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EU approves Repatha

THE European Medicines Agency has recommended authorising Repatha (evolocumab) as a treatment to lower high levels of cholesterol - the first monoclonal antibody in this therapeutic area.

Repatha provides a new treatment option for patients who are unable to control their high cholesterol despite taking currently available therapies.

It works by blocking the PCSK9 protein which would otherwise lower the number of LDL receptors in the liver.

Strides re-enters market

BANGALORE-BASED Strides Arcolab is relaunching an operation in Australia, with the \$380 million purchase of part of the generic portfolio of Aspen Pharmacare Holdings (**PD** breaking news Fri).

Strides exited Australia some years ago with the sale of Ascent Pharmahealth to Watson Pharmaceuticals (**PD** 24 Jan 2012) which took on the Actavis name.

As well as the generics, Strides said it would also purchase some branded drugs and would operate

under the Arrow Pharmaceuticals brand, selling about 140 generics and an extensive range of non-prescription pharmacy products.

That will give it "one of the largest portfolios in the Australian market," the company said.

"The Australian generic pharmaceutical market has always been very successful for Strides," said the company's ceo Arun Kumar.

"Aspen's Australian generic pharmaceutical assets are a valuable and unique platform for Strides to rebuild its business in Australia," he said.

The acquired products had sales of \$120 million in the 2013-14 financial year, and the deal also includes access to Aspen's product pipeline, including some "major product launches in the next six months".

Dennis Bastas, founder & former ceo of Ascent Pharmahealth, will head up the new Arrow Pharmaceuticals business.

The deal also included the sale to Strides of a portfolio of six branded prescription drugs by Aspen's unit in Mauritius.

Aspen said the deals were in line with its strategy to "focus attention in areas where most value can be added".

British no-fault plan

THE UK government has proposed decriminalising dispensing mistakes made by pharmacists.

Currently under the UK Medicines Act pharmacists face criminal charges if they admit to an error, but under the proposed change there would be a new defence for pharmacy professionals if they make an inadvertent mistake.

A consultation on the changes is currently under way, with the aim of redressing imbalances between legislation and regulation and also bringing pharmacists and pharmacy technicians more in line with the handling of errors made by other healthcare professionals.

It's hoped that by removing the fear of prosecution pharmacists will be encouraged to report errors so regulators can learn from them and stop them recurring.

PSA-Aspen grants

THE Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) has advised that the PSA-Aspen Pharmacare Australia's Innovation Grants, recognising innovation in pharmacy, close in two weeks, 01 Jun.

National president of the PSA, Grant Kardachi, said the awards sought examples of innovation in increasing consumer health outcomes and pharmacy business through the use of S2 and S3 products, and in growing the dispensary through innovative and sustainable business practices.

"Aspen Pharmacare Australia and PSA share a common belief that the landscape of Australian retail pharmacy is continuing to change and in the highly competitive retail pharmacy market businesses can no longer run as they did in the past, relying on dispensing alone," Kardachi said.

Nominations can be lodged at psa.org.au/awards/innovation.

Friday's comp winner

FRIDAY'S competition winner was Amanda Jansen from QVIC and Direct Chemist Outlet, who won a Braun Touchless + Forehead thermometer courtesy of FGB.

Pharmacy Daily and Innoxia are this week offering a product pack featuring the new Innoxia Organic skincare range - see the competition box for details.

Pharmacists most supportive of EMM

A SURVEY involving staff from 13 public hospitals, five private hospitals and two government healthcare organisations deploying or planning to deploy an electronic medications management (EMM) system, showed that pharmacists were least resistant to implementation, reports *Pulse+IT*.

Doctors were most resistant at 80% of respondents, nurses came in at 45% and pharmacists at 20%, while some hospital executives were also resisting the change.

The main challenge of introducing such a system is its ability to integrate with other systems within the hospital setting, the report said.

'Say Yes to the best PBS': MA

MEDICINES Australia (MA) is stepping up its opposition to proposed changes to the PBS, slamming "unelected Canberra bureaucrats" who it says have chosen to reduce funding in a way that will hurt patients.

A major consumer-focused campaign is calling for changes that will lead to "the best PBS", in response to the Federal Budget announced earlier this month.

Without being specific, the budget flagged cuts to the PBS including a measure called the PBS Access and Sustainability Packages.

MA told stakeholders it had been "very disappointed at how the bureaucracy conducted the budget discussions," and the community

based "Say Yes to the Best PBS" campaign aims to engage the public so that cuts "do not undermine access to the newest and best medicines".

While committed to working constructively to reach the best outcome for patients and industry, MA is now urging consumers to "ask the Prime Minister and Health Minister to reach a fair agreement with the industry".

The campaign includes targeted communication through advertising and advocacy with stakeholders and political representatives.

There's also a special website at www.sayyestothebestpbs.com which allows the public to send a pro-PBS message to their local MP.

WIN A NEW PRODUCT PACK

This week **Pharmacy Daily** and **Innoxia** are giving away a new product pack including Organic Gentle Cleansing Gel (\$14.99 RRP), Organic Hydrating Daily Moisturiser (\$24.99 RRP) and Organic Brightening Eye Cream (\$19.99 RRP).

Introducing NEW Innoxia Organic skincare. This brand new skincare range enriches your skin naturally. The certified organic aloe vera based formulations combine with organic nourishing oils, vitamins and botanicals to deliver healthier, firmer, smoother and more hydrated skin. The organic care regime to beautiful skin includes products to cleanse, enrich, protect, nourish and treat, all affordable at under \$25rrp!

