

Arthritis summarised

THE Australian Institute of Health and Welfare has released a pdf and printed version of their latest publication, this time titled *Arthritis and other musculoskeletal conditions across the life stages*.

Arthritis and other musculoskeletal conditions affect an estimated 6.1 million Australians (approximately 28% of the total population) across all ages.

The publication is a useful resource for anyone studying the subject.

CLICK HERE to access.

No vaccine link to autism

VACCINES have no demonstrated association with autism based on a recent evidence-based meta-analysis of case-control and cohort studies published in the medical journal *Vaccine*.

Five cohort studies involving 1,256,407 children and five case-control studies involving 9,920 children were included in this analysis which clearly dissociated vaccines with the development of autism or autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

The other perceived autism risks were also evaluated, namely measles, mumps rubella (MMR) vaccine and mercury-based preservative thiomersal.

Paper senior author associate professor Guy Eslick from the Sydney Medical School said these vaccines were the ones which had received the most attention by anti-vaccination groups.

"There has been enormous debate regarding the possibility of a link between these commonly-used and safe childhood vaccinations and the supposed development of autism," Eslick said.

The claimed but not proven link to childhood vaccinations has led to both an increased distrust in

the trade between vaccine benefit outweighing potential risks he added, creating a major public health issue.

"This is especially concerning given the fact that ... NSW also saw a spike in measles infections from early 2012 to late 2012.

"Vaccine-preventable diseases clearly still hold a presence in modern day society, and the decision to opt out of vaccination schedules needed to be urgently and properly evaluated."

Vitamin D deficiency

THE Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has recently highlighted that vitamin D deficiency is prevalent in Australia which is particularly concerning for pregnant women as their vitamin D status impacts the skeletal and respiratory health of their newborn.

Blackmores director of education Pam Stone said, "These new findings support the position statement released by The ANZ Bone and Mineral Society and Osteoporosis Australia last year which highlighted that around 25% of pregnant women in Australia are vitamin D deficient."

Calcium safe for CVD

ALTHOUGH recent reports have linked calcium to increased cardiovascular disease (CVD) risk, new longitudinal research out of Boston, Massachusetts has concluded, "Our findings do not support the hypothesis that calcium supplement intake increases CVD risk in women."

In a prospective cohort study of supplemental calcium use and incident CVD in 74,245 women in the Nurses' Health Study were followed up over 24 years.

CLICK HERE to read the abstract.



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Emotions #online

CSIRO researchers have released a new online tool developed for the Black Dog Institute, in partnership with Amazon Web Services, called *We Feel* which analyses the words from millions of tweets to display a real-time view of our emotions, both locally and globally.

We Feel looks for up to 600 words from around 27 million tweets daily and maps them to a hierarchy of emotions showing trends.

Guild Update

Community Pharmacy and the Federal Budget

Last week's Federal Budget was a mixed bag for community pharmacy – relief at the absence of new savings measures that might inflict further harm, but disappointment that imminent pain for pharmacies was not recognised.

The Budget confirmed the massive savings that the Government is reaping from the ongoing program of PBS reforms.

This demonstrates the massive contribution that the medicines sector and community pharmacies are making to the ongoing sustainability of the PBS.

The Pharmacy Guild is disappointed that despite these billions in savings the Government has not seen fit to ameliorate any of the \$149 million impact on community pharmacy in 2014-15 of the pre-election changes to PBS price disclosure.

These changes will strip about \$30,000 off the bottom line of the average pharmacy in 2014-15, forcing many to reduce services, shed staff and/or reduce opening hours.

In terms of patient care, the Guild is also concerned about the impact the proposed increases in PBS co-payments will have on patients, particularly those with chronic conditions taking multiple medicines.

These sharp co-payment increases from 1 January 2015 will mean that the role of pharmacists in advising patients about the importance of taking their medicines as prescribed will become even more vital, and will need to be properly remunerated in the next pharmacy agreement, commencing in July 2015.



The Pharmacy Guild of Australia

Pharmacist opportunities

THE Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) and Chifley Business School (CBS) have entered into an “articulation pathway partnership” for postgraduate programs creating an opportunity for graduates of the PSA Graduate Diploma of Applied Pharmacy Practice or PSA Diploma of Management to enrol in Chifley Business School's postgraduate programs.

These programs include the Master of Business Administration (MBA), MBA Technology Management, Master of Project Management, Graduate Diploma of Management, Graduate Certificate in Management, Graduate Certificate of Project Management, Graduate Certificate in Business Strategy and Graduate Certificate in Strategic Leadership.

National president of the PSA, Grant Kardachi, said the agreement opened major opportunities for pharmacists to expand their career opportunities.

“The PSA Graduate Diploma is unique to the PSA and provides pharmacists with a qualification that supports them to undertake a variety of leadership and management roles.

“The Graduate Diploma will give graduates advanced skills in a broad range of management and pharmacy practice including communication, leadership, innovation and research skills.”

Simon Christensen, CEO of Chifley Business School said, “Chifley is extremely excited by this new articulation pathway and the synergies between the CBS and PSA approach to education.

“Chifley has more than 25 years' experience in the higher education sector and with more than 13,000 graduates we are confident that all PSA members will see the Chifley MBA as a terrific educational and career opportunity.”

The transferability of an MBA to the pharmaceutical industry was at the core of his message.

Clinical Rx workshop

FUNDAMENTALS 2 Blackmores clinical prescribing afternoon workshop with Dr Pauline Roberts PhD BSc DBM, who has used mineral therapy for over 10 years in her clinical practice, is set for 29 Jun 2014 in Melbourne and earns 4 CPE points from ATMS.

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*Membership numbers obtained from the individual pharmacy groups' websites on 3 April 2014.

Call (03) 9860 3300 now to discuss how an affordable Pharmacy Alliance membership can immediately benefit you.



DISPENSARY CORNER

SLOW-MO getaway.

Sick of working long hours in the pharmacy?

If you decide to make a break for it, perhaps it's wise to get a lift if you can't go faster than a tortoise.

Spike, the 17 year-old 80-pound pet tortoise, housed in Rio Rancho, New Mexico, found the gate left open one day but his attempt to escape to far flung lands only got him about 800 metres from home.

Yahoo! News reports that the lumbering giant was returned to its relieved owners by Animal Control.

READ the label carefully.

Pharmacists are known for their very high attention to detail around labelling of products.

University of Findlay recently contracted a supplier to fertilise their 72 acres of lawn gracing their Ohio campus, only to have around 54 acres die from the weedkiller that was accidentally used instead.

According to the local *Findlay Courier* the label-reading mistake happened in the last week of April and will take several weeks to reseed and re-sod the affected areas.

PAMPERED contented cows.

Most of us take for granted the privilege of sleeping on a mattress, regular bathing, living with airconditioning and automatic lighting, but not so many have occasional pedicures or free massages when we want them - but then, most of us aren't milking cows in poverty-ridden Bosnia.

Complete with relaxing music played during milking, the life of a cow in Jusuf Arifagic's dairy farm is pure bovine luxury.

According to *iOL News*, Arifagic has a vision for the dairy industry in the more temperate climate of Bosnia to overtake that of Norway.

“Pampered cows give five litres more of milk a day,” claimed the visionary, adding they are healthier as well, according to the local vet.