

TGA illegal drug alert

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has again identified drugs which are illegal to be supplied in Australia, not having been tested for quality, safety or efficacy by the TGA, as well as the place of manufacture being unapproved.

VigRX for Men capsules and VigRX Plus tablets contain sildenafil, the active ingredient in Viagra.

These products pose a serious risk to patients' health, the TGA said.

Remicade on PBS

REMICADE (infliximab), a new targeted biologic therapy, will be reimbursed on the PBS for Australians with acute severe ulcerative colitis.

The product is a new non-surgical treatment option when previously emergency surgery constituted the main alternative for patients who failed to respond to prior therapy.

Acute ulcerative colitis is a chronic inflammatory bowel disease.

The symptoms can be debilitating and may include abdominal pain, abnormal bowel movements, urgency, fever, fatigue and the presence of blood in stools.

EBOS focuses on growth

HAVING announced half year results in February (*PD* 19 Feb), including the 2013 \$1.1b Symbion acquisition and the investment-attracting dual listing, EBOS has stated that its focus for the future is all about growth.

"Our low gearing and strong cashflow generation, combined with undrawn bank facilities of \$390m at 31 Dec 2013, provide significant headroom for growth," said md Mark Waller and chairman Rick Christie in their *Interim Report 14*.

They also pointed out that the company was awarded the 'Best Growth Strategy' in the Deloitte Top 200 Awards in November last year with 19 acquisitions in 12 years, and included in their report a detailed senior succession plan for the organisation, such as Rick Christie's planned retirement at the 2015 AGM after 14 years with the company.

Focusing on 'the journey forward', the report highlights the market forces that have shaped the industry over the last 20 years driving down margins and forcing EBOS to choose between being "a small niche player or to aim

to become the industry leader in Australia and New Zealand."

The result is a company which in 2014 has 2,242 staff across Australasia, a combined customer base of 30,387 at a ratio of around 2:1 Aust:NZ, and over 5.4m orders processed, 77% of which were electronic.

The report concludes that few companies can boast such a sophisticated high tech supply chain through to brand building and sales/marketing expertise, together with the dual listing, creating a powerful broad-based growth future.

Teach the alert signs

A KEY message of Heart Week this year (04-10 May) will be to encourage pharmacists to educate their patients about the warning signs of heart attack.

Heart Foundation's National CEO Mary Barry said each year almost 10,000 Aussies die of a heart attack.

"This year we're asking health professionals to help us save lives by educating patients about the warning signs of heart attack and how to reduce their risk of having one," Barry said, adding that more than one million Australians aged 30 to 65 are at high risk of having a heart attack or stroke.

"We're asking health professionals to order a Heart Week kit that includes posters and balloons for display as well as fact sheets and wallet cards that can be distributed to patients."

CLICK HERE to order your kit online or call 1300 362 787.

Heart trigger to quit

CIGARETTE smoking remains a major risk factor and preventable cause of heart disease, yet despite advances in assisting people to quit, little is known as to what finally triggers the urge to quit for good.

Recent research from Royal North Shore and North Shore Private Hospitals in Sydney, published in the *Journal of Smoking Cessation*, investigates how having a heart attack can be a reason for behaviour change, and can be seen as a teachable moment.

The study involved 116 hospitalised heart attack patients who were more successful quitters.

NPSA hails support

NATIONAL Pharmaceutical Services Association (NPSA) president Patrick Davies has welcomed the strong support for the Community Service Obligation (CSO) given by pharmacists during APP2014.

During an interactive session conducted by the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, more than 90% of respondents said that all PBS-listed products should be made available to the CSO wholesalers (*PD* 27 Mar).

"It's great to get that kind of support from pharmacists and proof that what we have been saying about the importance of the CSO is being heard."

"We are looking forward to working with the Guild in negotiations around the 6CPA to ensure the CSO is further strengthened."

WIN A HYDRALYTE PRIZE PACK

Every day this week *Pharmacy Daily* is giving ten lucky readers the chance to win a Hydralyte prize pack, to ensure you stay hydrated whilst travelling.

Travelling?

Send dehydration packing with Hydralyte

The Risks:

- Travellers' Diarrhoea (up to 50% of those travelling to a high risk destination will suffer)
- Long Haul Flights (dry cabins)
- Increased Sun Exposure
- Increased Physical Activity
- Excessive Alcohol Consumption (alcohol acts as a diuretic)

The World Health Organization recommends all travellers' first aid kits contain an Oral Rehydration Formula (such as Hydralyte)

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

Which international health body recommends all travellers' first aid kits contain an Oral Rehydration Formula like Hydralyte?



