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## Ski in Canyons

**ACCOMMODATION** at the Grand Summit Resort for the 2016 CPD Ski Conference in Canyons, Utah is in short supply, with prospective attendees urged to reserve space as soon as possible - more on 02 9233 6466 or [cpdconferencing.com.au](http://cpdconferencing.com.au).

## Most remedies 'placebo'

**MOST** of New Zealand's and, given the similarities, therefore Australia's pharmacy cold products rely heavily on the placebo effect, according to a study by clinical pharmacologist and Associate Professor Matthew Doogue, from the University of Otago in Christchurch.

The research, commissioned by the *Dominion Post*, examined ten of the most popular products sold in supermarkets and pharmacies

to find that only four of the ten, those containing paracetamol, decongestants and antihistamines, had significant therapeutic activity.

Those given the nod were Otrivin adult spray, Lemsip Max Good Night, Coldrex Cold and Flu Plus capsules, and the pharmacy-only Codral PE Day and Night tablets, the ingredients of which had been shown in clinical trials to improve symptoms as well as reduce pain and nasal congestion.

Doogue highlighted vitamin C and echinacea, neither of which "relieved cold symptoms when compared to a placebo".

Manufacturers of some of the products disputed the professor's claims by citing research, but Doogue said in his opinion the outcomes of the studies were "fairly weak" and did not provide a body of respected evidence.

## Resveratrol results

**RESVERATROL**, the product found in red grapes, raspberries, dark chocolate and red wine, has been found to slow the cognitive deterioration of Alzheimer's patients in a study of 119 people published in *Neurology* - [CLICK HERE](#).

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## VPA chair to resign

**MICHAEL** Scavone, the chair of the Victorian Pharmacy Authority, has confirmed he will not seek reappointment once his three year term concludes on 30 Sep.

According to a communiqué from the VPA issued yesterday, the Vic Minister for Health will announce the chair and new pharmacist member appointments next week.

## HIV targets achieved

**AUSTRALIA** is close to reaching global targets for the testing and treatment of HIV, but more needs to be done to identify and treat infections early, according to a Kirby Institute report released at the World STI and HIV Congress in Brisbane.

Over 25% of people diagnosed with HIV in Australia already had substantial damage to their immune system, indicating they probably had contracted their infection a number of years ago, the researchers said.

## Refugee phcy access

**A STUDY** published earlier this year in the *Journal of Primary Health* highlights the need for appropriate interpreting and translation services in Australian pharmacies to help refugees.

The authors, from the University of Queensland, James Cook University in Townsville and the University of Auckland, NZ, reviewed a range of studies to conclude that pharmacy staff need to demonstrate effective cross-cultural communication skills to support refugee access to medication and pharmacy services. See [www.publish.csiro.au](http://www.publish.csiro.au).

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## PHARMAC decisions

**NZ'S PHARMAC** has announced decisions to approve funding for Natural Health Laboratories' renal multivitamin (Clinicians Renal Vit) and Bausch & Lomb's preservative free prednisolone sodium phosphate 0.5% eye drops.

### Guild Update

## Pharmacy and the path to 'optimal care'

A recent report published in the Medical Journal of Australia confirms the potential for community pharmacies to make a significant contribution to reducing the cost of unnecessary hospitalisations.

The study by researchers at the University of SA and the BUPA Health Foundation shows that as many as one in four older hospital patients could have avoided admission had their medication and health risks been better managed.

The researchers concluded that a quarter of hospital admissions were preceded by 'sub-optimal care', with up to \$300 million being spent per year to treat elderly patients who were not on the correct drug regime.

This report builds on the strong evidence that adverse medicine events account for thousands of hospital admissions per year.

A relatively modest investment in the quality use of medicines would significantly reduce unnecessary hospital stays and premature aged care facility admissions.

A comprehensive community pharmacy program addressing prescribing, adherence and compliance issues would provide the full value of the community's investment in PBS medicines.

## US pharmacy blood tests

**AMERICA'S** National Community Pharmacists Association has announced a new nationwide collaboration with Ultra Lab Tests to offer community pharmacy patients direct access to lab tests and health screenings.

