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Friday's Comp winner

FRIDAY'S winner of the Aromababy competition was **Jessica Sondergeld** from Warwick Friendly Society Pharmacy.

To make sure our readers from every state have a chance to win, we are launching state-specific competitions - today's on **page two** is just for our NSW and ACT readers.

TGA OTC cancellations

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has posted its notice of cancellation of Body & Health Essentials Maxi Organic Red Grapeseed by Body & Health Essentials P/L for failing to provide requested information.

GSK China \$546m fine

THE Changsha Intermediate People's Court in Hunan Province has ruled that GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) China Investment Co Ltd must pay a fine of 3b Yuan (AU\$546m) for bribery of non-government personnel.

Investigations began in June 2013 around payments to doctors and hospitals to enhance sales of GSK products (**PD** 16 May).

The court also handed out suspended jail sentences to former GSK China head Mark Reilly and four other executives, *Reuters* reported.

GSK apologised, saying it had taken steps to prevent future infractions such as decoupling sales targets from incentive rewards and reducing engagement with healthcare professionals.

'Florid pharmacy fantasy'

THE Pharmacy Guild has fired back at an opinion piece in the *Australian Financial Review*, calling it a "florid pharmacy fantasy."

Liberal Democratic senator for NSW David Leyonhjelm's piece painted a picture of young pharmacists on short shifts giving up on the dream of owning a business, of Guild executive director David Quilty explaining complex location rules to a "bemused" Health Minister and chuckling at his confusion, of a powerful lobbying force bent

Opioids hurt kids

MOST commonly implicated among prescription medicines in terms of injury to children through unsupervised ingestion are opioids (17.6%) and benzodiazepines (10.1%), according to a surveillance study published in *Paediatrics*.

Drawing on adverse drug event data from the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System—Cooperative Adverse Drug Event Surveillance project and national retail pharmacy prescription data from IMS Health, the US research examined 1,513 surveillance cases and 9,490 estimated emergency hospitalisations for the period 2007-2011.

The most commonly implicated active ingredients were buprenorphine (7.7%) and clonidine (7.4%).

The authors encouraged increased focus on child-resistant packaging and caregiver education.

CLICK HERE to read the paper.

MUSCULAR ACHES, PAINS, CRAMPS AND SPASMS?

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on reaping billions from the community pharmacy negotiations, and of a Health Minister determined to "get the deal done" before the Competition review.

"A granny hobbles to the nearest chemist, then smiles at the owner in the white coat.

"The owner smiles back, thinking of the margin provided by the taxpayer – up to \$148 – for each prescription filled."

Quilty fired back with his own satirical letter to the editor, saying the article was a "fairytale".

He said a significant portion of the \$15b for the current Agreement went to wholesalers, accredited pharmacists and other programs, not just pharmacists, and the funding for pharmacies paid privately capitalised pharmacies to dispense PBS medicines on behalf of the Commonwealth.

"Far from being overpaid, pharmacies are currently funding the single biggest saving across the entire Federal Budget, with PBS reforms reducing their dispensing remuneration in real terms every year since 2010.

"The Senator's fictitious granny who hobbles to her nearest chemist may well smile at the pharmacist in the white coat.

"She does so because she knows they can be relied upon to do whatever is required to meet her medicine and wider health needs, often with little or no payment."

To read Leyonhjelm's piece, **CLICK HERE** and to read Quilty's, **CLICK HERE**.

Soliris stale mate

ALEXION has said it will provide Soliris immediately to patients with atypical haemolytic uraemic syndrome (aHUS) if the government agrees to allow physicians to determine patients' medical needs.

The Government has said it agrees with the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) recommendations that the appropriate duration for initial, continuous eculizumab was 12 months (**PD** 19 Sep).

Alexion said all patients having to discontinue use of Soliris after 12 months would put lives at risk by forcing patients to wait for an "overt and severe threat to their lives", risking organ damage.

However PBAC chair Professor Suzanne Hill said it had not recommended all patients must stop receiving treatment after 12 months.

Hill said the PBAC had recommended at 12 months, patients be assessed for a second time and, if they did not have the disease fully under control, would continue to receive subsidised treatment as long as it was needed to maintain their health.

Treatment should stop if tests showed remission had been achieved, and should be restarted if the patient showed any sign of relapse, Hill said.

The aHUS Patient Support Group Australia said it "warmly but cautiously" welcomed the decision to fund Soliris on the PBS and implored the Health Minister and manufacturer to reach a final agreement to avoid further deaths.

To read more, **CLICK HERE**.



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Weekly Comment

Welcome to **PD's** weekly comment feature.

This week's contributor is

Paul Rowe,
Managing
Director - The
Business Squad



Tips to Beat PBS Reform

WITH the next PBS price changes coming in October, what can your pharmacy do to combat the reduction in profit?

