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Vital Signs 2014

THE Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care, has released 'Vital Signs 2014: The State of Safety and Quality in Australian Health Care.'

The report summarises key issues around the Australian healthcare system highlighting that the main contact most people have with the system is through their healthcare professional, including pharmacists.

Interviews with patients identified OTC and prescribed medications being taken with around 271m scripts dispensed from community pharmacies per year, emphasising that health literacy was an important issue that needed to be more fully addressed, it said.

Pharmacy dispensing labels have also been an area focus for the Commission since the 2013 workshop on the subject.

CLICK HERE to access the report.

Patients choose generic

A SURVEY has found 75% of pharmacists said patients often or always selected the generic product for a range of pharmaceutical categories.

The survey, which also found 25% of pharmacists felt their role did not meet expectations (**PD** 16 Oct), was conducted by Pharmacy Insights online with pharmacists enrolling in Pharmacy Club between May and July 2014.

The categories included antibiotics, pain management OTC and diabetes medication.

For categories such as hormone replacement therapy, 56% said patients selected the generic and for anticoagulants, only 39% reported this, which Pharmacy Insight co-partner ACA Research said could be due to patients wanting to stick with what works, but could also be a function of the lower number of generic options available.

Of the 628 pharmacists surveyed, 55% said there were times when they recommended a patient stick with the brand prescribed, even

when generic options existed, the report found.

Just over half (52%) of these said this was due to patient resistance towards generics and 27% said they recommended this to avoid patient confusion.

Twenty three per cent said it was due to doubts about the generic product quality and 19% said their decision was influenced by patient support from the branded product manufacturer, the report found.

Generic Medicines Industry Association acting ceo Belinda Wood said there was still consumer misunderstanding when it came to generics, and there was a "clear role" for the TGA to communicate its evaluation of generic medicines to reassure consumers of the quality, safety, efficacy and health outcomes of generic medicines.

Ignorance risk - NPS

TODAY is the final day of NPS MedicineWise Week and a poll conducted by Galaxy Research has shown that around one third of Australians take prescription medicines daily, but 30% had stopped taking meds without consulting their doctor, NPS said.

The survey of 1,001 people was conducted online in September.

NPS also alerted consumers to the risks associated with excessive use of pain killers, nominating pharmacists as a reliable source of advice.

NPS offers an 'online challenge' to become more 'medicinewise'.

CLICK HERE for the challenge.

Guild myCPD success

THE end of September marks the end of pharmacists' CPD year, with the Guild saying the myCPD site has achieved "impressive" results with more than 30,000 registered users.

The site also recorded more than 40,000 educational assessments completed by pharmacists and pharmacy staff, it said.

Ascend FDA injunction

A FEDERAL judge from the Southern District of Ohio has entered a consent decree for permanent injunction against Ascend Laboratories on behalf of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The consent decree requires Ascend Laboratories to post bond for the release of its unapproved drug products: pramoxine-HC otic drops, hydrocortisone acetate suppositories 25 mg, urea cream 39% and 40%, and urea lotion 40% seized by U.S. Marshals in May.

Guardian wins again

COMING from last position in 2011 to first in 2013, Guardian Pharmacy has again topped the Roy Morgan research customer satisfaction list for the 12 months to August, with a 91.2% customer satisfaction rating.

This follows its win in January of the customer satisfaction award (**PD** 20 Mar).

It was followed closely by Priceline Pharmacy (90.2%), Chemist Warehouse (90.1%) and Amcal (89.8%) with less than three percentage points separating the top nine pharmacy groups.

Roy Morgan consumer products gm Geoffery Smith said in the 12 months, 50% of Australians over 14 made at least one purchase from a pharmacy in an average four-week period - **CLICK HERE** to access.

PSA ticks Guild pres

THE Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) has welcomed the re-election of George Tambassis to the Guild presidency at a "critical time for the pharmacy profession."

ESKD future impact

THE future impact on health needs of Australians of end stage kidney disease (ESKD) is likely underreported, new research released by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare has found.

The issue of concern is whether or not patients hospitalised with ESKD will have ESKD recorded on their death record, affecting the accuracy of disease pattern records.

CLICK HERE to access.

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Jobs of the Week

- **Pharmacist in Charge** - Whyalla & Eyre Region, SA (Job# 2010877)
Take a holistic approach with full PPI's in a popular coastal location.
- **Clinical Pharmacist** - Riverina Region NSW (Job# 2010873)
Clinical Pharmacist to coordinate delivery of Oncology Pharmacy Services.
- **Pharmacist Manager** - Darling Downs Region, QLD (Job# 2010907)
Career opportunity within 2 hours of Brisbane - friendly community.

Have you arranged a Locum for your next break? call us to sort it!

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.

