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Med Devices update

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has released the March issue of the Medical Devices Safety Update.

In this issue, the TGA tests ultrasound transmission gels for bacterial contamination.

To view the update, [CLICK HERE](#).

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PSA pursues 6CPA ideas

THE Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) is continuing to pursue solutions in an effort to ensure the ongoing delivery of HMRs, MedsChecks and Diabetes MedsChecks.

PSA ceo Liesel Wett said in her 'Message from the CEO' that many in the profession had been caught by surprise by the caps.

"The imposition of caps on the delivery of these services, plus a new timeframe for RMMRs, caught many in the profession by surprise."

"PSA held an emergency board meeting and followed this up with a strategic session at its scheduled board meeting."

"We have also written to the minister for health, Peter Dutton, and held meetings with his staff as well as senior officials in the Department of Health and Ageing."

While the Board stressed that the focus of delivery of these services must be based on clinical need, the focus is to try to ensure that these services continue to be provided to improve health outcomes for Australians and also to maintain the business viability of those pharmacists who have built their business models around

delivery of these services, she said.

With the caps in place as an interim measure to manage the realistic sustainability of the system and the budget for the remainder of 5CPA being "demonstrably inadequate", Wett said the PSA were now looking to the future, for patients and the profession.

During the week, along with more than 50 organisations representing a broad cross-section of pharmacy organisations, disease state representatives, other peak health bodies, representatives of health professionals, industry associations, consumer groups and State and Federal Government Departments, PSA attended the first stakeholder forum convened by the Pharmacy Guild of Australia to consider ideas and innovations which might add value to the Sixth Community Pharmacy Agreement.

An e-Bulletin will shortly be released from the Society calling for nominations for PSA Branch Committee representatives.

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For more information, see the **front full page** of today's issue of *Pharmacy Daily*.

Fulbright pharmacy

AN Australian pharmacy student has been named a 2014 Fulbright scholar.

Suzanne Schultz from the School of Pharmacy and Medical Sciences at the University of South Australia received her scholarship last night in Brisbane.

Schultz is one of 31 named as a Fulbright scholar by the Australian-American Fulbright Commission and will study at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government in Massachusetts.

Her research focuses on international and inter-sector collaboration in drug development.

NICE nods axitinib

THE UK's National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has proposed a positive recommendation for axitinib (marketed as Inlyta by Pfizer in Australia) for advanced renal cell carcinoma.

Consultees including members of the public can now offer comment.



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Jobs of the Week

- **Pharmacist in Charge** - Bundaberg, QLD (Job# 2010446)
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- **Dispensary Technician** - Melbourne Inner NE, VIC (Job# 2010448)
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- **Pharmacist in Charge** - Southern Highlands, NSW (Job# 2010401)
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Events Calendar

WELCOME to *Pharmacy Daily's* events calendar, opportunities to earn CPE and CPD points.

If you have an upcoming event you'd like us to feature, email info@pharmacydaily.com.au.

7-9 March: PSA Annual Therapeutic Update; Crown Plaza Terrigal; see www.psa.org.au/conferences

8-9 Mar: ACNEM Training; Wellington, NZ; visit: www.acnem.org

13-16 Mar: Pharmacy Guild of Australia Annual National Conference APP 2014, Gold Coast - see www.appconference.com

22-23 Mar: The Goodfellow Symposium, Auckland - see www.goodfellowsymposium.org

4-6 Apr: Australian Fitness & Health Expo; Melbourne; see: www.fitnessexpo.com.au

11-12 Apr: 2nd BioCeuticals Research Symposium; Sofitel Sydney Wentworth; see: www.bioceuticals.com.au

12-14 Apr: FIP Fifth Pharmaceutical Sciences World Congress, Melbourne - for details **CLICK HERE**.

3-4 May: 4th International Conference on the Science of Nutrition in Medicine and Healthcare Conference; Gold Coast; for more info see: www.nutritionmedicine.org.au

1-3 Jun: ConPharm 2014; Port Douglas; for more info go to: www.conpharm14.com.au

1-3 Jun: 20th International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2014); Melbourne; see more at: www.aids2014.org

ASMI quality assurance

THE Australian Self Medication Industry (ASMI) has moved to reassure consumers that vitamin and mineral supplements in Australia are regulated by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) and that they are considered beneficial when dietary intake is inadequate and when taken in accordance with the directions on product labels.

This statement was made in response to a US study which suggested that high doses of selenium and synthetic vitamin E are associated with an increased risk of rare high-grade prostate cancer.

This study had previously been reported but the data was reexamined to determine the impact of pre-existing selenium levels revealing that men with either high or low levels doubled their risk of developing a high-grade prostate cancer by taking vitamin E.

ASMI regulatory and scientific affairs director Steven Scarff said other studies with selenium and vitamin E supplements did not support these findings.

"There are a number of

limitations in the reporting of results, which were clearly noted by the authors of the study.

"Of primary concern is the manner in which the data was reanalysed, which could have resulted in a number of statistical errors."

