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J&J baby talc cancer

JOHNSON & Johnson has been made to pay US\$72 million in damages to the family of a woman who died from ovarian cancer, blaming her illness on her use of the company's iconic talcum powder based products.

Jacqueline Fox who died last year at 62 said she used the company's products for "feminine hygiene".

After her diagnosis she joined thousands of U.S women suing Johnson & Johnson for failure to warn about the dangers associated with talc, the mineral used in baby powder - her case heard in Missouri is the first of its kind to have damages awarded.

In an official statement Johnson & Johnson they sympathised with the plaintiff's family but "firmly believe the safety of cosmetic talc is supported by decades of scientific evidence".

PSA QUM awards

NOMINATIONS have opened for the 2016 Quality Use of Medicine in Pain Management Award which sees an Australian pharmacist awarded an educational grant for their dedication to the cause.

The initiative from the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) and Mundipharma is open for applications **HERE** until 27 May.

"We are looking forward to seeing another pharmacist who has helped patients better manage chronic pain through the quality use of medicines recognised through this award," Mundipharma's managing director Jane Orr said.

Cannabis passed in Senate

MEDICINAL cannabis can be legally grown in Australia following changes to the Narcotic Drugs Act passed in the Senate yesterday afternoon.

The changes will allow a national body to issue licences to medical marijuana growers as well as allowing the manufacture of medicinal cannabis products in Australia.

Recreational marijuana remains illegal on all fronts with criminal laws still in place, the Health Department said.

In an official statement from Health Minister Sussan Ley said it was "an historic day for Australia and the many advocates who have fought long and hard to challenge the stigma around medical cannabis products so genuine patients are no longer treated as criminals".

Ley described this legislation as "the missing piece in a patient's treatment journey" and stressed that the law will now enable seamless access to locally-produced cannabis products from farm to pharmacy.

"Under this scheme, a patient with a valid prescription can possess and use a medicinal cannabis product manufactured from cannabis plants legally cultivated in Australia".

Ley also announced that Department of Health together with the Therapeutic Goods Administration were "well-advanced" downgrading the drug to a lower level on the Poisons Schedule to a "controlled substance" class.

"This will in turn reduce any barriers to access, no matter what state a patient lives in," she said.

Mal Washer, chairman of AusCann, a prominent group that has been seeking rights to become a licensed medical cannabis grower in Australasia, told *SMH* the TGA still had to determine the types of medicinal cannabis that could legally be grown.

He indicated however, that the group may begin growing the product within a month from now.

He said the new medical cannabis products would be in high demand to help treat epilepsy as well as nausea following chemotherapy treatment.

AusCann Group Holdings Ltd is set to list on the ASX after a successful \$3m capital raising.

CM evidence call

AUSTRALIAN Self Medication Industry (ASMI) has called for scientists to build an increased scientific evidence base that identifies effective complementary medicines (CM) that have a positive impact from a broad economic perspective on Australia's budget.

In addition ASMI has summarised the drivers of growth in the global \$82b CM industry around the world and specifically in the Asia-Pacific region.

Ageing, fitness and self-care have emerged as key drivers of growth.

CLICK HERE for more details.

Phcy trial website

THE Department of Health has announced the establishment of a website defining the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme Access and Sustainability Package, as part of the Sixth Community Pharmacy Agreement (6CPA).

With \$1.26b allocated for community pharmacy programs over five years, the site clarifies the opportunities for pharmacy to provide services, especially for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and consumers in rural and remote areas.

CLICK HERE for more.

MPS-ZDispense linked

SOFTWARE company MPS and dispensing software group ZDispense have announced a new integration feature between QUANTUM™ and ZDispense.

This will enable MPS Pharmacies using ZDispense to automate 75% of the manual processes associated with script management and administration, the companies said.

Children activity call

THE Heart Foundation of Australia has called for children to be given at least 60 minutes per day of activity time, on the back of University of Cambridge research that has shown that especially in winter, they are not active enough.

Eight out of ten Australian children fail to meet this minimum guideline recommendation, said the Foundation.

DMARDS shake OA

OSTEOARTHRITIS as a disease may soon become a manageable or even reversible condition as a new range of disease modifying antirheumatic drugs (DMARDs) come to market from Merck Serono and TissueGene, according to research group Global Data.

