

New PSA awards

SIX new awards have been announced from the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) and sponsor Aspen Pharmacare Australia, to reward practices that improve consumer health outcomes through S2 and S3 products as well as dispensary.

The recipients will receive \$2,000 toward attending the PSA15 Conference to present their innovation in a poster session.

For more information about the awards, [CLICK HERE](#)

Improve cancer med access

THE Cancer Drugs Alliance (CDA) has launched a white paper at Parliament House which lays out possible ways to improve Australians' access to cancer medications.

The CDA said it had worked throughout last year with cancer community stakeholders, and its solutions included the need for greater consumer engagement when it came to Therapeutic Goods Administration and Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) decision making, including the establishment of a consumer sub-committee to provide information and more frequent PBAC meetings to fast-track decisions.

Another recommendation of the white paper was the modernisation of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS), including by moving beyond assessments of cost effectiveness, having stakeholder engagement occur in advance of a first PBAC submission to identify issues with methodology and more.

While the PBS was being modernised, which could take a number of years, the establishment of an Interim Access Scheme to provide access to medicines waiting for PBAC approval was

recommended, the CDA said.

The paper also recommended the formation of a National Chemotherapy Register to provide information to improve the quality of treatment in the country, including benchmarking medication usage and outcomes, tracking safety and efficacy and ensuring equitable delivery.

CDA chair Professor John Zalberg said the approval time for medicines in Australia was slow, and "very little" was approved.

The white paper said according to 2013 analysis, the average time for TGA registration to PBS listing was almost 20 months for new listings.

Zalberg said the Senate inquiry into access to new and innovative cancer medicines (*PD 05 Dec 14*) had shown numerous examples of people unable to access medicines, and some attempting to raise funds through crowdfunding or selling their house.

The paper was a call to action to bring all stakeholders together, acknowledge there was a problem in accessing cancer medicines, and find a solution, he said.

The Department of Health has previously said the government approved more than \$250m to fund medicines on the PBS since it came into office in 2013, with about 100 cancer treating medicines available, costing nearly \$1.5b in 2013-14 (*PD 19 Jan*)

[CLICK HERE](#) to read more.

AusPAR additions

AUSTRALIAN Public Assessment Reports (AusPARs) have been added for Influenza Virus Haemagglutinin H1N1, H3N2, B Victoria lineage, B Yamagata lineage and Peginterferon beta 1a (rch).

[CLICK HERE](#) for details of the AusPARs.

2 in 3 have diabetes, CVD, CKD risk factors

TWO in three Australian adults have at least three or more risk factors for cardiovascular disease (CVD), diabetes or chronic kidney disease (CKD), a new report from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) has said.

Ninety four per cent of those with diabetes had three or more risk factors, while 84% of those with CVD and 77% of those with CKD had three or more factors, spokesperson Sushma Mathur said.

Sixty three per cent of adults were overweight or obese, according to the report, while 32% had high blood pressure, 33% high blood cholesterol and 16% smoked daily.

The report found in general, men, people in outer regional or remote areas and in low socioeconomic groups had higher rates of risk factors, the AIHW said.

Mathur said the good news was most of the risk factor were modifiable or could be controlled.

[CLICK HERE](#) to read the full AIHW report.

61% Australians want meds over Fund

SIXTY one per cent of people have said subsidising the cost of more medicines for people who need them should be prioritised over putting money into the Medical Research Future Fund.

A Newspoll survey, commissioned by the Cancer Drugs Alliance and conducted in December with 1,214 respondents found 97% believed medicines that treated Australians with curable cancers should be PBS listed, 95% believed that medicines to ease symptoms of terminal cancer should be listed and 76% that drugs that could extend the life of those with terminal cancer should be listed.



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Dementia Rx consult

THE University of Western Australia School of Medicine and Pharmacology is conducting a study to survey opinions and gain consensus on inappropriate medicine use for older people living with dementia.

The researchers are calling for people with experience in the field to contribute to create a consensus-based list of prescribing criteria for people living with dementia.

[CLICK HERE](#) for more information.

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Zyprexa information unchanged

FOLLOWING a US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) review of the deaths of two patients while being treated with Zyprexa Relprevv (olanzapine pamoate), the organisation has said prescribing information for the drug will not need to be altered.

The study results were inconclusive, the FDA said, and patients should not stop receiving treatment without first talking to their healthcare professional.

A TGA spokesperson said the current Australian product information contained a boxed warning and "significant" information relating to the potential for post-injection syndrome and overdose.

The TGA would review the FDA information to ascertain if action was required, they said.

[CLICK HERE](#) for more.

NSW \$100 co-pay to go

THE Baird government has made a pre-election commitment to remove public patient co-payments for Highly Specialised Drugs.

Those affected would include patients living with cancer, hepatitis, HIV and Alzheimer's Disease, with Premier Mike Baird saying the \$76m commitment would be implemented next term, if re-elected.

The policy would see all patients treated by public hospitals no longer needing to pay the \$37.70 per script for highly specialised drugs, or \$6.10 for concessional patients, whether prescriptions were filled prescriptions through hospital or community pharmacies.

The Ministry of Health would work through the administrative details of removing the co-payment "early in the next term" with stakeholders, the Premier's office

said.

Baird said tens of thousands of patients would benefit from the co-payment removal.

A spokesperson for the Minister for Health Jillian Skinner said the funding would come out of the health budget.

Stakeholders would include the Pharmacy Guild.

Shadow Minister for Health Walt Secord said this was a "catch up" policy, with Labor promising on 01 Mar to remove the co-payment for chemotherapy treatment.

Pharmaceutical Society of Australia NSW branch president Dr Stephen Carter said the organisation welcomed the proposal, as would NSW pharmacists.

