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Tuesday 25 Mar 2014 PHARMACYDAILY.COM.AU

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"eRx Express is fantastic. We thought the over-50s won't go for it, then our first script was from a 62yo"
Glen Rose – Tenambit Pharmacy

NICE ticks Velcade

IN new draft guidance, the UK's National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has recommended bortezomib (Velcade) as a treatment for some patients with newly diagnosed multiple myeloma.

Velcade is already available in Australia as an authority script on the PBS under specific conditions.

In other NICE news, draft guidance has not recommended radium-223 dichloride (Xofigo, Bayer) for relapsed prostate cancer.

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UK NIP approves Bexsero

THE Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) in the United Kingdom has recommended that Novartis' meningococcal group B vaccine, Bexsero, be included in the National Immunisation Program (NIP).

The vaccine went on sale in Australia in early March through private prescription and is due to be considered by the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee for inclusion on the Australian NIP at the July meeting (***PD*** 07 Mar).

Novartis Vaccines ANZ country head Dr Chris Kaufmann said there had been "very strong" interest for Bexsero since its Australian launch.

Kaufmann said Novartis was committed to working with health officials to ensure widespread availability of the vaccine through the NIP as soon as possible.

It was looking to have preliminary meetings with PHARMAC before June 2014, he said.

The JCVI recommended a program for the use of Bexsero with the NHS immunisation schedule at two, four and 12 months of age, noting that as the vaccine "only demonstrated cost-effectiveness at a low price", plans should anticipate a sustainable and cost-effective program.

It also advised a targeted study for adolescents to assess the impact of Bexsero on the acquisition of meningococcal carriage.

For JCVI's statement, **CLICK HERE**.

RGH on Ticagrelor

Ticagrelor, an oral antiplatelet indicated for use in acute coronary syndromes, is a reversibly binding P2Y12 receptor antagonist and the subject of this week's RGH Pharmacy E-Bulletin.

The Bulletin discusses the literature around the effects of ticagrelor-induced dyspnoea.

CLICK HERE to read.

UK error reporting

NHS England and MHRA have alerted pharmacists that they are working together to simplify and increase reporting, improve data report quality, maximise learning and guide practice to minimise harm from medication errors.

Recently, according to the UK's *Chemist and Druggist*, a Boots Pharmacist was struck off for failing to report dispensing errors.

New Jurlique ceo appt

THE board of Jurlique International today announced the resignation of Sam McKay as ceo & president, and the appointment of Mark Whyman to the position, effective from 01 Apr.

McKay has agreed to act as an adviser to the board of Jurlique International and the wider Pola Orbis Group for a 12-month period.

Pola Orbis Holdings president Satoshi Suzuki thanked McKay and said he was pleased that McKay had agreed to stay in an advisory capacity.

TGA seeks input

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has revised a number of parameters included in the draft compositional guideline for molybdenum trioxide and now seeks comments on the proposed revision.

This consultation closes on 02 May 2014 .

CLICK HERE to view the revisions.

EMA approves meds

THE European Medicines Agency's (EMA) Committee for Medicinal Products for Human Use has recommended granting a marketing authorisation for Vynfinit (vintafolide) for ovarian cancer, Folcepri (etarfolatide) and Neocepri (folic acid), Sylvant (siltuximab) for Castleman's disease, Entyvio (vedolizumab) for the treatment of ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease, Jardiance (empagliflozin) for the treatment of type 2 diabetes, Olysio (simeprevir) for chronic hepatitis C, Revinty Ellipta (fluticasone furoate / vilanterol trifenatate) for asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and Ebilfumin (oseltamivir) a generic of Tamiflu, for the prevention and treatment of influenza.

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New bleeding app

THE National Blood Authority's new MyABDR app was launched in Canberra by the assistant Minister for Health Fiona Nash.

The "globally-unique" smartphone app changes the way people with bleeding disorders, such as haemophilia, monitor and treat their condition, said Nash.

"MyABDR enables people with bleeding disorders and their carers to record bleeds and their home treatments in real time.

These details were immediately listed on their clinical record in the Australian Bleeding Disorders Registry (ABDR) and accessible by their clinicians, making the data more readily available to improve patient care, Nash said.