TissueGene's Invossa and Merck Serono's sprifermin, which are expected to launch in the US in 2020 and 2021 respectively, have both shown evidence of slowing disease progression, said GlobalData analyst Lu Chen.

PBAC guidelines event

THE Department of Health Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme is hosting an event at Rydges Sydney Airport Hotel on the morning of 15 Mar, giving interested stakeholders the opportunity to understand the rationale for the proposed structural changes in the revised Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) Guidelines.

Described as a guidelines review, the occasion is a forum to which submissions can be lodged via the public consultation page for the draft revised PBAC Guidelines.

CLICK HERE for details.

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This offer is priced from \$2,525 per person, discount included, and is available for travel on 27 Apr departure.

Visit aatkings.com for details.

Blackmores revenue up 66%

LEADING natural health brand Blackmores has announced that its revenue for the half-year ended Dec 31 2015 is up 65.5% to \$341.4m, with group profit after tax up 159.5% to \$48.3m (from \$18.6m in H2 2014).

Blackmores Australia sales for the period were \$237.6m, up 73% compared to the prior corresponding period with EBIT of \$63.6m.

The Board has declared an interim dividend of 200 cents fully franked, representing an increase of 194% compared to the prior period.

The directors said that the strong results were due to continued sales growth across all segments, operational leverage and a focus on progressing the company's four strategic priorities: consumer centricity, Asia growth, product leadership and operational effectiveness.

The Australian business was bolstered by Chinese tourists and entrepreneurs, the company report said, as well as continued innovation and marketing activity.

The launch of a Superfood range, the opening of a flagship store, educational programs and digital

marketing comprised the mix.

The Chinese arm of the company is growing in importance to the bottom line with sales in total to Chinese consumers amounting to around 40% of Group revenues, said the report.

In Oct 2015, Blackmores announced an equal partnership with Bega Cheese Ltd (PD 30 Oct 15) to manufacture a range of nutritional foods.

Blackmores Institute has also grown in importance through the Asian region with the increased need for education of consumers and healthcare providers.

CLICK HERE for the full report.

Last NIC abstracts call

THE 15th National Immunisation Conference (NIC) has issued a reminder to pharmacists that this is its last call for abstracts for the event set for 07 to 09 Jun in Brisbane.

The Pharmacy Guild of Australia urges pharmacists that this is an opportunity to showcase the impact of pharmacist administered vaccinations in local communities.

CLICK HERE for details.

DISPENSARY CORNER



FOLLOWING yesterday's announced strike action by pharmacists in a national pharmacy chain, the Royal's staff are getting in on the act too.

Kensington Palace's wardens who look after exhibits, work in the ticket offices and show visitors around, claim they're also doing it tough with changes to their working hours seeing their annual wage cut by £3,000.

Their 'royal wage' mustn't have been too regal to begin with as they say this could potentially put their income below the minimum living wage.

C'mon Will and Kate, cut them some slack.

We're waiting for the tabloid images of them walking off the job, but a palace spokesperson is keeping it classy saying they're hoping to "reach a mutually satisfactory agreement".



A "BALLOONING" hedgehog (pictured above) has been put on a health kick because the poor spiny mammal is too fat to curl up into a ball.

Three times the size of a regular hedgehog, he became "dangerously obese" after being a little too well fed by an animal rescue worker.

If he was released into the wild he wouldn't be able to defend himself because of his size and inability to curl up.

He has been put on a strict diet and exercise plan in hopes of saving his life.

Goodluck & stay off the donuts!

Win with MILANI

This week *Pharmacy Daily* and Milani are giving away everyday a prize pack including Supreme Kohl Kajal Eyeliner, Eyeshadow Primer and Tastastic Face & Body Baked Bronzer.

Milani Cosmetics is a cruelty-free brand. They do not test products on animals, nor do they allow others to test on their behalf. The brand is certified by both PETA and The Leaping Bunny Program (CCIC) as cruelty-free. Milani also has a ton of Vegan options also. For more info visit www.milanicosmetics.com.au

To win, be the first from SA or NT to send the right answer to the following question to comp@pharmacydaily.com.au

What is currently listed in the Sale page of Milani Cosmetics Australia's website?

Congratulations to yesterday's winner, Thomas Petrucci from Friendlies Chemist Fremantle.

