

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## Rare Disease Day

**KEYNOTE** speaker of the GLOBALHealthPR annual meeting, which concluded on Rare Disease Day, Alexion Pharmaceuticals managing director David Kwasha questioned why patients should not have access to treatments for rare diseases.

Kwasha said that considering the majority of very rare diseases were often the most life-threatening, and commonly affected children and young adults, greater collaboration was needed between government, industry and the public.

“Why should any human be discriminated against access to life-saving therapy simply because their disease is ultra-rare?”

GLOBALHealthPR chair John Seng said effective communication would encourage healthcare authorities to put more funding into treatment access.

**MEANWHILE** the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) said in recognition of Rare Disease Day, that it was focusing on paediatric rare diseases.

The FDA had been directed by Congress to issue a report and strategic plan focused on accelerating and encouraging the development of therapies for paediatric rare diseases, Office of Orphan Products Development director Gayatri R. Rao said.

Several agencies were working together to develop this, and a web-based educational tool for patients with a rare disease, advocacy groups, researchers and industry had been launched as well, she said.

“We are committed to working with the paediatric rare disease community to face those challenges head-on and to accelerate the development safe and effective therapies for these diseases.”

## Levonorgestrel review

**THE** Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has said it is reviewing recent information which suggests levonorgestrel might not be effective for women weighing more than 70 kg.

The review is in conjunction with MedSafe.

The oral emergency contraceptive is marketed in Australia as NorLevo-1, NorLevo, Postinor and Levonelle.

The review comes after a French manufacturer, HRA Pharma, found that the emergency contraceptive began to lose effectiveness when women reached about 75kg, *CNN* reported, and did not work at all for women who weighed more than 80kg.

The European Norlevo label changes were expected early this year, *Reuters* reported.

The US Food and Drug Administration told the publication it was reviewing the available

information on the issue and would then determine if any label changes were needed.

The TGA said consumers were advised that irrespective of weight, levonorgestrel might not prevent pregnancy in every case.

## Botox no headache

**FROM** 01 Mar, Botox (botulinum toxin type A) will be listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) for the prophylaxis of headaches in adults with chronic migraine.

The listing is restricted to those who experience headaches for 15 days or more per month with a migraine on at least eight of those days.

The treatment will be administered by trained neurologists.

## NZ MoH to retire

**NEW** Zealand Minister of Health Tony Ryall has said he will retire from politics at the next election, for employment in the private sector, but would remain in Cabinet until the next election, the *New Zealand Herald* reported.

The next NZ elections will be held this year.

## NPSA on new PBS

**THE** National Pharmaceutical Services Association (NPSA) said the medicines added to the PBS (**PD** 27 Feb) underlined the importance of the Community Service Obligation.

NPSA president Patrick Davies said patients could be assured the listings, along with all PBS medicines, would be delivered by the CSO wholesalers across the country in a timely, affordable and secure way.

## Votrient PBS listing

**VOTRIENT** (pazopanib hydrochloride) has been listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS), from 01 Mar.

The medication has been listed for advanced soft tissue sarcoma in patients who received prior chemotherapy including an anthracycline treatment.

This PBS listing adds to Votrient's existing listing for treatment of advanced and/or metastatic renal cell carcinoma (RCC).

## AMT 2.53 released

**THE** Australian Medicines Terminology (AMT) 2.53 release can be downloaded from the NEHTA website.

**CLICK HERE** to download v 2.53.



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### Weekly Comment

Welcome to PD's weekly comment feature. This week's contributor is **Roma Cecere, General Manager - Strategic Business Performance for GuildLink.**



## Patient Adherence Programs

One of the core roles of pharmacists is to prevent and resolve medication related problems. Patients who struggle to use medication appropriately may limit the drug's effectiveness, and as a result experience poor health outcomes and raise overall healthcare costs.

Pharmacists are the most accessible health care professionals and having completed four years of education centred on pharmacology, often they are over educated and underutilised as a profession. Globally we see this trend changing where pharmacists are taking on more clinical roles, not just dealing with minor ailments but delivering other health services, such as disease specific health checks. As they see patients on average fourteen times a year they are also the best equipped to assist patients with adherence.

