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Kidney cancer meds

THE European Medicines Agency (EMA) has recommended granting marketing authorisations in the European Union (EU) for Cabometyx (cabozantinib) and Kispixy (lenvatinib) for the treatment of advanced renal cell carcinoma (kidney cancer).

Both new products are classified as tyrosine kinase inhibitors which block certain enzymes known as tyrosine kinases critical to the growth of cancer cells and found on the surface of the cells.

Common cold cure?

NOT quite, but what is understood is that Cardiff University and University of Helsinki researchers have been able to demonstrate the duration of common cold symptoms can be abbreviated from around seven days to four, using zinc acetate lozenges, in a study published online in the *British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology*.

Generally available in pharmacies, the dosage of zinc needs to be between 80mg and 92mg per day, said lead author Dr Harri Hemila from Helsinki who clarified that lozenges without citric acid should be used, citric acid preventing the absorption of zinc.

Given that in common colds, the virus often grows in the throat, lozenges may work better than swallowing pills, researchers said.

CLICK HERE to access the abstract.

Alcohol's 7 cancers

THERE is strong evidence that alcohol causes cancer at seven sites in the body and probably others, says Jennie Connor, researcher at the Department of Preventive and Social Medicine, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand.

"Current estimates suggest that alcohol-attributable cancers at these sites make up 5.8% of all cancer deaths world-wide," the author wrote in her conclusion.

The evidence thus far is conclusive for a causative relationship with cancer of the oropharynx, larynx, oesophagus, liver, colon, rectum and breast, the *Addiction* journal study said.

CLICK HERE for the article.

SHPA Summit goes tech

THE increasingly digitised healthcare system is the focus of the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) two day Future Summit, being held in Melbourne this week.

SHPA ceo Kristin Michaels said the future direction of the profession is toward more technological engagement as a critical issue.

"The third in a series of annual Future Summits today began consideration of critical issues that are important for the future of the profession," she said.

"Participation in the Future Summit is very competitive and brings together pharmacy's most important leaders and thought champions from around Australia.

"Participants are chosen via a rigorous selection process and they are working together to build robust foundations for future change," Michaels added.

The role of the hospital pharmacy workforce is evolving to accelerate with the introduction of electronic medication management systems and electronic medical records, she explained.

"New electronic systems could pave the way for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians to have more

time for bedside consultations, with other health professionals, and to ensure the best decisions are made about patient medication."

Additional training and other continuing professional support from the SHPA will include

provision of technological tools.

"One stream of Summit activity has been focused on the development of a

tool kit for writing business cases.

"It will be used by pharmacists to support creation of new pharmacy services by undertaking analysis and presenting well-structured business cases to support their proposals," Michaels said.

A well-considered, rigorous business case is essential to get appropriate funding in a competitive environment, she said.

"The Summit is also developing a mentoring program for pharmacists who are preparing for transition into more senior roles where they will require significant non-clinical skills...these skills could include leadership, management, communication, research and education," Michaels concluded.

Diazepam or diltiazem

PAXIL or Taxol, fomepizole or omeprazole, Foradil or Toradol are some of the similar-name dilemmas in the pharmacy environment.

Drug name errors can occur at any stage of the drug use process: prescribing or ordering, transcription, dispensing, administration or monitoring, according to a new study published in *BMJ Online*.

Authors examined at laboratory tests of memory and perception finding they can predict real-world error rates, prompting them to urge regulators and pharmaceutical companies to consider adopting these generally inexpensive but highly predictive tests to screen proposed drug names during the preapproval process to minimise harmful drug name confusion errors.

CLICK HERE to access the study.



WA vaccination plan

RENEWED focus on increasing childhood vaccination rates, easier access to immunisation and more support for vaccination providers are among the 10 priorities the WA Liberal National Government has announced for the state's future management of preventable diseases.

Health Minister John Day said the WA Immunisation Strategy 2016-2020 would target areas and groups of concern.

"Research shows each \$1 spent on routine childhood vaccinations saves the health system up to \$5 in direct medical costs, with another \$11 saved in indirect costs such as time off work and loss of productivity," Day said.

Accessibility, communication and education are key strategy features.

Visit www.health.wa.gov.au for the full strategy document.



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Acupuncture is 'pointless,' says FSM

ACUPUNCTURE has been studied for decades and the evidence that it can provide clinical benefits continues to be weak and inconsistent, according to Friends of Science in Medicine (FSM) in a new review of the data.

