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APP2016 wedding

IF YOU are attending the Australian Pharmacy Professional Conference and Trade Exhibition (APP2016) Viva Las Vegas Street Party on Sat 19 Mar, you may find yourself at a wedding ceremony.

Organisers of the event are spicing things up by seeing a pharmacy couple who wish to get hitched to take advantage of Australia's only Official Elvis Marriage Celebrant, Dean Vegas, who happens to be performing at the gala event.

More than 1500 guests are anticipated for the APP2016 Street Party, the biggest and best yet, say organisers.

Go to appconference.com.

Brain health statin

RESEARCHERS from the University of Cambridge believe common cancer drug Bexarotene may prevent the onset of Alzheimer's disease.

According to their findings published in *Science*, Bexarotene could be the first "neurostatin", a drug that works like a statin, but for the brain rather than the heart.

Their premise is that in order for the drug to be effective it would need to be given to people in their 30s to stop the dementia ever developing.

Tests showed the medication successfully delayed the onset of Alzheimers both in a test tube and in nematode worms.

The drug has been tested on Alzheimer's patients, and did not reverse the condition, but scientists now think that was because it was given too late to be effective.

Strong regulation in Aus

AUSTRALIAN medicines are highly regulated by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) making them the safest option for consumers to choose when seeking complementary medicines, says the Australian Self-Medication Industry (ASMI).

Director of regulatory and scientific affairs Steve Scarff said, "Australia's system of regulating complementary medicines is one of the most rigorous in the world."

"In Australia, there are strict controls over manufacturing standards for complementary medicines to assure the safety and quality of the medicines."

Scarff also pointed out that there are strict controls over the ingredients in complementary medicines and only those ingredients already approved by the TGA can be used.

"Labelling of complementary medicines is highly regulated to ensure labels contain the right

information to help consumers select and use these products appropriately.

"Complementary medicines, like all medicines, can only be legally supplied in Australia when the TGA's unique identifying number has been included on the label."

"This unique number is preceded by an AUST L or AUST R, depending on its regulatory classification."

Companies supplying products with a label number must hold evidence for the claims they make, which means the numbers act as a safeguard, Scarff clarified.

"Any adverse reaction should be immediately reported to a healthcare professional. The TGA has processes in place to analyse and respond to adverse event reports and ASMI strongly supports them," he added.

Cannabis - what next?

WITH the almost inevitable passing of amendments to the drugs act allowing the growing of cannabis for medicinal or scientific purposes, the question remains, what next, asks *The Conversation*.

Firstly, cannabis will need to be moved to Schedule 8 from its current S9 status.

Decisions and rulings will need to be made around storage, eg., whether only in hospitals or also in community pharmacy.

How patients will qualify for prescriptions will also need definition, as well as healthcare professional training and forms of administration, said the article.

EMA SGLT2 caution

THE European Medicines Agency's (EMA's) Pharmacovigilance Risk Assessment Committee (PRAC) has reviewed diabetes drugs SGLT2 inhibitors and warned healthcare professionals to exercise caution in patients with risk factors, to minimise the risk of diabetic ketoacidosis.

The three SGLT2 inhibitors authorised in the EU are canagliflozin, dapagliflozin and empagliflozin.

CLICK HERE for details.

Asia-Pac Scholarship

APPLICATIONS close this Fri 19 Feb for the 'quality use of medicines' (QUM) scholarship which allows a health academic, health worker or policy maker from the Asia-Pacific region to travel to Australia to attend the National Medicines Symposium (NMS) 2016 in Canberra in May.

The Asia-Pacific scholarship provides flights, accommodation and registration to someone with an interest in QUM or rational drug use, who will also be invited to present their work at the symposium.

The theme for NMS 2016 is 'Making wise decisions about medicines, tests and technologies: co-designing policy, practice and priorities' and will look at current and future challenges affecting the medicines, tests and broader health sector.

The sub themes for the conference are: 'foundations for success', 'sustainable systems', and 'in practice', the organisers said.

For more information **CLICK HERE**.

GSK fined £38m

GLAXOSMITHKLINE, (GSK) the UK's biggest drug maker, has been fined more than £37.6m by the Competition and Markets Authority for arranging deals between 2001 and 2004 to reduce competition from generic drug manufacturers with its antidepressant paroxetine, according to a report in the *BMJ*.

GSK's branded version of paroxetine, Seroxat, was one of GSK's best selling drugs, with sales exceeding £90m.