The app was developed by the National Blood Authority on behalf of all Australian governments and in close collaboration with patients and clinicians, she added.

Vaccine side effects

THE NPS MedicineWise has posted some useful information for patients on its website relating to side effects from influenza vaccine.

The article puts into perspective the side effect situation as it relates to all drugs, prescribed and OTC, which creates a helpful resource for pharmacy patients.

Apart from the general principles developed in the posting, it states that up to 10% of patients receiving the vaccine may experience the most common side effect which is a mild fever (up to 38.5°), emphasising that it is usually nothing to worry about.

Other side effects summarised include some muscle tenderness or weakness, and predictably, some soreness, redness and swelling at the injection site, as well as how to report on side effects.

CLICK HERE to send patients to the resource.

FDA approves Xolair

THE US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved Xolair (omalizumab) for the treatment of chronic idiopathic urticaria, a skin disease, and Otezla (apremilast), to treat psoriatic arthritis.

Xolair is jointly developed by Novartis and Genentech Inc.

Otezla is manufactured for Celgene Corporation, the FDA said.

TGA warns on meds

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has issued alerts on a group of medicines.

The products identified are Zi Xiu Tang Pollen capsule, Zi Xiu Tang Beauty Face and Figure capsule, 3X Slimming Power capsule, Tiger King tablets and MME Naturally Maxman capsules.

For more information relating to these alerts go to www.tga.gov.au.

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Letter to the editor

IT is with surprise that we read the comments by ASMI director of scientific affairs, Steve Scarff, down playing the recent publication of research results by letter in the world's number one medical journal The New England Journal of Medicine [Atkinson HC et al Increased Phenylephrine Plasma Levels with Co-Administration of Acetaminophen: New England Journal of Medicine (2014) 370:12, 1171-2].

It is difficult to see how a previously unknown drug-drug interaction which underpins the regulatory rules around paracetamol and phenylephrine combinations is somehow unimportant. Furthermore there is an attempt to further downplay the results by virtue of them being published in a letter.

It is important to note that a letter to the journal is still subject to editorial and peer review prior to publication. A letter is often seen as a mechanism to make important scientific results available in a timely manner since publication is more rapid.

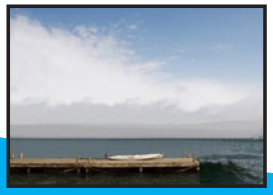
We also note that many of the member companies of ASMI were pivotal drivers behind an extensive and thorough scientific document summarising the state of expert published and industry unpublished knowledge on phenylephrine which was tabled in the USA.

The conclusion of this document was "oral phenylephrine 10mg is safe and effective as a nasal decongestant for over-the-counter use in adults" and that "there are insufficient data in adults to support the assertion that increasing the dose of phenylephrine to 25mg is necessary to produce clinically meaningful improvements in nasal decongestion with a similar safety profile as the currently available 10mg OTC monograph dose."

Here is a discovery that shows that combining phenylephrine with another drug effectively doubles the amount of phenylephrine in a person's system – precisely the outcome these multinational pharmaceutical companies did not want in their submissions to the US Food and Drug Administration - yet the response of their industry body in Australia is to describe the research as being of "limited value". This seems to be at odds with their own member's collective scientific knowledge.

Hartley Atkinson M.Pharm, PhD

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



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Mental health study

GRIFFITH University is looking for family members or carers for people with a mental illness such as depression or anxiety for a study looking at whether consumers get the best out of their medicines.

The study is part of the Mental Health and Community Pharmacy Project, launched in January, which is funded by a $2.1m grant from the Department of Health as part of the Fifth Community Pharmacy Agreement R&D program and helps pharmacy staff improve their skills to work with mental health consumers to get the best out of their medication (***PD*** 15 Jan).

Project manager Brad McConachie said throughout the project there had been a high level of focus on mental health consumers and carers, identifying their needs, experiences and expectations of pharmacy services and developing pharmacy training to address needs.

"Often family members or carers are the ones that collect the medicines and often have their own information needs in supporting the person they care for.

"The Project is about acknowledging and engaging consumers, as well as carers, as full partners with their health care providers, in particular emphasising their relationship with pharmacy staff."

