

## Drugs and dementia

NATIONAL Prescribing Service says drug therapy is not the answer when treating dementia, with "limited benefits to using cholinesterase inhibitors and memantine".

NPS clinical expert Judith Mackson said some people will not respond at all, and adverse effects are common.

"If these medicines are to be used it is imperative that they are monitored in order objectively assess their effectiveness for the patient," she said.

Mackson urged health professionals to encourage the use of non-pharmacological strategies at all stages of dementia.

"Carers may see medication as the only option, so they will need support and information to help manage their expectations," she added.

## Nutrex recall

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration has announced the Level II consumer recall of a batch of Nutrex Research Lipo 6 liquid capsules, because traces of yohimbine have been found in some bottles of the product.

## Opioid dependency study

PRICEWATERHOUSECOOPERS has been contracted by the Pharmacy Guild to develop a funding model for a program to deliver pharmacotherapy services in the community setting to assist pharmacies with opiate-dependent patients.

According to the Guild, community pharmacies across Australia look after 39,000 patients who are dependent on opiates (mostly heroin) every day - and these pharmacies dispense to 70% of all patients on methadone and buprenorphine treatment, with little government funding.

"Community pharmacists

## Haemophilia week

HAEMOPHILIA Awareness Week kicks off next Sun 12 Oct, aiming to inform the general public about inherited bleeding disorders incl haemophilia and von Willebrand disease.

The campaign will feature personal stories of experiences with the disorders from each state; more info from the Haemophilia Foundation Australia on 1800 807 173.

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## Win a Lift Lip Gloss

CONGRATULATIONS to Dr Tiffany Bamford of Bristol-Myers Squibb who was yesterday's lucky winner.

Each day this week **Pharmacy Daily** is giving you the chance to win a Lift Lip Gloss from Naked Glow, courtesy of **Total Beauty Network**.



The Marine Filling Spheres instantly smooth, plump and hydrate while the natural organic oils heal and soothe your lips.

And of course there is no petroleum or paraben added!

For a chance to win, send your answer to the below question to [comp@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:comp@pharmacydaily.com.au).

Finish this sentence -  
"kiss goodbye..."

The first person to answer correctly each day will win.

HINT: Go to [www.tbn.com.au](http://www.tbn.com.au) & click on Naked Glow.



## MIMS October prescribing update

### INDICATION CHANGES

• ALVESCO (ciclesonide) is now indicated in the prophylaxis of asthma in patients six years or older. The recommended dose for patients 12 years or older is 80-320 mcg once daily, and for children 6-11 years is 80-160 mcg once daily. The use of a spacer is recommended for children 6-11 years old.

• Avandia (rosiglitazone) and Avandamet (rosiglitazone + metformin) are no longer indicated for triple combination therapy with a sulfonylurea. The use of rosiglitazone in patients with NYHA class I to IV heart failure, history of cardiac failure or acute coronary syndrome is contraindicated.

An increased incidence of cardiac failure has been observed in clinical trials when thiazolidinediones are used in combination with insulin. Insulin and rosiglitazone

are both associated with fluid retention; concomitant administration may increase the risk of oedema and could increase the risk of ischaemic heart disease.

Avandamet should not be initiated in patients on insulin and vice versa. Avandia is not indicated for use with insulin.

### SAFETY RELATED CHANGES

**Butoconazole** (Gynazole-1) is contraindicated in patients hypersensitive to other imidazole antifungals (e.g. clotrimazole, miconazole, econazole, ketoconazole).

Studies have not been conducted to evaluate the potential for interactions between butoconazole and coumarin anticoagulants, such as warfarin.

However, some azole antifungal agents have been shown to increase INR levels in patients taking warfarin,

due to inhibition of CYP2C9. Therefore, caution is advised in patients taking coumarin anticoagulants, as butoconazole may increase INR, and these patients may be at risk of increased bleeding or bruising.

Patients being treated with **varenicline** (Champix) should be alerted to the need to monitor for neuropsychiatric symptoms including changes in behaviour, agitation, aggression, depressed mood, suicidal ideation and suicidal behaviour.

Patients and their families should be advised that the patient should stop taking Champix and contact a healthcare professional immediately if behavioural changes, agitation or depressed mood are observed, or if the patient develops suicidal ideation or behaviour. Patients and their families should be encouraged to report any history

of psychiatric illness before initiating treatment.

Doctors should advise patients to stop taking PDE5 inhibitors, including **vardenafil** (Levitra), and seek prompt medical attention in the event of sudden decrease or loss of hearing. These events, which may be accompanied by tinnitus and dizziness, have been reported in temporal association to the intake of PDE5 inhibitors, including vardenafil. It is not possible to determine whether these events are related directly to the use of PDE5 inhibitors or to other factors.

Serious skin reactions (e.g. Stevens-Johnson syndrome, toxic epidermal necrolysis) have been very rarely reported in patients taking **terbinafine** (Zabel). If progressive skin rash occurs, terbinafine treatment should be discontinued.