- 17-18 Oct: Pharmacy Assistant Conference 2014; Gold Coast; see: www.pharmacyassistants.com/
- 17-19 Oct: Medication Management Review Stage 1 Workshop; Subiaco; visit: www.psa.org.au
- 21 Oct: Bridging the Gap: Patient centred integrated care; Sydney; for more see: www.psa.org.au
- 21 Oct: Keeping It Going QCPP Maintenance; Sydney; for more details see: www.guild.org.au
- 22 Oct: Diabetes and NDSS Information Night; Subiaco; go to: www.psa.org.au
- 24 Oct: Lung Health Education Day; Melbourne; for more details see: www.lungfoundation.com.au
- 25 Oct: Mental Health First Aid Workshop; Newcastle; details at: www.guild.org.au
- 25 Oct: Lung Health Education Day; Campbell Town, Tasmania; for more details see: www.lungfoundation.com.au
- 26 Oct: Managing the side effects of chemotherapy and cancer treatments in the community; James Cook University, Townsville; www.psa.org.au
- 28 Oct: Expanding role of pharmacists: triage, treat and refer; Warrnambool; more details: www.psa.org.au
- 30 Oct: Lung Health Education Day; Adelaide; for more details: www.lungfoundation.com.au
- 11 Nov: Better Living With Your Lung Disease Regional Patient Seminar; Mandurah; for more details see: www.lungfoundation.com.au

Letter to the Editor

AN ARTICLE about a literature review of complementary medicines (*PD* 15 Oct) has prompted this response from University of Adelaide senior lecturer in Pharmacology Ian Musgrave:

In the Pharmacy Daily of Wednesday 15 October there is a news item highlighting a recent report that claims that Complementary Medicine has the potential to produce a net economic benefit of \$1.8 billion from 2015-2020.

However, of the six treatments that were investigated, only one is complementary.

The news report covers vitamin D and calcium supplementation for osteoporosis. Vitamin D and calcium supplementation is not complementary medicine, but conventional medicine, with the optimal doses and patient populations being worked out in clinical trials after basic research determined the mechanism of action of the hormone.

Similarly, folic acid and omega fatty acids for cardiovascular disease are not complementary medicines, but conventional medicines. They were again discovered and developed by conventional research and clinical trials.

That something can be purchased over the counter without a prescription does not make it complementary; paracetamol would never be claimed as a complementary medicine.

Being a vitamin does not make something a complementary medicine. Using vitamin C to treat Scurvy or folic acid to prevent neural tube defects is conventional medicine, while using vitamin C to treat colds is a complementary use (which is still promoted in the face of continued evidence that it is ineffective).

The benefits of these regimes may be overestimated. The report did not examine some of the latest systematic reviews on omega fatty acids that have concluded there are no or minor effects.

The review of the only actual complementary medicine, St. John's Wort, does not factor in the life threatening drug interactions that it causes in the cost benefit analysis, and seems to be promoting self-medication for a significant illness.

Claiming conventional medical treatments (such the vitamin D and calcium supplementation highlighted in the news article) show that complementary medicines have significant economic benefits is highly misleading.

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

WIN A BIO-OIL PACK

This week *Pharmacy Daily* and **Bio-Oil** are giving five readers the chance to win a Bio-Oil Fit & Fab pack.



Spring is the perfect time to get fit outdoors. But don't let your skin suffer as a result of exposure to the sun or wind. With Bio-Oil, it's easy to ensure your skin gets the TLC it needs. Bio-Oil includes a range of skin-loving oils such as chamomile, rosemary, lavender and calendula for outstanding results. Valued at \$109.90, the Bio-Oil Fit & Fab prize pack includes Bio-Oil in 60ml and 125ml, a sports watch, water bottle and a sports towel. Visit: <https://www.bio-oil.com/en-us/>

To win, be the first from VIC or TAS to send the correct answer to: comp@pharmacydaily.com.au

Why is Bio-Oil's consistency different to other oil formulas?

Congratulations to yesterday's winner, **Irean Baritakis** from **Nightcliff Amcal Pharmacy**.

DISPENSARY CORNER



FLY-BY housefly.

Swat that fly in your pharmacy - its reputation is well earned and not to be envied.

The entire genome of the common housefly has now been sequenced by scientists at Cornell University, New York, in an attempt to identify genes that make them immune to the pathogens they carry, *BBC News Health* reported.

The flies could carry about 100 illnesses.

They lived a "dirty lifestyle", with constant feeding on liquid or semi-liquid matter, often faeces, but did not get sick, the publication reported.

The findings could help discover cures for human diseases, it said.

MOPPING with intent to clean.

Be careful when doing your end of day clean up at the pharmacy - you could be charged with "mopping aggressively", as one Connecticut man was.

John Thorton was arrested this week after grabbing a mop from a hotel employee's hands and "mopping aggressively" over her shoes, *Associated Press* reported.

The charmer reportedly pushed the woman into a corner when she asked him to stop and threatened police officers during his arrest, the publication reported.

What a moppet.

WHAT a croc.

In Australia, it would probably pay to be as cautious as the UK mother who called police and zoo keepers after seeing a baby crocodile in her garden - only to find out it was a plastic toy.

Police officers were also initially fooled until they threw water on the toy, the *Telegraph* reported, with a Devon and Cornwall police spokesman saying officers "bravely" investigated.

"The beast turned out to be an inflatable toy crocodile.

"Police have apprehended the crocodile."