Pharmacists are trusted professionals and offer a variety of services that are often unknown to the greater community. The GuildCare software is simply the enabler, assisting pharmacists in identifying patients who are non-adherent or newly initiated to therapy and also in recording their interactions with their patients.

The new reporting functionality will allow pharmacists the ability to build a sustainable business model whilst addressing patient adherence.

For more info about GuildCare, visit [www.guildcare.com.au](http://www.guildcare.com.au).

## Swisse defends research

**FOLLOWING** the widespread media interest surrounding complementary giant Swisse Wellness \$15m research program to be conducted at La Trobe University (PD 04, 07 & 12 of Feb), the company has defended not only itself and its background of research and development but that of Australian research in general.

Citing the resignation of Ken Harvey from the university as a "publicity stunt for a final farewell," Swisse Wellness chief executive officer Radek Sali said that although Harvey insisted that such research should only be funded by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) or Australian Research Council (ARC), ARC ceased funding medical research in 2012.

In addition, Sali claimed that the top 10 patent protected drugs

that are prescribed by doctors in Australia all rely on efficacy from research that was industry funded.

"This is absolutely no different to what Swisse is aiming to do with the support of additional industry players, government and other financial backers.

"Given that Swisse does not hold patent protection for any products to be researched by CMEC, it means that the entire nutraceuticals industry can benefit from the research findings."

Swisse also argued that there is a pool of \$800m dollars from Government for which health and medical researchers compete but currently only \$800,000 or 0.1% of that is allocated to complimentary and alternative medicine research.

According to Swisse, NHMRC funding statistics show the average yearly commitment over the last decade to the field of complimentary and alternative medicine research is a 0.2% of the total funding.

In Australia approximately 65% of total research funding comes from industry versus 21% from the NHMRC, Swisse said.

## Pfizer on DHL

**PFIZER** said it was honouring its commitment to deliver medicines in a reliable and timely manner through its direct distribution model.

The company recently renewed its deal with DHL as logistics provider for the model, until the end of 2016 (PD 28 Feb).

The model was controversial at introduction, causing dissatisfaction with some pharmacists (PD 03 Nov 11).

Pfizer said it had introduced a number of initiatives to strengthen its service, having worked closely with pharmacies since its introduction.

"We also have a robust system in place to make emergency deliveries, and support the delivery of critical medicines, outside normal pharmacy hours.

"This helps pharmacies meet unexpected patient needs.

"We will continue this very strong patient focus, supporting pharmacies to meet patient needs.

When asked whether Pfizer thought other manufacturers should adopt the model, the company responded that this was a matter for the manufacturers.



## DISPENSARY CORNER

**MOAT** you be lost?

It might be a good thing pharmacies don't have moats, judging by what happened outside the National Gallery of Victoria.

An Irishman in his 40s crossed St Kilda Rd on Thursday dressed in board shorts, a snorkel mask and flippers, and proceeded to explore the moat outside the Gallery, the *Age* reported.

*Fairfax Radio* reported that the man was understood to have caused trouble outside the gallery before, and police were called to arrest the man when he refused to leave the pool, the publication reported.

**ALL** signs point to 'no'.

If you're visiting the US, maybe avoid driving around Boston for a while - the city has dozens of incorrect new signs, including one for a route that doesn't exist.

*WFXT Fox 25* reported on the errors, including road signs for the same route, placed next to each other, pointing in opposite directions, as well as signs for East and West Route 9 pointing in the same direction.

Officials planned to meet with the consultant firm hired by the city to draft an installation plan for the new signs, to make them pay for any costs of the mistake, *WFXT* reported.

**FUZZTASTIC.**

If you see an influx of bearded or patchy young men in your pharmacy, it may be due to the hipster trend.

An increasing number of late 20s to early 30s men were undergoing a beard transplant operation, thanks to the hipster look, *Reuters* reported.

One New York surgeon said he performed 175 such procedures in 2013, and that it was generally young people living in Brooklyn wanting to look cool who underwent the one-day operation.