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Synthetic drugs boom

THE United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime has warned of a synthetic drugs boom, with new psychoactive substances (NPS) flooding the market.

The 2014 Global Synthetic Drugs Assessment report said the expansion of global amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS) was of increasing concern and the presence of NPS was growing on illicit drug markets.

The report said the use of NPS that posed a health threat had grown “rapidly” over the past 10 years and there had been increasing reports of the availability and manufacture of these substances.

NPS had emerged in every region of the world including Australia, it said, and was present in 94 countries in total.

“Surging” ATS seizures pointed to a rapid expansion of the global market, the report said, with total seizures rising by more than 80% to more than 135 tons in 2012.

ATS was being trafficked to Australia, with 3% of ATS seized at Western European and Japanese airports originating from West Africa headed for this country, the report said.

[CLICK HERE](#) to access the report.

Guild lobbies landlords

PHARMACY Guild of Australia executive director David Quilty and national president George Tambassis met with the leaders of the Shopping Centre Council of Australia (SCCA) to explain that the viability of pharmacies in shopping centres would be at risk should rents not take into account the increasing impact of price disclosure.

SCCA members include the owners and investors in major shopping centres including Westfield, Stockland and GPT.

Writing in his *forefront* editorial, Quilty said SCCA ceo Milton Cockburn had committed to distributing the Guild's recent '2014 Pharmacy Rental Report – Price Disclosure Impact Edition' to his board members and to make pharmacy rents an item for discussion at the next meeting.

“Importantly, he committed to work with the Guild to help ensure that his landlord members are aware of the issues facing pharmacy.”

“It was agreed that the SCCA would help facilitate briefings by the Guild of individual SCCA landlord members around Australia, building on the work that

has already commenced in Victoria.

“The Guild will look to provide those briefings to key landlords in coming months.”

Quilty said Cockburn had also highlighted that landlords themselves faced increases in operating costs.

Cockburn said the SCCA board met last Thursday and he briefed them on the discussions and distributed the Guild material.

He also told the board the Guild would be seeking meetings with the Heads of Leasing to brief them individually and that he had offered to facilitate these as necessary.

“The Board was fully supportive of this.”

“We obviously value having a relationship with the PGA which enables these matters to be discussed.”

The Shopping Centre Council of Australia said in its newsletter there were only 1,084 pharmacies in shopping centres or slightly over 20% of total community pharmacies, with more than half of these in smaller neighbourhood centres where the average occupancy cost was low.

It said 4% of community pharmacies were located in the higher demand regional centres, which “generally have much higher foot traffic and higher rents.”

Read the Guild report [HERE](#).

FDA nods Entyvio

THE US FDA has approved Entyvio (vedolizumab) injection to treat adult patients with moderate to severe ulcerative colitis and adult patients with moderate to severe Crohn's disease.

Entyvio is approved to treat those conditions when one or more standard therapies have not resulted in an adequate response.

PHARMAC early notice

PHARMAC is notifying the tender award for the supply of some amoxicillin presentations earlier than the usual end of month notification to make sure all interested parties are aware as soon as possible.

MEANWHILE PHARMAC has also said it will fund febuxostat (Adenuric) from 01 Jun for the treatment of patients with severe gout.

Several gout treatments are already funded by PHARMAC but the clinical advisory committee identified a need for additional treatment, it said.

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Statins fail for COPD

NEW research out of Canada has dismissed the potential role of statins in decreasing the rate and severity of exacerbations, the rate of hospitalisation, and mortality in chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

Previous retrospective studies have indicated a beneficial effect, so the COPD Clinical Research Network and the Canadian Institute of Health Research set up the prospective randomised placebo-controlled trial of simvastatin in the prevention of COPD exacerbations (STATCOPE).

Daily simvastatin 40mg failed to reduce exacerbations.

CLICK HERE to read more.

Travel Specials

WELCOME to Pharmacy Daily's travel feature. Each week we highlight a couple of great travel deals for the pharmacy industry.

TRAVEL on Sale

This weeks travel specials are brought to you by Travel on Sale.

In this week's travel specials, Travel on Sale is offering great value deals to Hong Kong. Flying Qantas Airways, packages include return airfares, accommodation, airport transfers and bonuses including free nights, free tours, upgrades and more starting from \$1,099pp. Or check out the family package staying four nights at Disney's Hollywood Hotel with a two day Disneyland ticket, arrival transfers and kids stay free bonus offer from \$1,699 per adult and \$719 per child.

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*Conditions apply

PCEHR 'opt-out' change

THE Royle review of the Personally Controlled Electronic Health Record (PCEHR) has generated 38 recommendations including a friendlier name change and an 'opt-out' approach.

Minister for Health Peter Dutton said the report found strong support for continuing to develop a consistent and effective electronic health record.

As well as the more user friendly name of My Health Record (MyHR) and the opt-out system, to take effect from a target date of 01 Jan, other recommendations revolved around the limited amount of clinically usable information in the PCEHR, a restructure of the governance arrangements, such as dissolving the National Electronic Health Transition Authority and replacing it with the Australian Commission for Electronic Health (ACeH) which would include a pharmacist member, and enhancement of usability.

Other recommendations included the expansion of the Australian Medications Terminology data set to include a set of over the counter medicines and including this in the National Prescribing and Dispensing

Repository (NPDR).

The report said the NPDR only contained 49,282 documents so far but once widely adopted would allow pharmacists in particular to track compliance and interactions with OTC medication.

"It does not readily or rapidly allow clinicians to track a current medications list."

The report said the issue of one of the subsidies available to pharmacists being reliant upon whether the first script was dispensed electronically needed to be reviewed to increase the rate of adoption.

The 2014-15 Budget provided \$140.6m to support the operation of eHealth and the PCEHR system for 12 months.

Dutton said the government would consider the recommendations over the coming months.

The Consumers Health Forum (CHF) said the new plan would inject fresh life into the project.

Ceo Adam Stankevicius said the opt-out provision would overcome the problem of the slow build in momentum of the opt-in system.

To read the report, **CLICK HERE**.

DISPENSARY CORNER

MORE peanuts, stat!

Dedication to care is one thing, but we're not sure you'd want to follow the lead of the nurses at Lianshui County Chinese Medicine Hospital, who have been asked to wear air hostess outfits to improve patient care.

Apparently the aim is to offer a standard of care which would defuse tense situations between staff and patients and their relatives - although how this is supposed to help is still up in the air.

Orange News reported the nurses get paid more but have to take on a bigger workload.

Their skirts are also longer for reasons "everyone understands", the publication reported.

BAD kitty.

Marijuana has been legalised for sale in some parts of the United States but not in New Zealand, and most people wouldn't expect their dispenser to take a feline form, at that.

So imagine the surprise of one Dunedin home owner, whose pet cat dropped a five gram bag of cannabis in their house, the *Otago Daily Times* reported.

Police said the owner had phoned in on Sunday to report the felonious feline but the force were still stumped as to where it came from, with investigations "continuing", the publication said.

A journalist's dream came true when the Dunedin Police sergeant Reece Munro was asked whether the police would consider adding a feline drug detecting division, to which he restrainedly replied that it could be something the police could explore in the future.

HERO feline throws first pitch.

Speaking of felines, Tara the tabby who became the star of a YouTube video for rescuing a four year old from a dog attack was given one of the greatest honours America can bestow - she was asked to throw the first ball of a baseball match(!?).

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