

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today has two pages of news, plus a full page from *Instigo*.

Guild on biosimilars

SUBSTITUTION of biosimilar medicines by community pharmacists has been recognised by the Pharmacy Guild in a new policy position statement.

Acknowledging that use of biosimilars is a "safe and effective cost saving measure for government and patients," the Guild policy notes that the TGA follows a rigorous and detailed assessment process for all registered medicines.

"Where the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee has 'a' flagged a PBS item it is recognised that the sponsors have submitted evidence it is therapeutically equivalent and may be used without differences in clinical effect," the paper states.

Patients should be informed at the pharmacy of the availability of an alternative in these cases, with the approach consistent with the Guild's PBS Brand Premium policy for generic medicines which has been in place for many years.

The new Guild biosimilars policy highlights the importance of continuing education for all healthcare professionals, and also says that to avoid patient confusion, the name of the active ingredient should be reinforced when prescribing, labelling, dispensing and administering medicines to patients.

New Closing the Gap pact

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia and the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) have co-signed a Joint Position Paper seeking to improve the Closing the Gap (CTG) PBS Co-payment measure.

Originally introduced in 2010, the measure reduces or removes the patient co-payment for PBS medicines for eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients living with, or at risk of, chronic disease.

In the position paper, the organisations call for a CTG-Medicare link to protect privacy and improve eligibility, an expansion of PBS listings to include more common medicines, inclusion of dosage administration aids and better communication for patients and health professionals around the CTG copayment.

NACCHO chair Matthew Cooke (pictured above right with Guild national president George Tambassis) said it was important that everything be done to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have access to appropriate medicines.

"Chronic diseases are one of the major reasons we still have a gap in life expectancy between Aboriginal and other Australians," Cooke said.

"Improved access to medicines is critically important if we are to see generational change in the health outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people."



Guild national president George Tambassis said it was pleasing that more than 258,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients were accessing the more affordable PBS medicines through the measure but more could be done to ensure greater uptake.

"A range of practical enhancements would assist those in remote areas to get better access to the medicines under the scheme and ensure they have access to it wherever they fill their prescriptions.

"We want this vital scheme to be sufficiently flexible to improve the health of people wherever they live and wherever they travel," he said.

The joint position paper is now online at www.guild.org.au.

Health record trial

HEALTH minister Sussan Ley yesterday announced an "opt out" e-Health trial, involving about one million people in far north Queensland and NSW's Blue Mountains region who will have new My Health Record accounts set up for them automatically.

ASMI urges evidence based policy reforms

AUSTRALIAN Self-Medication Industry ceo Dean Schoombie is calling on the government to "base policy decisions upon evidence," with the proposed real-time monitoring system for codeine-containing products able to provide "objective data" to guide reforms.

In an opinion piece about the codeine controversy, Schoombie has again called for a twelve month moratorium on the final decision to up-schedule codeine products (*PD* 02 Oct), saying this will provide time for the electronic recording system to be implemented and collect "current, objective data on which a final scheduling decision should be based".

The monitoring system developed by ASMI, the PSA, the Guild and consumer groups will provide pharmacists with support to help them decide whether or not to provide a consumer with the requested medicine.

"It would also provide a simple means of referral of patients to pain specialists if chronic use is identified," Schoombie said, noting that there is no corresponding system in place for monitoring prescription analgesics.

The system identifies who initiates the purchase, and the pharmacist will only supply the product if the consumer consents to recording of the purchase.

The consumer's purchase history will guide the pharmacist's decision with repeat purchasers able to be counselled on possible addiction risks and referred to a GP.



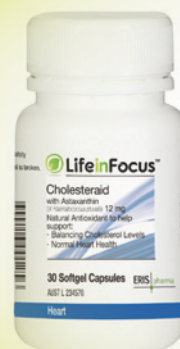
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References: 1. Ortiz R, Toblli JE, Romero JD et al. Efficacy and safety of oral iron(III) polymaltose complex versus ferrous sulphate in pregnant women with iron-deficiency anaemia: a multicentre, randomized, controlled study. *J Matern Fetal Neonatal Med* 2011;24:1-6. 2. Toblli JE, Brignoli R. Iron(III)-hydroxide polymaltose complex in iron deficiency anaemia / review and meta-analysis. *Arzneimittelforschung* 2007;57:431-438.