National Convention & Exhibition '14

for everyone in pharmacy

Secure 2014 Group 1 &
Group 2 CPD Credits

Cocktail Function
Fri 20 June, 5.00 - 7.30pm

Exhibition
New Products & Services

COMPREHENSIVE 3 DAY EDUCATION PROGRAM
SAVE THE DATE - REGISTRATIONS OPEN SOON!
www.nswpharmacy-nce.com.au

20 - 22 June
Australian Technology Park
Inspiring Pharmacy to:
**Adapt, Change &
Future-Proof**

Weekly Comment

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



Communication key to tackling medicine management

ONE of the core roles of pharmacists is to prevent and resolve medication related problems. We all know that talking to patients about their medication while they are in the pharmacy is a core element most pharmacists do every day. Opening the communication channels between patient and health professionals is fundamental in assisting patients with medication adherence.

Communicating to patients can take many forms; verbally talking to patients, providing them with additional reading material (handouts such as CMI's), and electronic communication in the form of SMS messages, pre-recorded voice calls, emails and SmartPhone Apps.

Follow-up communication is found to be very effective in assisting with patient adherence issues as well as building patient loyalty with the pharmacy. In a report by Varolii Corporation, the majority of people agreed that reminders or care information sent via SMS messages, email or SmartPhone app could have helped them avoid a health problem that occurred in the past.

Pharmacists of today need to ensure their patients are not only receiving communication concerning the prescribed medication in their pharmacy but once they leave the pharmacy also. This extra communication may just be the trigger for a patient to maintain their medication adherence and come back to your pharmacy.

Trial reforms 'urgent'

MEDICINES Australia has said regulatory reforms for clinical trials is an "urgent national priority."

Ceo Dr Brendan Shaw told the Australian Clinical Trials Alliance that the country's share of global investment in clinical trial activity was decreasing, despite the "massive" investment they brought to Australia.

The country had not benefited from the shift in global R&D spending in the pharmaceutical industry towards markets in the region, he said, and regulatory inefficiencies and high costs made it harder to attract investment.

Low patient recruitment and the public health system, which did not focus on research, also added to the decline in clinical trial investment in the country, he said. "The solution is to implement

reforms identified over three years ago and do this within the next 12 months.

"Last year, the McKeon Review of Health and Medical Research called for clinical trial reform to be made an 'urgent national priority'.

"Medicines Australia shares this view."

MA welcomed the Government's promise last year to accelerate the pace of regulatory reform, he said.

A National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) spokesperson said with the Department of Industry, it was working to improve the clinical trials environment in Australia and to implement proposed reforms.

Specifically NHMRC was working on a nationally consistent approach, including working to speed up the start of trials by improving governance mechanisms.

The spokesperson said there had been several reports which indicated significant international investment in Australian clinical trials, such as MA's report that in 2008 biopharmaceutical companies funded more than 70% of ongoing clinical trials in Australia.

"It is through the research done in clinical trials that people gain access to better treatments sooner."

Resistant hitchhikers

WITH news emerging this week that health insurers will provide a 'guarantee' on the quality of some overseas medical procedures, NPS MedicineWise is warning Australians travelling overseas for surgery that there is never any guarantee of not picking up an antibiotic resistant infection.

"We know that overseas surgery is becoming more popular, perhaps because it's cheaper, more accessible or for privacy reasons," NPS MedicineWise clinical adviser Dr Andrew Boyden said.

He said there were a number of measures that medical tourists could take to minimise the risk of bringing home unwanted stowaways in their bodies.

CLICK HERE to read more.

TGA consultations

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration is seeking comments on proposed advisory statements for OTC nasal decongestant preparations for topical use and OTC cough medicines for oral use.

Both consultations close on 25 Apr.

For more, visit www.tga.gov.au.

NMS earlybird rego

EARLYBIRD registration deadline for the eighth National Medicines Symposium 2014 to be held in Brisbane from 21-23 May 2014 at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre is 18 Apr.

Held every two years, the scientific program is designed to provide the latest and the controversial in the medicines and health environment.

The theme for NMS 2014 is *Medicines in health: shaping our future*.

For details, **CLICK HERE**.



DISPENSARY CORNER

CAT scan saves diabetic girl.

A black and white rescue tabby cat called Pippa has performed a series of small miracles by alerting the owners when diabetic Mia Jansa, 8, is about to suffer an hypoglycaemic episode.

The UK Whitstable family adopted the cat from the RSPCA in August last year and since then the cat, according to *BBC News*, has saved Mia's life about 20 times.

The cat's acute sense of smell can detect when Mia's sugar levels are dropping dangerously.

PARAMEDIC Fido.

Animals are really trying to save the day in today's Dispensary Corner, following the news that Sophie, a dog from Nebraska, called 911.

Alas, it was a mistake and not a life saving act, with owner Melissa Acosta saying it was all "a little embarrassing," *Associated Press* reported.

Dispatchers who picked up the call could only hear the sounds of breathing and scratching and said it was the first time a dog had called the centre, *AP* reported.

SHARK pooling.

If you're considering ways to get to work...a hammerhead shark dragged a student in his kayak up the Atlantic coast for two hours.

Naturally he filmed the event for Youtube, *Reuters* reported.