



CPD on OC pill choice

RECOMMENDING the lowest effective dose of oestrogen and progestogen is a key element in the choice of combination oral contraceptive (OC) pills, an article published in *Australian Prescriber* and accredited for CPD points has said.

Pills containing levonorgestrel or norethisterone in combination with ethinylloestradiol 35µg or less were considered first-line, had a relatively low risk of venous thromboembolism and were listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, the authors said.

The article summarises safety and tolerability, risk concerns, and affordability across options.

CLICK HERE to access the article.

Xolair TGA approvals

NOVARTIS Pharmaceuticals Australia has announced that Xolair (omalizumab) has now been approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) for the treatment of chronic idiopathic urticaria (CIU) in adult and adolescent patients (12 years and above) who remain symptomatic despite H1-antihistamine treatment.

CLICK HERE for omalizumab PI.

NSW govt commits to vax

THE NSW Minister for Health Jillian Skinner has confirmed if re-elected, the government will allow pharmacist influenza vaccination.

Calling Labor's commitment (**PD** 02 Feb) "catch up politics", Skinner said the move was Coalition policy which she spoke about at a meeting with pharmacists at Parliament House last year.

At the time, **PD** asked the Minister's spokespeople whether Skinner had pledged to a change in regulation or to implementing a pilot program in NSW, and was told Skinner was supportive of community pharmacies providing flu vaccines (**PD** 03 Dec 14).

The Minister said the final Queensland Immunisation Pilot Program report would be reviewed for evidence that adverse events could be safely managed, with a spokesperson saying the Department would wait on this review to ensure a safe and

effective roll out.

Skinner said the Department had been working with the Pharmacy Board of Australia and pharmacy organisations, with competency standards and accredited training courses now developed.

NSW Opposition Leader Luke Foley said the party would consider extending vaccinations to adult measles and whooping cough (**PD** 02 Feb), however Skinner said discussions had been limited to influenza vaccination.

"NSW believes allowing pharmacies to offer a vaccination service may improve access to influenza vaccination for those not eligible for the nationally-funded vaccine program."

Improving access should reduce the burden on hospitals during peak winter periods, she said.

PI updates for COCs and metoclopramide

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) is working with sponsors to ensure the product information (PI) of combined oral contraceptives (COCs) and hormone replacement therapy (HRT) includes information about inflammatory bowel disease.

The TGA said this came after evaluating recent research suggesting a link between COCs use and an increased risk of developing inflammatory bowel disease, and HRT being a potential risk factor.

The TGA said the PI for metoclopramide had been updated to include information about the risk of neurological adverse events, including a new contraindication and changes to dosing and duration of use.

CLICK HERE to access the Medicines Safety Update.

Post-grad GMP course

THE University of Technology Sydney (UTS) with SeerPharma has launched Australia's only postgraduate degrees in Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP), flagged by UTS Graduate School of Health head Professor Charlie Benrimoj last year (**PD** 22 Oct 14).

SeerPharma managing partner Brad Roberts said that GMP was becoming increasingly important for the pharmaceutical, food and medical devices industries, which needed expert knowledge to meet Australian and international requirements.

Masters, Graduate Diploma and Graduate Certificate courses will be offered from this year, with applications open now.

CLICK HERE for more.

CMA: economic contributions of CM

COMPLEMENTARY Medicines Australia (CMA) has said the Federal government should reflect on the economic and population health contributions made by the complementary medicines industry in its upcoming Budget.

Its pre-Budget submission calls for "light touch right touch" regulation, a focus on preventative health and encouragement of innovation in research - **CLICK HERE** to read.

Pharmacy Award review conference

A CONFERENCE for the four yearly review of the Pharmacy Industry Award 2010 has been set for 10 Feb in Melbourne.

The Guild has previously said it was hopeful a conference prior to any hearing would help it and union parties reach an agreement on variations sought (**PD** 30 Jan).

CLICK HERE for details.



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Pharmacist training in MNCH by FIP

MATERNAL, newborn and child health (MNCH) is the subject of a new series of four free webinars presented by the International Pharmaceutical Federation's (FIP) Community Pharmacy Section. The webinars start on 18 Feb at 11am CET (1.00 am EST Australia). **CLICK HERE** for details.

Guild Update

Pharmacies called on to host 'Close the Gap Day' events

THE Pharmacy Guild is encouraging community pharmacies to register for National Close the Gap Day. More than 200,000 Australians are expected to show their support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health equality by taking part in National Close the Gap Day.