According to the NCPA, customers will be able to order "low-priced lab tests" without needing a referral from a doctor, with results then easily accessible via the internet.

Customers can review and track their test results for each biomarker from their personal and secured dashboard at their convenience.

"In many areas, community pharmacists are the only accessible health care provider and a resource

for vital patient-focused services such as medication management, education, immunisations and more," said NCPA ceo Douglas Hoey.

He said the new arrangement would allow community pharmacists to continue their commitment to driving better health outcomes for patients "by giving patients direct access to information about their own health at lower costs".

Hoey said the move would also help community pharmacies diversify their patient service offerings and business opportunities.

There are about 23,000 NCPA member independent community pharmacies across the US.

## PPIs low lupus risk

**PROTON** pump inhibitors (PPIs) are associated with very infrequent cases of subacute cutaneous lupus erythematosus (SCLE), a non-scarring dermatosis that can develop in sun-exposed areas according to the UK Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA).

Considering the extensive use of PPIs, very few cases of SCLE have been reported, MHRA said.

**CLICK HERE** for more.

## Quit-drug update

**THIS** week's RGH Pharmacy E-Bulletin gives an update on the use of varenicline and neuropsychiatric adverse effects (AEs), citing recent reviews which clarified that even patients with pre-existing psychiatric conditions, do not appear to be at increased risk of neuropsychiatric AEs when attempting smoking cessation aided by the use of varenicline.

**CLICK HERE** for the e-bulletin.

## Give your feet some love!

This week Pharmacy Daily and Plunketts are giving away a prize pack each day of NS-8 Heel Balm, NS-8 Foot & Leg Moisturiser and NS-8 Foot & Shoe Deodoriser.

Spring is here and it's time to make sure your feet are ready – soft, smooth and odour-free. NS-8 Natural Footcare formulations are based on carefully selected naturally active ingredients to deliver superior results. NS-8 Heel Balm is not greasy, so you don't need socks, and natural exfoliants gradually remove dry, thickened skin, so you don't need foot files. NS-8 Foot & Leg Moisturiser refreshes and moisturises hot, tired legs, softening and smoothing dry skin. NS-8 Foot & Shoe Deodoriser is a non-aerosol spray that kills odour causing bacteria on shoes and feet. Australian owned and made. Website: [www.NS8.com.au](http://www.NS8.com.au)

To win, be the first person from **QLD** to answer the following question and send it to [comp@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:comp@pharmacydaily.com.au)

**True or false: NS-8 Heel Balm means no socks and no foot files?**

*Congratulations to yesterday's winner, Erimle Adeleye from Cooma District Hospital.*



## DISPENSARY CORNER

### HEALTHY ageing?

An 84-year-old Russian film star has married a 24-year-old student, insisting the six decade age difference is irrelevant.

It's the fourth time around for Ivan Krasko, who performed in more than 100 Soviet-era TV shows and movies as well as enjoying a long theatrical career.

His new bride is Natalya Shevel, a student who met the actor five years ago and impressed him with her ability to write poetry.

Krasko said after the wedding "I feel like I am 23 years old," adding that "I should have enough strength for the seven years that I have promised her".

The movie star divorced his previous wife - who was only 47 years his junior - in 2011.

**HUMAN** beings are biologically wired to be lazy, according to a study recently published in the *Current Biology* journal.

Researchers from Canada's Simon Fraser University asked volunteers to wear restrictive leg braces which made walking at their usual pace more strenuous.

"Within minutes, each volunteer worked out how to modify their usual walking pattern to use the least energy," the *BBC* reported - confirming the common tendency to put as little effort as possible into common tasks.

The scientists said in some cases the energy savings were minuscule, saying the findings confirm that the subconscious nervous system continuously fine-tunes movements to minimise the effort used - and the effect is apparent even when exercising, when the brain is hard at work in the background making it as efficient as possible.

"This is bad news for those of us who eat too much," said lead researcher Dr Max Donelan.

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