

EU warning on strontium ranelate

THE European Union has issued a statement warning about potential "severe hypersensitivity reactions" to the use of Protelos and Osseor, which are used for the non-hormonal treatment of postmenopausal osteoporosis.

The EU medicines agency said it's received reports of 16 cases - two of which resulted in fatalities - of 'drug rash with eosinophilia and systemic symptoms (DRESS)' in patients treated with the drug.

Having assessed the data the EU has ordered the urgent updating of product information to include warnings about hypersensitivity.

Patients are being advised to stop using the drugs when a rash occurs and seek medical advice.

The reported serious reactions started within 3-6 weeks of the initiation of treatment, with symptoms including skin rashes, fever, swollen glands and an increased white cell count.

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PBS Dec price reductions

THE Pharmacy Guild this morning told members of the full list of price reductions which will take effect 01 Dec - confirming a warning of the imminent changes issued on 07 Nov.

New brands introduced will see a 12.5% reduction in Alendronate Sodium, Vancomycin, Fluconazole, Naltrexone Hydrochloride and Octreotide Acetate injection.

There are also reductions on lercanidipine (Zanidip), all brands

of perindopril (e.g. Coversyl and Coversyl Plus) and trandolapril (Tranalpha, Gopten & Odrik).

Guild president Kos Sclavos advised pharmacists to "carefully monitor your ordering of these items over the next two weeks".

The members only section of the Guild website contains a comprehensive list of the price reductions, including a breakdown of medications by brand and strength.

GSK grants

LOW influenza immunisation rates for health care workers in primary care settings such as pharmacists have been identified as a major risk, in the wake of this year's severe flu season.

GlaxoSmithKline has awarded \$20,000 to the Mackay Division of General Practice for a proposed 'Well Workers Immunisation Project,' which aims to increase the rate of health worker flu vaccination in the Mackay region.

GSK also gave \$20,000 to the Melbourne General Practice Network and the Dousta Galla Community Health Service for their program which targets new migrants and refugees.

Pharmacists strike!

A DISPUTE between pharmacy owners and pharmacists in Finland is set to see the closure of most pharmacies across the country.

The Finnish Pharmacists' Association is pushing for a 17% pay rise (about €500 per month) and is telling members to stay at home if agreement isn't reached.

Customers are being warned of delays and limited opening hours at the 800-odd pharmacies in Finland.

Skin cancer action

SUMMER is well on its way, and the Cancer Council across the country is highlighting the risk of skin cancer through National Skin Cancer Action Week which kicks off today, with the Cancer Council Qld saying one in every two Australians will be diagnosed with skin cancer during their life.

Promotions include a visit by Sid Seagull to Wet'n'Wild Water Park this week, handing out sunscreen and teaching patrons the importance of being SunSmart.

Rimonabant trial

A PAPER published in *The Lancet* this week has linked sanofi-aventis' weight-loss drug Acomplia (rimonabant) with a higher risk of depression.

The Age said the study analysed four trials involving over 4000 patients, and found people using the drug were much more likely to stop treatment due to depressive or anxious symptoms.

Sanofi-Aventis said the data was based on old research but agreed that caution was required with the use of any drug.

The company said it would continue to push for TGA approval of the medication, which is in use in 37 countries across the globe.

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Pharmacists - need a job?

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DISPENSARY CORNER

SHE'S not half-witted but she only has half a brain.

Doctors treating a 39-year-old woman in China were amazed to discover that an MRI scan showed she only has grey matter on the right hand side of her skull.

The woman from Wuhan city has reportedly "lived a perfectly normal life" and the abnormality was only found when she arrived at a hospital emergency ward complaining of weakness.

A US man has been arrested for possessing an allegedly hallucinogenic toad.

Police in Kansas City claimed the 21-year-old was holding the animal "with the intention of licking its venom glands" in order to get high.

A ROBOTIC hygiene breakthrough has been announced by European scientists, who say they've created an automatic cockroach which can lure the real insects into traps.

A Belgian researcher developed the "robo-roaches," which he claimed were able to fool cockroaches into thinking it was a good idea to walk into particular areas where they could then easily be killed.

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Stop snoring ruining your life

It's long been considered a joke in the bedroom but snoring can have serious consequences if left unchecked, affecting bedroom intimacy, work performance and general wellbeing. Snoring deprives sufferers of the sleep that experts say is vital to our physical and mental health, and essential for the normal functioning of all the systems of our body.

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