

Medlab nanotech statin breakthrough

MEDLAB Clinical says preliminary results of its NanoStat (Nanocelle Atorvastatin) bioequivalence trial have shown significant improvement in drug delivery when compared to oral 20mg tablets of atorvastatin.

The company said NanoStat achieved faster peak concentrations and at least twice the blood levels of free atorvastatin, because it “cleaves” the calcium salt from the atorvastatin molecules prior to absorption by the body.

Medlab said it was its intention to investigate “the potential for a lower dose statin delivered as an oro-buccal spray, being similar to the effects of a stronger dose tablet”.

DNA mapping call

UNIVERSITY of South Australia senior lecturer in pharmacy Dr Vijay Suppiah has called for Australian pharmacists to embrace pharmacogenetic (PGx) testing to deliver medication more effectively and slash around \$2.4 billion wasted each year through unsafe and ineffective drug prescriptions.

“PGx testing – mapping a person’s genetic makeup – is the most effective way to ensure patients are prescribed drugs which suit their specific DNA profile,” Suppiah said.

“Most people expect that when they get a prescription filled from a pharmacy, it will be effective and have minimal side effects. Unfortunately, that only happens in up to 60% of cases,” he said, with genetic makeup playing a large role in whether a specific drug will work or cause certain side effects.

See his full argument in the *Australian Journal of Primary Health* at publish.csiro.au.

Epi-pen heat risk

A **POLISH** study published in the *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology: In Practice* has warned patients using epinephrine pens such as Epi-Pen not to leave their medication in a hot car or subject it to high temperatures due to resulting reduction in efficacy.

Visit jaci-inpractice.org.

Prescribing pharmacist plan

THE Pharmacy Board of Australia has confirmed it will shortly launch a consultation seeking the views of pharmacists and other stakeholders regarding the potential role of pharmacists in prescribing.

The initiative follows a forum hosted by the Board last year (**PD** 02 Jul 2018) which considered the needs and opportunities for expanding pharmacist involvement in prescribing.

A report on the forum was published in Aug, along with a background paper and two other reports about pharmacist prescribing commissioned by the Board, which have been uploaded to the “Professional practice issues” page at pharmacyboard.gov.au.

A further discussion paper is being finalised which will include the outcomes of the forum along with a range of consultation questions “to help the profession further explore its role in prescribing,” the Board said yesterday.

Key topics on the table include models of prescribing that can be pursued by the pharmacy profession, including appropriate supporting evidence; identification of gaps in evidence that may need to be addressed by the profession; and issues that need to be considered and addressed to assess the regulatory need for

Coles’ H&B entry

COLES has announced a new foray into pharmacy-type products with the launch of its new free quarterly health and beauty magazine, *Coles Health and Beauty*, available in stores immediately.

The summer 2019 issue provides readers with the weekly wellbeing routine of successful model and winner of *The Block*, Elyse Knowles.

“It also includes feature stories about how to stress less and achieve your goals this year, as well as easy hair and makeup tutorials for hot weather,” Coles said.

Coles Marketing Content Manager Maia Bryant says, “Our new magazine has been created to help Australians navigate the health and beauty aisles through reliable and credible information”.

an endorsement for prescribing of scheduled medicines.

“The discussion paper is intended to stimulate discussion and collaboration among stakeholders and highlight where further work is needed,” the Board noted.

Prior to the distribution of the consultation document, the Board is encouraging practitioners and stakeholders to provide any feedback or comments on the forum report published last year (**PD** 04 Oct 2018) by emailing PharmBAfeedback@ahpra.gov.au.

Takeda takes Shire

THE largest foreign acquisition by a Japanese company has now been concluded, with pharmaceutical company Takeda settling its US\$84 billion acquisition of Shire Pharmaceuticals (**PD** 27 Apr 2018).

Takeda said with the addition of Shire its reach now encompassed 80 countries and regions, making it the largest Japanese pharma company as well as being one of the world’s top ten with more than US\$30 billion in annual revenue.

More home-care \$

DEMENTIA Australia has said it welcomed the rollout of an additional 10,000 new high-level home care packages, which commences this week and will support more senior Australians, including those with dementia, to remain living independently in their own homes.

Dementia Australia CEO Maree McCabe said as the prevalence of dementia continues to increase so does the need for high-level home care packages.

“Currently, around 70 per cent of the more than 436,000 Australians with dementia live in the community.

“An increase of home care packages will help more Australians to live at home for as long as possible, in a supported way.

“This will make a substantial difference not only to their lives, but also to those of their families and carers, as well as the broader community,” McCabe said.

The additional packages will fund up to \$50,000 of care services pp pa, which may include home assistance, nursing, transportation, and meal preparation.

Choosing Wisely Award



NPS MedicineWise’s Choosing Wisely Australia initiative was late last year recognised for “sustainable health intervention that is being implemented”, at the inaugural 2018 Bond University Sustainable Healthcare Awards.

