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Gene patent benefit

THE Federal court ruling on gene patents (**PD** 08 Sep) does not mean a person who has the gene could get sued, Watermark Intellectual Asset Management special counsel Tania Obranovich has said.

In response to a reader comment, she said existing gene patents were directed to isolated DNA molecules and not a gene in its natural form.

The ruling would impact patients favourably, since if it had not found that genes were patentable, being discoveries, not inventions, the pharmaceutical industry would have been severely impacted, as many newly isolated natural products such as novel antibiotics, would have been rendered non-patentable, she said.

Molecules in isolated form being patentable meant companies could invest hundreds of millions of dollars into testing and developing products such as medicines to bring to market, since they could recoup their investment, Obranovich said.

This also meant universities could patent research and seek commercial partnerships, rather than publishing in journals for companies to freely use, she said.

There were four patent thresholds to meet, she said.

To read more on this, **CLICK HERE**.

Valdoxan review

THE Pharmacovigilance Risk Assessment Committee (PRAC) has concluded its review of Valdoxan/Thymanax (agomelatine), used to treat major depression in adults.

PRAC recommended tightening recommendations around liver injury to clarify that liver function tests should be performed before, and regularly during, treatment, as well as making the product contraindicated in patients 75 years and older.

A TGA spokesperson said it was aware of the recommendations, and that Australian product information already contained information about use in patients with impaired liver function.

The TGA would review the information in the PRAC recommendation to determine whether action was required here.

Research fund support

THE Government's proposed \$20b Medical Research Future Fund (**PD** 15 May) has gained the support of the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) Action Group, which includes Simon McKeon and Sir Gus Nossal.

The Group has launched the 'Imagine a Healthier Future' campaign, advocating further investment in health and medical research.

Group vice chairman Peter Scott said developments such as the vaccine against ovarian cancer had been made possible by the commitment of previous governments to fund medical research "thereby establishing many of Australia's medical research institutes, universities, clinics and companies as significant contributors to our economic wellbeing as well as to our quality of life."

McKeon said sustained investment in such a fund would create a sustainable health system

Nurse or pharmacist?

RESEARCH published in the *European Journal of Pharmacology* recently evaluated the respective skills of pharmacists versus nurses in conducting medication reviews.

The study found that pharmacists spent significantly less time conducting reviews and physicians agreed significantly more often with the pharmacist that action should be taken on the medication discrepancies.

CLICK HERE to see the abstract.

and deliver \$6b in gains linked to increased wellbeing.

The group would lobby, advertise and invite Australians to visit research institutions, a spokesperson said.

A National Health and Medical Research Council spokesperson said details around the MRFF were still being worked through.

Previously, University of Sydney Dean of Pharmacy Professor Iqbal Ramzan said it was not clear whether the Fund would be for medical, or medical and health research.

Ramzan said this was still his understanding and there had been no further clarification.

For further information, **CLICK HERE**.

ACP conferrals



THE Australian College of Pharmacy (ACP) presented three members with Associate Fellow status at its annual conference gala dinner.

Elevations were conferred for Alex Park, Mary-Jessimine Bushell and Grant Martin, while Peter Saccasan (**pictured left**) was made Fellow Honoris Causa for his contribution to the College and the wider Industry, ACP said.

MPS med management

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia has endorsed MPS Australia's Medication Management system for the provision of an outsourced Dose Administration Aids solution for community pharmacy, with Guild national president George Tambassis saying the organisation believed it provided a better medication management solution for community pharmacy.

See the **cover page** for more.

Soft drinks are out

A PHARMACIST in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia has removed soft drinks and other sugary beverages from his store saying that as a health professional, he needed to be consistent in his own practice with the advice he gave patients.



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Aspirin role in cancer

THE RGH E-Bulletin this week looks at the role of aspirin in cancer prevention, referencing a recent published review.

CLICK HERE to access the bulletin.

Mitochondrial week

GLOBAL Mitochondrial Disease Awareness Week is being celebrated this week, with up to one in 200 Australians was at risk of developing Mitochondrial Disease, the Australian Mitochondrial Disease Awareness Foundation said.

Guild Update

Scanning to the max

PHASE 2 of the Electronic Prescription Scanning Incentive (ePSI) is underway this month, so now would be a very good time to be maximising your scanning of scripts.