Some consideration would need to be given to administrative procedures, he said.

Statins cut hosp costs

STATINS have been shown to reduce the rate of heart failure hospitalisation by more than 10%, in a new study out of Glasgow and published in the *European Heart Journal*.

Medline, EMBASE, and the Cochrane Central Register of Controlled Trials from 1994 to 2014 were mined for randomised controlled endpoint statin trials resulting in 17 studies with 132,538 participants.

[CLICK HERE](#) for the study.

97% online pharmacies 'dangerous'

THE US National Association of Boards of Pharmacy (NABP) has said that 97% of the more than 10,900 internet pharmacies are operating in conflict with pharmacy laws and practice standards, according to a report in *IPWatchdog*.

Personal and financial information had also been stolen, and incorrectly labelled poisonous products associated with many online sites, the report said.

The NABP has called for the development of a pharmacy Top Level Domain public health initiative to enable consumers to distinguish legitimate from rogue pharmacies selling online.

Medicare fix impact

FIXING the Medicare rebate until 2018 as is currently proposed by the Federal government could cost GPs \$384.22 per 100 consultations, according to a study published in the *MJA*.

Research by the University of Sydney Family Medicine Research Centre used Bettering the Evaluation and Care of Health (BEACH) data to make the calculation, additionally suggesting that bulk-billing GPs would need to charge a copayment of \$8.43 per non-concessional patient consultation to make up the difference.

[CLICK HERE](#) for the *MJA* abstract.

RGH E-Bulletin

THIS week's RGH Pharmacy E-Bulletin presents an overview of dose administration tools with reference to product stability outside of original packaging.

[CLICK HERE](#) to access.

Win with audiclean

This week *Pharmacy Daily* and *Audiclean* are giving readers the chance to win an Ear Cleansing Wash (RRP \$17.95), Ear Wax Remover (RRP \$10.95) and Ear Swimmer's Ear (RRP \$12.95).



Audiclean is a range of effective and easy to use ear care products meant to prevent and treat ear discomfort. Ear Cleansing Wash and Ear Wax Remover are 100% natural solutions to prevent and treat wax build-up. The Swimmer's ear formula dries excess water in the ear and inhibits bacteria growth.

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

Can Audiclean Ear Wax Remover only be used to treat wax build up?

Congratulations to yesterday's winner, Natasha Ruthenberg from Terry White Chemists Lakelands.

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DISPENSARY CORNER

KING of scents.

We're not sure if you'd want to stock this scent in your pharmacy, but for the Burger King lovers out there, the company is offering a Whopper-scented cologne for sale only in Japan, on 01 Apr, *Associated Press* reports.

And no, apparently it's not an April Fools' joke, although we have our doubts.

Reportedly, the scent will cost 5,000 yen or about A\$53, or, proponents could save themselves about \$48 and just buy a Whopper to carry around.

DID Australia kill the dinosaurs?

If you're a South Australian pharmacist working near Warburton Basin, prepare for an influx of visits from local scientists for sunscreen as they gear up to visit the site of the world's largest asteroid impact ever found.

A team of researchers from the Australian National University were drilling for a geothermal research project and tumbled on the impact zone, which is 400 km wide and buried in the earth's crust, *BBC News* reported.

Thought to have hit about 300m years ago, lead researcher Dr Andrew Glikson told the publication however that no extinction event has been linked to it, leading him to suspect the asteroid crashed earlier than this.

WALTER who?

Do you think Walter White would beat you in a 'best local pharmacist' vote?

Feel sorry for President Barack Obama then, who has been beaten out by TV presidents.

A *Reuters-Ipsos* poll found 54% held an unfavourable opinion of Obama, compared with just 11% for the president in 24, and 18% for Martin Sheen in the West Wing, *Reuters* reported.



Blackmores Bilberry Eyestrain Relief

Bilberry can help maintain rhodopsin stores which may be depleted during long periods of visual work, the company says. **Bilberry Eyestrain Relief** may also be protective against circulatory-related eye conditions, Blackmores says. The product presents as a purple and black speckled, lilac-coloured, small capsule-shaped tablet. Always read the label, use only as directed and if symptoms persist see your healthcare professional.

Stockist: 1800 803 760

RRP: \$20.99 for 30 tabs

Website: www.blackmores.com.au

Exfoliance Clarte Exfoliating Gelé - Normal/Combination Skin

Lancôme **Exfoliance Clarte Exfoliating Gelé** has been formulated with white wax micro-beads, which contain salicylic acid, to create a gentle and effective exfoliator, the company says.

Suitable for those with normal and combination skin, the exfoliator also contains pineapple and papaya to help exfoliate the skin.

Stockist: 1300 651 991

RRP: \$79 for 100 ml

Website: www.lancome.com.au



Blue Stratos Deodorising Talc

Blue Stratos Deodorising Talc is the finest cosmetic grade, French milled talcum powder, the company says. It is velvety smooth and contains unique ingredients for extra absorbency and protection against perspiration wetness. This iconic masculine brand in its distinctively rich blue livery suits the discerning male who wants to feel fresh all day.

Stockist: 1800 791 381

RRP: \$8.99

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Postal address: PO Box 1010, Epping, NSW 1710 Australia

Street address: 4/41 Rawson St, Epping NSW 2121 Australia

P: 1300 799 220 (+61 2 8007 6760) F: 1300 799 221 (+61 2 8007 6769)

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Publisher: Bruce Piper

Editor: Alex Walls info@pharmacydaily.com.au

Reporter: Mal Smith

Advertising and Marketing: Magda Herdzyk advertising@pharmacydaily.com.au

Business Manager: Jenny Piper accounts@pharmacydaily.com.au