FSM has joined a chorus of disbelievers including the World Health Organisation (WHO), the US Center for Inquiry Office of Public Policy and the Cochrane Collaborative, all now saying there is no need for any more studies on the matter.

Studies that have been completed have demonstrated equivocal results no better than placebo or have been of poor design disallowing any conclusion, the FSM summary article said, adding: "there is no place for acupuncture in medicine."



Guild Update

Pharmacy Connect countdown

ONE of the highlights of the Pharmacy Connect conference at Darling Harbour Sydney from September 9 – 11 will be a Guild Member Only breakfast which will feature National president George Tambassis giving an update on the Sixth Agreement and the pharmacy landscape.

The Member Only Breakfast will also feature an update on Health Advice Plus, the Guild's professional services program comprising a cost-efficient, hands-on support package tailored to the unique needs of each individual pharmacy.

Pharmacy Connect offers a two day education program, trade exhibition, welcome reception and a Gala Dinner.

New home diabetes test

PHARMACIES in the ACT and NSW are now rolling out a new home testing service for diabetes, aiming to make it easier for people who are isolated, time poor or "just can't make it to the doctor today" to investigate their risk of the condition.

Dubbed *MyHealthTest*, the service is described as a new generation of blood testing, in which a sample is taken by the patient themselves using a pharmacy-purchased or home-mailed kit, which is then posted back to the laboratory.

Results are accessed online, with *MyHealthTest* general manager Nick Cerneaz saying "with so many people potentially suffering the risks of diabetes or pre-diabetes without knowing it, this service is

ideal for those who find it difficult to get to a doctor.

"Our service is improving access for millions of Australians to raise awareness of an important medical issue, and where we find anything of significance we recommend the result is shared and discussed with a medical practitioner," he said.

The service is planning to have national pharmacy distribution in the near future, and to also expand the range of tests on offer to cover thyroid, prostate cancer and cholesterol.

See www.myhealthtest.com.

US RUM initiative

AMERICAN pharmacy giant Walgreens has debuted "Safe Medication Disposal Kiosks" at almost 300 of its pharmacies across 21 states, in what's been described as the "first national effort of its kind by a retailer".

The move aims to help fight prescription drug abuse, with the kiosk providing a safe and convenient way to dispose of unwanted, unused or expired prescriptions, including controlled substances and OTC medications.

Why do you stay?

WHY do you remain in the role you are in at present, asks masters student and provisional organisational psychologist, Howard Ng, conducting research with Murdoch University on Australian pharmacists.

CLICK HERE to have your say and contribute to this research.

Win with Dreambaby®

This week *Pharmacy Daily* and Dreambaby® are giving away each day 2 packs of four Strollerbuddy Stroller Clips and a Stroller Hook.



Dreambaby® Strollerbuddy Stroller Clips, available in new season colours including, purple, pale blue, green, orange, grey and pink are fun, attractive and have so many functions to help you and your little one enjoy a day out and about! The

Dreambaby® Stroller Hooks (RRP\$8.95) are stylish and built to last, lightweight and versatile. The soft yet heavy-duty handle clips easily onto just about every stroller handle and won't slide around.

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

How would a Dreambaby® Stroller Hook assist on a trip to the shops?

Congratulations to yesterday's winner, Debbie Ma from Pharmsave Wiley Park.



Dispensary Corner

THERE'S a new food movement in Canada, with the opening of the country's first ever 'Poop Cafe Dessert Bar'.

The restroom-themed eatery in Toronto offers an "all-brown menu," modelled on a concept the owner Lien Nguyen first spotted on a visit to Taiwan.

"I'm trying to make poop cute... it's funny to put food and poop together," she insisted.

Although there's not a lot of colour variation, flavours are based on traditional Thai, Korean and Korean desserts such as patbingsoo (red beans with ice).

Diners will sit on fake toilets and eat their food out of cute little cisterns and urinals.



POKEMON Go, the smartphone phenomenon which appears to be taking over the world, apparently appeals to people of all ages.

A nursing home and rehabilitation centre in Florida, USA has introduced the game to elderly patients who are recovering from injuries, as a way of keeping them physically and mentally active.

The game uses 'augmented reality' to combine images of the user's surroundings with superimposed animated characters, who are hunted down and captured in real time.

Pokemon Go can involve plenty of exercise, with some objects such as special Pokemon eggs requiring physical activity such as a 5km walk to make them hatch - giving users lots of incentive to keep on moving.