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Competency consultation

THE Pharmacy Practitioner Development Committee will shortly release a consultation paper on the review of the *National competency standards framework for pharmacists in Australia*.

Organisations which are part of the Pharmacy Practitioner Development Committee (PPDC) - the Guild, the Pharmacy Board of Australia, the PSA, PDL, SHPA, Professional Pharmacists Australia, AACP, the Australian Pharmacy Council, NAPSA and the Council of Pharmacy Schools - will be invited to comment on proposed amendments to the standards.

During a meeting earlier this month the PPDC consolidated several possible changes to the document, with the members to provide feedback over a six week

period as well as responding to several consultation questions.

PPDC chair Shane Jackson said at the completion of the consultation period all input will be collated and considered.

"A refined draft of the revised framework is anticipated to be released for consultation to the profession and other stakeholders, including consumers, in early 2016," Jackson said.

Pharmacy sentences

US pharmacist Kim Mulder, ceo of Kentwood Pharmacy Michigan, has been given a ten year prison sentence on charges to commit healthcare fraud, and ordered to pay almost US\$9m in restitution.

Mulder and his staff ran a scheme which restocked and resold drugs retrieved from nursing homes and adult foster care homes, defrauding health insurers of at least \$70m.

Drug Topics reports that other pharmacy workers were also sent to prison for their part in the scam, including the pharmacy floor manager, staff pharmacist, a drug packer, the distribution manager and the sales director.



DISPENSARY CORNER

CANADIAN pharmacist Andrew Strempler has certainly seen the highs and lows of the sector, after being released from prison earlier this week having completed about two and a half years behind bars.

41-year-old Strempler is described as an "internet pharmacy pioneer," being credited with launching the first online chemist when he sold a pack of Nicorette gum on eBay in 2001.

His business then went from strength to strength - much to the chagrin of US authorities who eventually convicted him of purchasing drugs from foreign countries in 2005 and 2006 without complying with regulatory safeguards, and selling them to US citizens via an internet, mail order and telephone order pharmacy.

His defence was that his business was growing fast and he made errors including not properly verifying the authenticity of some of his bulk medication purchases.

Prior to his conviction Strempler flaunted the massive wealth his enterprise had created, with the *Winnipeg Free Press* describing his "car park full of luxurious cars including a yellow Lamborghini, two Dodge Vipers, a Jaguar, a red-and-white Pontiac GTO and a Bentley previously owned by Jennifer Lopez".

He also apparently likes jewelry, with Liberace-like diamond rings and expensive watches.

Although Strempler spent part of his sentence in Georgia he was later transferred to serve out his term in a Canadian prison in Manitoba.

Under the terms of his supervised release he is required to remain in Canada and is not permitted to own or operate a business until 02 Jan 2016.

AusPAR additions

NEWEST products to be included in Australian Public Assessment Reports (AusPARs) are sevelamer carbonate (Renvela / Sevelamer Carbonate Winthrop/ Sevelamer Carbonate Sanofi from Sanofi) and carglumic acid (Carbaglu from Emerge) - [CLICK HERE](#) for details.

Win with Natura Siberica

This week Pharmacy Daily and Natura Siberica are giving readers the chance each day to win a Natura Siberica prize pack including Revitalising Bath Salts 600g, Nourishing Cream Soap 500mL and Lifting Hand Cream.

Natura Siberica is a new organic beauty range for hair, body and bath. Originating from the unspoilt continent of Siberia, this unique range is formulated from Wild Harvested herbs and flowers and exclusive natural and organic ingredients. Visit www.naturasiberica.net.au.

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Name three ingredients you will find in Natura Siberica products.

Congratulations to yesterday's winner, Jeanette Drury from Wizard Pharmaceutical Services.



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