Funding for ePSI is provided under the 5CPA to encourage pharmacies to scan the barcodes on all available electronic prescriptions.

Electronic Transfer of Prescriptions (ETP) is the transfer of prescription information between prescribers and dispensers using electronic means. It is an important foundation for community pharmacy in the movement towards a connected healthcare system.

To be eligible for the ePSI, pharmacies must firstly be eligible under the Community Services Support Priority Area of the 5CPA Pharmacy Practice Incentives.

In order to encourage as many pharmacies as possible to benefit from this incentive, over the next couple of weeks there'll be a social media mini-campaign – so watch out on Twitter and Facebook for reminder messages.

Student winners



THE winner of the Pharmacy Guild National Student Business Plan competition was a joint team from the University of Canberra and Charles Sturt University.

Pictured from left is Jessica Cahill, Jamie Pisani and Cyd Soriano, whose 'Primelink Pharmacy' featured a telehealth service for patients over 65 years of age and a Sun Care app aimed at reducing skin cancer incidence.

Runners up were teams from La Trobe University and Queensland University of Technology.

The award was announced at the Pharmacy Business Network.

Viral hepatitis topics

THE burden of viral hepatitis among Indigenous populations and its global impact will be addressed at the 'World Indigenous Peoples' Conference on Viral Hepatitis', the first of its kind, being held from 14 to 16 Sep in Alice Springs, Australia.

TGA consultations

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration is calling for input relating to three OTC consultations: loperamide, guaifenesin and mebendazole.

The deadline is 10 Oct.

CLICK HERE for details.

Oesophageal cancer

CANCER Council Australia has published new clinical guidelines which will help provide greater consistency in the management of one of Australia's fastest growing cancers, oesophageal adenocarcinoma and its known precursor, Barrett's Oesophagus.

CLICK HERE for the guidelines.

Vax focus at PAC14

PHARMACIST delivered immunisations will be a focus of Pharmacy Australia Congress (PAC14), the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia has said.

The conference would examine the issues of the turf war, pharmacist skills, pharmacy logistic requirements and queries around public benefit at two sessions in Canberra, the organisation said.

The trial was now in Phase 2, which involved whooping cough and measles vaccines (**PD** 14 Aug).



DISPENSARY CORNER

HARDENED criminal on sildenafil.

Police raiding a man's home found a box of Viagra but there was no evidence that the drugs had been purchased legally, reports the *Gold Coast Bulletin*.

Admitting he was in possession of a restricted drug, the man quipped that if he was found guilty he may well become "a hardened criminal."

IOL News said the court was told that a doctor had prescribed the man the drug to regulate his testosterone levels and that he had bought a box on a visit to the Indonesian resort island of Bali.

DAY Two: The Pong Persists.

If your pharmacy is situated near an area of particular fragrance (say, Rotorua in New Zealand), you could follow the lead of residents in Milton, near Cambridge in the UK, who have been asked to keep a "pong log", thanks to its plague of terrible odours, *Cambridge News* has reported.

Apparently, locals launched their own website to rate the smells, from 1, not unpleasant, to 10, very unpleasant, in order to prove that the village was indeed inhabited by myriad pongs, the publication reported.

The smells were thanks to a nearby sewage plant and recycling centres, it said.

SURELY a sack race is more appropriate.

We're not sure how your pharmacy organises who washes up, or who's in charge of organising the birthday cake, but drawing straws or tossing a coin would be appropriate; however, perhaps not the way you'd expect an election to be decided.

Poplarville in Mississippi had a tied election for alderman and the tie-breaker would be overseen by the local election commission and held on Thursday, *Reuters* reported.

It said deciding an election by chance was not unheard of.

WIN AN AROMABABY GIFT PACK

This week **Pharmacy Daily** and **Aromababy** are giving five readers the chance to win an Aromababy gift pack.

Launched two decades ago as the first, natural baby brand of its kind, Aromababy offers a comprehensive selection of organic-rich products for mother and child including unscented, for sensitive skin. 100% Australian made and used in select hospitals, Aromababy is not sold in supermarkets and relies on concentrated formulations, ensuring value for money together with optimum efficacy.

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Congratulations to yesterday's winner, **Naomi Gould** from **Australian NaturalCare Products**.