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

Is the Innoxia Organic range certified?

Need a hint? [CLICK HERE](#).

Check here tomorrow for today's winner.



Weekly Comment

Welcome to **PD's** weekly comment feature. This week's contributor is **Nivi Kent, Locum Recruitment Consultant at Raven's Recruitment.**



Locum Pharmacist etiquette

OFTEN pharmacists ask us what feedback we have received about them from the store after having completed their locum booking. Workplaces can vary; therefore keep in mind some basic common etiquette.

These tips may help you stand out from the rest:

- No matter what mood you are in, always be respectful and courteous of your fellow employees and customers at the pharmacy;
- Never discuss a customer's conditions or medications with others, be trustworthy;
- Be proactive in assisting your fellow employees to make their job easier;
- Keep chit-chat to a minimum and don't distract others;
- Avoid answering your mobile phone whilst working. If the call is important then excuse yourself from the dispensary where possible or return the call on your break;
- Dress appropriately, as usually a standard white shirt with black/navy blue trousers or skirt is acceptable. Make sure to find out whether you need to supply your own pharmacist coat as the store may not have extras; and
- Lastly, be cheerful, upbeat and smile!

Remember, the pharmacy world is small and word travels fast. If you have made a good impression, then their friends and colleagues will be sure to hear about you and demand for your services at all levels will increase.

New PBAC Chair named

PROFESSOR Andrew Wilson has been appointed as the new Chair of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC).

Wilson's new role was announced by health minister Sussan Ley on Fri, who said he was a "highly respected medical specialist in the area of cardiovascular disease".

Wilson will take up his position as Chair of the PBAC at the Jul 2015 meeting, and in the meantime will continue to lead the current post-market review of the Life Saving Drugs Programme which is now close to completion.

He will also lead the recently announced review of the PBAC's

methodological guidelines for the preparation of applications to incorporate international best practice, and remove any unnecessary regulatory burden on the pharmaceutical industry, while safeguarding the efficiency and effectiveness of the PBS.

"I look forward to Professor Wilson's work to provide Government with high quality advice on the comparative effectiveness and cost of medicines subsidised on the PBS," Ley said.

Wilson holds senior academic positions with the Menzies Institute at Sydney University, and has also served in a number of senior positions in the NSW and Qld health departments.

He is familiar with the workings of the PBAC, having been on the committee some years ago.

Ley also announced further additions to the PBAC, both nominated by the Royal Australasian College of Physicians.

Dr Peter Grimison is a medical oncologist at the Chris O'Brien Lifehouse in Sydney, while Professor Jonathan Craig is a senior staff specialist at the Children's Hospital at Westmead.

All of the appointments are for a four year period.

Leukaemia Rx tick

IMBRUVICA (ibrutinib) by Janssen, the new oral once-daily anti-cancer therapy that has been shown to help improve survival in the most common form of leukaemia, has received regulatory approval in Australia.

The Therapeutic Goods Administration has approved the product for Australians with chronic lymphocytic leukaemia (CLL) who have received at least one prior therapy or who have a chromosome anomaly known as 17p deletion.

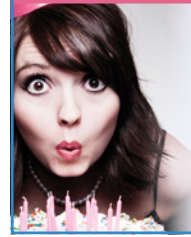
ADRS update

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration has changed the security requirements for logins to its Adverse Drug Reporting System.

Previously users could create their own login details, but under the new system a unique login ID is based on a numeric code, to assist in protecting the information provided to the TGA.

Registered users will have recently received correspondence containing the unique ID and outlining new 'password reset' requirements - more information via ebs@tga.gov.au.

Another year older.



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Diabetes deadline

THE consultation period for the National Diabetes Strategy has been extended to 31 May, to allow for more input from the public and give more time to review new reports including the evaluation of the Diabetes Care Project and a recent AIHW report.



DISPENSARY CORNER

POLICE in London have issued a formal warning about counterfeit cosmetics, after some seized items were found to contain rat droppings and arsenic.

The City of London Police, which has launched a blitz on fake luxury goods, highlighting fake perfume, eyeliner, mascara, lip gloss and foundation, all of which had toxic levels of heavy metals.

The Police Intellectual Property Crime Unit has suspended more than 5,000 websites selling fake luxury branded goods, and seized more than £3.5m worth of phony products.

"Beauty products are meant to enhance your features...however the fakes can in fact do quite the opposite," said Detective Superintendent Maria Woodall who oversees the unit.

No natalizumab melanoma link

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has issued a final update on a postulated link between natalizumab (Tysabri) and melanoma, advising that no definite link has been established.

The TGA has been monitoring reports of melanoma in patients being treated with the drug (**PD** 19 Mar 14), with an analysis of reported cases and a review of Australian and international data has found insufficient evidence.

Based on the finding, the TGA is closing this issue in its Early Warning System.

EXERCISE really does make a difference, with a new study from Norway finding that working out in old age can have the same effect on life expectancy as giving up smoking.

The report in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine* analysed 5,700 elderly men and found that those who did three hours of exercise a week lived around five years longer than the less active.

The study was conducted by Oslo University Hospital, and found life expectancy in the 68-77 year old sample group was extended by both light and vigorous exercise.

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