As with all injectable paediatric vaccines, e.g. pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (Prevenar), the potential risk of apnoea should be considered when administering the primary immunisation series to premature infants. The need for monitoring for at least 48 hours after vaccination should be considered for very premature infants (born  $\leq 30$  weeks of gestation), who remain hospitalised at the time of the recommended administration. As the benefit of vaccination is high in this group of infants, vaccination should not be withheld or delayed.

*This list is a summary of only some of the changes that have occurred over the last month. Before prescribing, always refer to the full Product Information.*

PAGE 2 Editor: Bruce Piper email: [info@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:info@pharmacydaily.com.au)  
**Comments wanted**

THE TGA is asking for comments on whether a number of European Union guidelines should be adopted in Australia.

The next deadline is 27 Oct for comments re the guideline on Clinical Investigation of Medicinal Products for the Treatment of Migraine - see [www.tga.gov.au](http://www.tga.gov.au).

## MMR workshop

CONSULTANT accredited pharmacists Geraldine Moses and Debbie Rigby will conduct a Medication Management Review Accreditation workshop on the Qld Sunshine Coast next month.

The Stage One seminar will take place 08-09 Nov at the Wyndham Vacation Resort Surfair in Marcoola Beach, and aims to prepare participants for the AACCP MMR accreditation assessment process.

It costs \$550 for PSA members, \$605 for SHPA members and \$825 for non-members; more info [mandyc@psaqld.org.au](mailto:mandyc@psaqld.org.au).

## Make-up madness

PRESTIGE beauty products are taking luxury to the next level in the lead-up to Christmas.

Estée Lauder today released a 23K gold-plated make-up collection adorned with Swarovski Elements accents.

The \$120 lipstick and \$380 shimmer powder are presented in a blue velvet carry pouch and come with a card verifying their authenticity.

## HOT Travel Deals

WELCOME to *Pharmacy Daily's* travel feature.

Each week we plan to highlight a couple of great travel deals which we're sure will be of interest to everyone in the pharmacy industry.

Scenic Tours is offering a saving of up to \$400 per couple on their Grand Tasman 12 Day tour. Priced from \$3795pp the tour visits Cradle Mountain, the Gordon River, Strahan and more. Call 1300 SCENIC for more details.

For something different why not head to **Bhutan** and spend Christmas and New Year in the snow capped peaks of the Himalayas. You can explore this hidden Kingdom from the 5 star Uma Paro where they are offering a 7 night package over the festive season. The programme includes privately

## Crisis 'good' for pharma

BIG pharma will benefit from the current 'credit crunch', according to an analysis by the world's leading provider of online data and forecasting platforms.

Datamonitor's head of company analysis Dr. Chris Phelps believes that large pharmaceutical companies have wisely stayed out of the cheap debt game [of the corporate world] and as a result, the credit crunch will play out as a net positive for the industry.

"Pharma companies are not only expected to weather the financial storm successfully but to also use this period to exploit

## New pharmacist director for API

AUSTRALIAN Pharmaceutical Industries this week appointed Lee Ausburn as an independent director of the company.

API said Ausburn is a registered pharmacist with a "long and distinguished career in the pharmaceutical industry" having worked with Merck & Co as well as being a former Principal Pharmacist with the PSA in NSW, lecturer and tutor in the Pharmacy Department of the University of Sydney and a clinical pharmacist at St George Hospital.

API chair Peter Robinson said Ausburn's industry expertise and business experience would be "an excellent asset for the company."

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their unique cash strength by embarking on an acquisition spree," the analyst said.

Although the pharmaceuticals industry's stock market performance has been faltering compared to other sectors, it is cash-rich and has not taken on significant debt, compared to other industries.

The report also reveals that the average net debt as a proportion of capital employed for the top 20 pharmaceutical companies is just 6% while the average for financial institutions is 95%. 'This fact alone suggests that the fallout from the credit crisis will not be as significant in the pharmaceutical industry as in other more highly leveraged sectors,' the report stated.

The average top 20 pharma company also has access to US\$7.5 billion in cash, equivalents and short-term investments, said the report.

'The credit crunch shifts the balance of power in the pharmaceutical relationship' due to greater bargaining power and acquisitive tendencies, it concluded.

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## DISPENSARY CORNER

RESEARCHERS in the USA have found that women subconsciously raise the pitch of their voices during their most fertile part of the month.

A study published in *Biology Letters* suggested the slight increase occurs because men are attracted to a more "feminine" female voice.

POLITICIANS in Taiwan have suggested that the global Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) epidemic six years ago was deliberately initiated by China as part of a biological warfare campaign.

Taiwan's National Security Bureau chief Tsai Chao-ming cited sources in China who suspected biological warfare, but "conclusive evidence has not surfaced."

SARS started in southern China in 2002 and killed several hundred people around the globe, bringing Asian tourism and travel to a halt.

MENTAL health will be on the improve in San Diego, California where a business capitalising on frustration and angst is booming.

Sarah's Smash Stack encourages its customers to relieve stress by hurling crockery against a wall as hard as they can, seven days a week.

Clients pay US\$10 to dress in protective gear and pulverise plates and glasses to the accompaniment of loud music.

A sign on the wall exhorts them to "Break More Stuff."

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