Here are 5 tips that will help:

- Management Information

To understand how you are doing and what needs to be fixed, you first need to have information on the performance of your pharmacy. You cannot afford to run blind.

- Lease Negotiation

Landlords have started to get the message that Pharmacy is undergoing fundamental change that is impacting on profitability. Now is a good time to approach your landlord and discuss options to reduce rental costs.

- Interest Rates and Fees

After stock and staff, your next big cost is often bank debt. Review your funding needs and assess if they are adequate and priced for the current market.

- Trading terms

You may feel that there is little difference between wholesalers and other suppliers but you would be surprised what is available in the current market. But you need to ask or get someone that understands what is on offer to ask.

- Pricing Policy

Understand what you are or want to be, check your pricing and understand the difference between mark-up and gross profit.

Next week we will discuss another five tips that will help your pharmacy survive PBS reform.

Abbott: TGA "thicket of complexity"

PRIME Minister Tony Abbott wrote in a 23 Aug letter to 2GB radio host Alan Jones that the regulation of medicines was a "thicket of complexity, bureaucracy and corporate and institutional self-interest."

As first reported in *Sydney Morning Herald*, Abbott was responding to the discussion about medical cannabis, which several states, including NSW, NT and Vic, have agreed to trial or investigate trialing.

Jones read out the letter last week, with Abbott saying if a drug was needed for a valid medicinal purpose and was being administered safely, there should be no question of its legality.

"And if a drug that's proven to be safe abroad is needed here, it should be available.

"I agree that the regulation of medicines is a thicket of complexity, bureaucracy, and corporate and institutional self interest.

"My basic contention is, that something that's been found to be safe in a reliable jurisdiction shouldn't need to be tested again here."

To listen to the full show, **CLICK HERE**.

Reducing red tape

MANUFACTURING business network META has launched the META Deregulation Hub, an information resource, to reduce regulatory burden in Australia and increase export opportunities.

In partnership with the Export Council of Australia (ECA), the Hub would provide industry feedback to assist the government in its de-regulation agenda, ECA chief operating officer Lisa McAuley said.

A TGA spokesperson said it was not involved in the Hub, but was committed to ensuring the delivery of appropriate and effective regulation which maintained health outcomes and upheld public health and safety protections.

Within this context, it was participating in the government's deregulation agenda and exploring regulatory reform initiatives, the spokesperson said.

Nalmafene S4 01 Oct

A NEW study published in *BMJ Open* found that nalmafene could be seen as a cost-effective treatment for alcohol dependence, with substantial public health benefits.

It is planned for TGA Schedule 4 listing on 01 Oct.

CLICK HERE to access the paper.

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DISPENSARY CORNER

FIGHTING cancer with sleep.

A researcher at the Washington State University College of Pharmacy is looking into sleep's effect on skin cancer.

Assistant Professor Shobhan Gaddameedhi was looking into whether having a healthy sleep schedule increased genomic stability, and so, decreased ultraviolet radiation mutations, *Health Canal* reported.

Department chair K. Michael Gibson said it had been shown that administering drugs during certain circadian rhythms led to improved efficacy, the publication reported.

BUDGET holdup.

There is nothing new about store holdups as many pharmacists can attest, but some robbers must have tight budgets.

A Philadelphia robber managed the exercise without either a getaway vehicle or a weapon.

Waiting in line for his turn at the counter, this fearless fiend picked up a banana from a display and upon reaching the counter, placed it in his pocket and masqueraded it as a gun, *Yahoo! News* reported.

He escaped with cash and cigarettes on his, wait for it, bicycle, the publication reported.

ARE your escalator handrails clean?

Quick, get this subway some hand sanitiser!

The hand rail of an escalator in a Los Angeles subway last week became a treadmill for a wild rat who seemed unable to escape the situation, reported the *UK Telegraph*.

Trapped in an eternal run as if the handrail were a treadmill, the rat was finally relieved of its predicament by a sympathetic onlooker who flicked it off, allowing it to escape.

Just watching it makes you want to clean your hands but the video is, of course, proving popular on YouTube.

CLICK HERE to watch.

WIN A HYDRALYTE PACK

This week **Pharmacy Daily** is giving five readers the chance to win a **Hydralyte** pack.

Did you know? Dehydration is the biggest health risk associated with vomiting and diarrhoea - you can lose up to 3L of fluid.*

Hydralyte's scientific formulation contains the correct balance of fluid, glucose and electrolytes for rapid and effective hydration. When sickness strikes, offer fluid replacement (Hydralyte) immediately.

*Mild Hydration, 4% fluid deficit, in an 80kg adult.

See **HERE** for more details.

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

What is the biggest health risk associated with vomiting and diarrhoea?