On Thursday 19 March 2015, pharmacies can help raise awareness in support of health equality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders by 2030 by hosting an event.

Events can range from workplace morning teas, sports days, school events and public events in hospitals, offices and community pharmacies around the country.

Visit the Oxfam Australia website to register your business to host an event. Oxfam will send your pharmacy resources and information.

If you would like some ideas on how your pharmacy can get involved in National Close the Gap Day 2015 please contact Helen Bowden at the Pharmacy Guild: helen.bowden@guild.org.au.

USA e-cigarette warning

CALIFORNIA'S State Health Department has issued a public health advisory warning people off e-cigarettes due to health risks associated with the products.

The advisory said the devices emitted not just harmless water vapor, but an aerosol that contained at least 10 chemicals known to cause cancer, birth defects or other reproductive harm.

Queensland chief health officer Dr Jeannette Young said that as the first state to subject e-cigarettes to the same laws as regular cigarettes, it was encouraging to see jurisdictions around the world limiting their use.

"The research also found the nicotine in them is as addictive as the nicotine in traditional cigarettes."

In December last year, the Federal Department of Health called for tenders for the preparation of a discussion paper on options to minimise the risks associated with marketing of electronic nicotine delivery systems, or e-cigarettes (**PD** 08 Dec 14), as no assessment had been undertaken by the TGA.

To read the Californian advisory and report, **CLICK HERE**.

MA: members could rethink authorisation

MEDICINES Australia (MA) has said if the suggested hospitality condition is imposed by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC), its members were likely to reconsider seeking authorisation for the eighteenth edition.

A letter from MA's lawyers said the organisation felt it was inappropriate to impose the condition of ongoing hospitality reporting, which would "significantly increase the burden on its member companies (to no discernible benefit) while the regulation of its competitors is decreasing".

Edition 18 of the Code imposes a hospitality cap of \$120 per meal.

Imposing the hospitality reporting condition would exacerbate the inequity between MA members and competitors, with other industry bodies not having implemented authorisation for a code of conduct as detailed as MA's, it said.

It was "more than likely" members would reconsider seeking authorisation for the Code and withdraw the application if the condition were imposed, it said.

CLICK HERE to read more.

WIN WITH PROPAIRA SPF 50+



This week **Pharmacy Daily** and **Propaira** are giving readers the chance to win two lots of Propaira SPF 50+ sunscreen 80mL.

Propaira SPF50+ Sunscreen is designed to protect cancer prone skin from harmful UVB and UVA. The term "SPF (Sun Protection Factor) UVA/UVB Broad Spectrum" used on sunscreen labels represents UVB protection but has less emphasis on UVA protection, the company says.

Propaira SPF50+ Sunscreen has very high UVB protection as well as very high UVA protection to further prevent the development of skin cancers, Propaira says.

To win, be the first person from **QLD** to send the correct answer to the following question to: comp@pharmacydaily.com.au

What is the percentage of UVA rays in the terrestrial UV rays?

Need a hint? [Click here.](#)

Congratulations to yesterday's winner, Justine Bassell from the Australian College of Pharmacy!

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DISPENSARY CORNER

ONLY in NZ.

If you see a moving Starbucks or Slushie cup outside your pharmacy, take action and rescue the hedgehog that's likely inside.

We say 'likely' because a spate of hedgehogs-stuck-in-cups has apparently hit New Zealand and the phenomenon might have migrated.

Hawera police sergeant Andrew Russ found a hedgehog "staggering" along a road at 4am with a plastic cup stuck on its head.

Whether it's the Hawera police force, we're not sure, but *stuff.co.nz* reported another officer found a hedgehog stuck in the same type of cup in April 2013.

Apparently, the creatures were patiently trying to hunt snails, bloated with milkshake spoils, at the bottom of the cups, the publication reported.

Perhaps one of the best parts of this story is the comments section, which included "Shot to NZers dropping their crap all over the streets", various 'spike' puns and the multiple hedgehog/cup rescue stories.

CLICK HERE to read more.

SCRIPT for Mr Big Grumpy Bum?

Ever referred to one of your patients as a 'big grumpy bum'?

This was the description used by Australian Marine Wildlife Research and Rescue Organisation president Aaraon Machado when talking about Jeremy, the young koala who was pictured lying face down with burned paws soaking in a medical solution after being caught in the Adelaide Hills bushfires, the *BBC* reported.

Jeremy has made a complete recovery and been released back into the wild, but not before initially copping an attitude which led to the memorable sobriquet.