"Dietary vitamin and mineral supplements are important for many people.

"They do not replace a balanced diet but they are useful for those with vitamin or mineral deficiencies, and they play a vital role in health and wellbeing."

TGA approves combo

THE TGA has approved GlaxoSmithKline's combination of Mekinist (trametinib) and Tafenlar (dabrafenib) for the treatment of patients with BRAF V600 mutation positive unresectable Stage III or metastatic (stage IV) melanoma, as well as a monotherapy where BRAF inhibitors could not be used.

CAHML + local pharm

THE Central Adelaide and Hills Medicare Local (CAHML) wants to engage with community pharmacy to hear how it can work together and explore what it has to offer pharmacists.

CAHML has accordingly created a small survey for pharmacy, covering areas it has a particular focus on at the moment, including MedsCheck and eHealth.

Completing the survey also gave pharmacists the chance to be part of the soon to be established Pharmacy Reference Group, CAHML said.

To complete the survey, **CLICK HERE**.

More AD deaths

A STUDY published in *Neurology* has found that annual death rates from Alzheimer's Disease were closer to 500,000 than the 85,000 counted by the US government, *USA Today* reported.

The study followed more than 2,500 adults who had agreed to donate their brains to research.

Glucosamine advice

NPS MedicineWise has published a guide to glucosamine taken for osteoarthritis.

The publication follows a recent study regarding the use of glucosamine and chondroitin sulphate in combination, looking at their effect on joint space narrowing in knees of osteoarthritis sufferers, which indicated that daily doses of the combination showed a decrease of joint space narrowing (**PD** 05 Mar).

NPS MedicineWise said some studies had shown that it could protect the cartilage in joints, while others had shown no significant benefit.

The guide includes the best way to take glucosamine, side effects and other ways to help osteoarthritis.

India bans stem cells

THE Indian Council of Medical Research and the Department of Biotechnology have said stem cells can only be used as therapy in a clinical trial.

The revised guidelines for stem cell research and therapy work from new findings that have changed the scope of stem cell related research, saying there was no conclusive proof of safety or therapeutic efficacy of stem cells in any condition, the *British Medical Journal* reported.



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Alzheimer's alliance

EISAI and Biogen Idec have entered into a collaboration to develop and commercialise two of Eisai's clinical candidates for Alzheimer's Disease (AD).

According to *RTTNews.com*, the agreement also provides Eisai with an option to jointly develop and commercialise two of Biogen Idec's candidates for AD - the anti-amyloid beta (A β) antibody BIIB037 and an anti-tau monoclonal antibody.

These candidates have the potential to reduce A β plaques that form in the brains of patients with AD and to stop the formation of new plaques, thus improving symptoms and suppressing disease progression.

Eisai, the original manufacturer of donepezil (Aricept), a market leader in AD therapy, will serve as the operational and regulatory lead in the co-development of E2609 and BAN2401 and will pursue marketing authorisations for both compounds worldwide.

Menin B vax on sale

NOVARTIS Vaccines' meningococcal group B vaccine (recombinant, absorbed), Bexsero, is now on sale through private prescription and the company is evaluating options for registration in New Zealand.

The company said it had been approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration for immunisation against disease caused by N.meningitidis group B strains for ages two months and older.

It had been recommended by the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation for all children and young adults wanting to reduce their risk of meningococcal B, Novartis said.

The distributing wholesalers are Team Medical Supplies and Warner & Webster.

Bexsero was already in use in Canada, the UK, France and Germany and cost \$125 per dose in Australia, with dosing dependent upon age, for instance infants

under six months required three doses plus a booster, Novartis said.

Expert in infectious diseases, University of Sydney Professor Robert Booy said meningococcal B was the most common form of the meningococcal disease, and the new vaccine should cover 76% of the B strains in Australia.

"The most effective way to protect Australian children and the broader community against meningococcal disease is vaccination, as we have seen through the success of the national meningococcal C immunisation program, with no new cases of meningococcal C in those under twenty in 2011."

The company was working with the government for National Immunisation Program listing and until then, Bexsero would be available on the private market, Novartis Vaccines ANZ country head Dr Christoph Kaufmann said.

"Bexsero will be considered by the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee for inclusion on the NIP at the July meeting."



DISPENSARY CORNER

TRY 'password'.

It can be difficult keeping track of all your passwords these days - it certainly seems to be the case for police officers in Delhi, who were unable to access a site holding more than 600 corruption complaints for eight years, because they had lost the computer password, the *Indian Express* reported.

Two senior officers have since been trained in the system and can access the cases, with one officer telling the paper it was a "technical problem".

THINGS'RE just golden.

No valid claim to a stash of rare Gold Rush-era coins, buried on the property of a Californian couple and worth US\$10m, has been filed, the firm representing the couple has said.

The sale of the bullion would proceed as planned, Kagin coin expert David McCarthy told *Reuters*.

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Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner Anne Develin from The Pharmacy Guild of Australia.