The Sustainable Healthcare Awards raise awareness of best practice in high-value healthcare and recognise the achievements of

advocates and pioneers in this area.

NPS MedicineWise Client Relations Manager Dr Robyn Lindner, (pictured), accepted the Practice Award, saying, “Choosing Wisely Australia is bringing together health professionals, healthcare consumers and other key healthcare influencers to address practices of low-value and unnecessary healthcare”.

Dispensary Corner

PATIENTS going into hospital for an operation are generally hoping the surgeon's hands are steady and dexterous, which is why a woman received such a fright when a wild moose wandered into her room before showing her its large cumbersome hooves.

Stephanie Hupton was quick to pull out her smart phone to record the incident (naturally), watching the inquisitive animal calmly peruse the range of medical facilities at the Alaska Regional Hospital in Anchorage. Hupton said the mopey moose lingered languidly in her room before "sauntering out through a motion-activated door."

Attention staff, we need a tranquilliser gun in here, stat! Oh, and an experienced gourmet butcher too please.



IF A doctor was to say that you were healthy and free of cancer, you'd be pretty happy, right?

Well unfortunately that declaration came far too late for a man who was misdiagnosed with prostate cancer and who already had the gland removed.

Pathologist Joy Trueblood at the Iowa Clinic admitted in court to misdiagnosing Rickie Lee Huitt, attributing the mistake to a "scanner glitch".

In a statement, The Iowa Clinic said: "Once alerted about the situation we immediately apologised to the patient".

Vic euthanasia dispensing

THE pharmacy service at the Alfred Hospital in Melbourne will be the only point of access for dispensing lethal "voluntary assisted dying" medications in Victoria, with authorities confirming the scheme is expected to be implemented by June 2019.

Regulatory details were released last weekend by Vic Health Minister, Martin Foley, who said "having a single point of access for voluntary assisted dying is just one of the ways we're making sure the model is the safest and most conservative in the world".

The scheme can only be accessed by adults with decision-making capacity who are suffering an "incurable, advanced condition" which is likely to cause death within six months (or 12 months for people with neurodegenerative diseases).

Guidelines require patients to make three clear requests to their regular health practitioners for the voluntary assisted dying, and also undertake two independent medical assessments.

For people too sick to travel, the pharmacy service will deliver the medication and provide information on administration, as well as collect any unused drugs.

The Alfred pharmacy department will report to the Voluntary Assisted Dying Review Board, which will oversee the operation of the legislation and ensure high safety standards are met, Foley said.

"We've made voluntary assisted dying legal because a person's quality of death is part of their quality of life," he added, saying all of the guidelines are now in place to ensure that people with as terminal illness who wish to end their lives with dignity can do so.

New cholesterol drug

NEWLY approved for marketing in Australia, Praluent (alirocumab), a monoclonal antibody, is second in a new class of medicines indicated for a small group of patients with high cholesterol who are difficult to treat and have high cardiac risk. PBAC will consider listing in Mar.

Win with Dermal Therapy

Everyday this week Pharmacy Daily and Dermal Therapy are giving away a selection of the pictured products to the value of \$45.



Dermal Therapy Very Dry Skin

Lotion works for a full 24 hours, providing optimum hydration and protection for your skin. This non-greasy, quick absorbing formula contains 10% Urea and 1% Dimethicone in a synergistic blend of emollients and skin conditioning agents. Easy to use with a family friendly pump, this intense body lotion is suitable for use by those with sensitive, dry and itchy skin. Visit www.dermaltherapy.com.au to find out more.

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

How many hours of hydration does Very Dry Skin Lotion have?

Congratulations to yesterday's winner, Thomas Petrucci from Tom's Value Pharmacy.



Travel Specials

WELCOME to *Pharmacy Daily's* travel feature. Each week we highlight a couple of great travel deals for the pharmacy industry, brought to you by *Travel & Cruise Weekly*.

Travel & Cruise Weekly

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2019 Holland America Line offers

WHY not NOW? asks Holland America Line as they offer exceptional deals for 2019 sailings: receive stateroom upgrades and discounts on select shore excursions plus suites receive up to US\$600 on board spending money per stateroom.

Explore the possibilities of a 7-Day Glacier Discovery cruise, Seward (Anchorage) to Vancouver, on board ship *Westerdam* from AU\$1,248 pp. Visit hollandamerica.com.

Expedition Cruising with Hurtigruten

HURTIGRUTEN will bring Alaska, Canada and more closer with its inaugural 2020-21 season on board new ships *MS Roald Amundsen* & *MS Fridtjof Nansen*.

Consider 18 days cruising Antarctica, Patagonia and Chilean Fjords from \$13,485 pp with all landings and small boat cruising included - spot whales, albatross and more - **CLICK HERE**.