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Guild Update

National Family Drug Support Day

Despite being crucial to the success of any treatment for drug abuse, family members often encounter stigma and discrimination as a result of problematic drug abuse in the family.

Family Drug Support (FDS) have organised the inaugural National Family Drug Support Day on 24 February 2016, with events held around the country to highlight the need for families of drug users to not only be recognised and heard but to be supported and encouraged to speak about their concerns and needs.

Tony Trimmingham, FDS founder and CEO, believes families are a critical element of any proper response to addressing harmful drug use and getting assistance to them has a crucial bearing on the success of any treatment for a family member with drug use problems.

The objectives of National Family Drug Support Day are to reduce the stigma and discrimination family members often encounter as a result of problematic drug use in the family; and to raise the importance of families in drug policy discussions.

If you'd like to support National Family Drug Support Day in your pharmacy, resources are available for download from the Guild website, or you can find out more about providing direct support from the [FDS website](#).

Anti-meth plan concerns

SEVERAL US pharmacy chains fear proposed legal changes in Indiana to stop suspected meth makers from purchasing pseudoephedrine could put pharmacists in danger.

The proposed laws would leave it in the hands of pharmacists to demand a prescription from suspicious customers if they refuse versions of cold medicines that are tamper resistant or contain lower doses of pseudoephedrine.

A Senate proposal being put forward would require pharmacists to screen customers and allow them to deny supply outright.

Opponents of the bill argue such laws would place too much liability on pharmacists - despite giving the pharmacists immunity for their

decision.

Heather Willey, a lobbyist for CVS Pharmacy has told Associated Press of her concerns.

"We definitely don't want for our pharmacists to be in the position of law enforcement," she said.

Supporters, including some pharmacists, argue the bill won't change much as they already consult thoroughly with their customers.

Australia still uses Project STOP to monitor pseudoephedrine sales and restrict access.

Statin tendinopathy

CONTRARY to widespread popular belief in the medical community, statins are strongly associated with a reduction in the risk of tendinopathy, according to a new systematic study of evidence-based data.

Published in the *BMJ*, the study drew on data from Ovid MEDLINE, CINAHL Plus, PubMed and Embase.

Authors wrote, "All studies found no positive association between statin therapy and tendon rupture for the total study population."

[CLICK HERE](#) for the study.

EMA HCP resources

THE European Medicines Agency (EMA) has provided a range of training resources for HCPs.

They explain the inner workings of the EMA, the value of the centralised procedure, how patients are involved and principles of pharmacovigilance.

[CLICK HERE](#) to access.

Win with Mute

This week Pharmacy Daily and Mute are giving away everyday two Mute starter packs.

Mute is a patented respiratory technology designed to gently stent open your nasal airway during sleep to increase the volume of air travelling through the nose, making nasal breathing much easier which may alleviate the incidence and severity of snoring. Designed with the anatomy of the nose in mind, it sits comfortably in the nose and by gently dilating the airway, it may alleviate nasal congestion and obstruction, making it easier to breathe. Available in 3 sizes (small, medium and large) freely adjust the dilation system to personalise the fit to each nostril.

To win, be the first two from QLD to send the correct answer to the question to comp@pharmacydaily.com.au

What decibel level does Jenny Chapman (the UK's loudest snorer) reach?
Need a hint? [CLICK HERE](#)

Congratulations to yesterday's winners, Debhas Guha from Sanofi, and Michael O'Donnell.

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DISPENSARY CORNER

BAGEL (pictured below) is one cool cat: she looks as though she hasn't a care in the world, donned in sunglasses 24/7 as she cruises the streets.

She hides a secret behind those shades though. Bagel was born without eyelids and is unable to develop tears.

For this reason she must keep her glasses on to protect her eyes and requires eye drops several times a day.

The lovable feline now has quite a following online thanks to the super cute photos posted by her owner.



CUSTOMERS don't usually stroll into their local pharmacy with their face covered and wielding a gun, but that's what played out last week in Petersburg in the US.

When the masked man entered the pharmacy, employees called the police thinking they were being robbed.

Despite his strange attire authorities said he had no intentions of robbing the place.

It turns out the man was wearing a bandana over the lower half of his face "to shield a health concern".

He was also in possession of a weapon minus a proper permit.

He was charged with one felony count of wearing a mask and creating a public alarm as well as a misdemeanour for having a concealed weapon.

We wonder if he still managed to get his "health concern" sorted.