The project aimed to train 200 pharmacy staff members, representing 100 pharmacies, and so far, the team had trained 94, McConachie said.

"A team of mentors consisting of pharmacy staff, consumers and carers are currently assisting these pharmacists to identify and work with 500 consumers who they believe would benefit from this medication support plan over the next six months."

Findings from the project would be published at the end of the R&D program in mid-2015, McConachie said.

For more information and to read some case studies, **CLICK HERE**.

Mental health review

THE National Mental Health Commission has announced a call for submissions as part of a national review of mental health services and programs.

The process would provide information to inform funding priorities and efficiency of services

Commission chair Professor Allan Fels said the commission needed "on-the-ground knowledge" of what did and did not work.

To make a submission, **CLICK HERE**.

Guild Update

New Oxycontin

The Pharmacy Guild of Australia welcomes a significant effort to reduce abuse of controlled drugs from April 1.

New regulations will see 10-80mg strengths of Oxycontin (oxycodone) tablets reformulated with physicochemical properties designed to make them harder to crush for unsanctioned routes of administration such as snorting and injecting, with the intention of reducing diversion.

The 5mg strength has not been reformulated. The existing 5mg presentation will be deleted from the PBS and supply will be discontinued.

Existing 10-80mg non-reformulated oxycodone stock will be able to be dispensed as a PBS subsidised prescription after 1 April 2014, but pharmacists must be vigilant of a potential increase in inappropriate requests for these particular tablets before and immediately after the reformulated products become available.

It is expected that within this transition period a high number of forged prescriptions for oxycodone will be presented to pharmacies.

Tips for detecting forged prescriptions are:

- Be vigilant of private (non-PBS) prescriptions for oxycodone, especially for large quantities
- Check the doctor's qualifications and contact them if needed
- Carefully check the patient details as often offenders use stolen Medicare cards and other types of identification

For further information contact the TGA on 1800 020 653.

The Pharmacy Guild of Australia

WIN AN ORGANIC DETOX

Everyday this week ***Pharmacy Daily*** will be giving you the chance to win a 4.3.2.1 Organic Detox from **Key Sun**, valued at $39.95.

4.3.2.1 Organic Detox provides 14, one-a-day, liquid herbal doses to supplement your detox program. Combine 4.3.2.1 Organic Detox with your healthy eating plan to enjoy the organic goodness of 4.3.2.1's certified organic herbal detox formula.

For your chance to win this great prize pack, simply be the first person to send in the correct answer to the question below to: **comp@pharmacydaily.com.au.**

How many different herb extracts does 4.3.2.1 Organic Detox contain?

Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner, **Donna Delgado** from **Jardines Chemmart Pharmacy**.

DISPENSARY CORNER

ANECDOTAL evidence?

At a recent event, ***Pharmacy Daily*** was told by a few sources that cinnamon is a haven of health benefits with one person sprinkling it on cereal daily, saying they hadn't had a cold all winter.

While this might have more to do with the prevalence of flu vaccinations these days, there are a few studies around suggesting the spice can be good for you - one showed it may reduce risk factors associated with type 2 diabetes (**CLICK HERE**), one, that a derived substance activated an antioxidant response in cultured human colon cells (**CLICK HERE**) and one showed that a substance in the cinnamon plant could be used as a prophylactic for Alzheimer's disease in mice (**CLICK HERE**), which are all the best excuses we've heard for eating donuts in a while.

FIVE healthy, hearty lies.

Pharmacists in Quebec may be faced with a couple of disgruntled customers trying to return baby purchases, after an entire town was tricked into believing one of the residents was pregnant with quintuplets.

The woman, unnamed for privacy reasons as she underwent psychiatric assessment, told her boyfriend 'Paul' she was pregnant a month after meeting, *CTV News* reported.

The truth was only begotten once a blood test was performed at 34 weeks, with Paul saying the woman had displayed various pregnancy symptoms, *Canoe News* reported.

Paul wrote that the town, which had rallied to provide assistance to the couple, would have gifts returned to them, the station reported.

ONE for the gamers.

A planned excavation into a New Mexio landfill to find a cache of Atari's worst game, 'E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial' will proceed, despite regulator's concerns, *AP* reported.

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