



Guild Update

Financial support for negotiators

Pharmaceutical Defence Ltd (PDL) has made a substantial donation of more than \$100,000 to the Pharmacy Guild of Australia to support the efforts of the team negotiating the Fifth Community Pharmacy Agreement with the Federal Government.

The PDL chairman, John Coppock, said the board of PDL felt that it was important the organisation demonstrated its support for the efforts of the negotiators.

"PDL's mission is to support the needs of the pharmacy profession via the arrangement and delivery of professional indemnity insurance services and sponsorship of a variety of pharmacy events and activity.

"This coming agreement negotiation is at a time of significant pressure to government budgets, and we want to support the negotiators to make a strong and positive case on behalf of the rest of pharmacy," Mr Coppock said.

The Pharmacy Guild gratefully acknowledges the contribution.



The Pharmacy
Guild of Australia

Pharmacy alcohol campaign

PHARMACIES across Australia are participating in a new National Alcohol Standard Drink Awareness campaign, which aims to raise the awareness of the concept of a 'standard drink' and inform people on how to reduce health risks from drinking alcohol.

New prescription repeat folders distributed to community pharmacies nationally feature pictures of standard drink sizes for a variety of alcoholic beverages - including pre-mixed drinks popular with young people.

The campaign messages also remind consumers about the need to take care drinking alcohol while taking medication.

"Once again, this activity demonstrates the invaluable professional healthcare role that

pharmacists play in their local community," said Guild President Kos Sclavos.

Pharmacy's involvement in the campaign also differentiates it from the grocery sector, with Sclavos emphasising that this "community service could not be provided through supermarkets, who are in fact profiting significantly from the sale of alcohol."

It's been recently estimated that the cost to the Australian community of alcohol-related social problems is \$15.3b a year, with about 3,100 people dying each year of excessive alcohol consumption, as well as the hospitalisation of around 72,000.

The campaign also coincides with a push to introduce mandatory health warnings on alcohol labels.

ADRAC bulletin

THE TGA's Adverse Drug Reactions Advisory Committee has detailed 108 reports of suspected adverse reactions to Cymbalta (duloxetine) since it was PBS listed for the treatment of major depressive disorder in June 2008.

More than 200,000 Cymbalta prescriptions have been dispensed, with the reactions reported including dizziness, suicidal ideation, tremor, agitation and serotonin syndrome.

The latest ADRAC bulletin, released yesterday, also gives details of other reactions including isotretinoin and acquired hearing impairment, severe pulmonary disease including interstitial lung disease in association with leflunomide, and fixed drug reactions.

ADRAC is asking health professionals to report all suspected reactions to its list of "drugs of current interest" which includes Cymbalta, Pradaxa, Invega, Crestor or Visacor, Sifrol, Lucentis, Januvia, Xarelto, Protos and Champix.

PBS listing changes

THE Health Department has advised changes to documentation required by the PBS Listing Unit in order to allow listing of new products in the schedule to proceed.

The modified requirements, which became effective 01 Aug, mean that the TGA approval list is no longer required in most circumstances.

Also, product information is now no longer required for listing of a new brand of an existing item.

Vitamin D for knees

A TEAM of researchers from the Menzies Research Institute in Hobart has estimated that if everyone in Tasmania had adequate levels of vitamin D, knee replacements could be delayed by an average of 14 years.

Professor Graeme Jones of the institute's Musculoskeletal Unit conducted a seven year study on almost 900 Tasmanian patients aged between 50 and 80, and found using MRI scans that those with healthy vitamin D levels maintained cartilage for significantly longer than those with a deficiency of the vitamin.

US pot pharmacy gives free samples

A NEWLY established pharmacy in Los Angeles this week advertised an enticing launch offer to attract its first customers.

Cornerstone Health and Wellness in Long Beach specialises in "medical marijuana" and will officially open this Saturday.

"We'll be giving away free grams of top-grade medical marijuana to the first one hundred patients who arrive," the pharmacy's website says.

The site also has a range of opening specials, with stock incl several varieties of cannabis including 'Purple Haze', 'Hemp Star', 'AK-47' and 'Bubble Gum'.



Pharmacy Women's Congress

14 - 16 August 2009 Surfers Paradise Marriott Resort & Spa, Gold Coast

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For more information contact Kim Thome on 07 38313788
or email womenscongress2009@guild.org.au

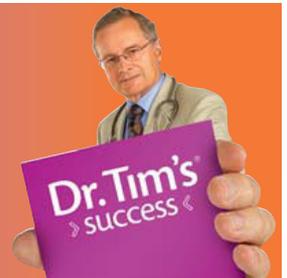


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US statin approval

THE US Food and Drug Administration has approved the 4mg maximum dose for Livalo (pitavastatin) for the improvement of blood cholesterol levels.

"Today's approval offers patients and their health care professionals another alternative way to treat high cholesterol," said an FDA spokesman.

Livalo is manufactured by Kowa Pharmaceuticals America.

Vic Guild agm

THE Victorian Branch of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia has announced that it will hold its Annual General Meeting at 7pm on Tuesday 29 September 2009, at 'Guild House', Level 2, 40 Burwood Road, Hawthorn.

Inhaled insulin

THIS week's edition of the RGH Pharmacy E-Bulletin gives an overview of inhaled insulin, with a new form called 'technosphere insulin' currently awaiting approval by the US Food and Drug Administration.

The bulletin is available at no charge by emailing a request to chris.alderman@rgh.sa.gov.au.

Rosehip arthritis treatment

AN INFLAMMATION specialist from Denmark is in Australia this week to preview an upcoming journal article covering evidence of the efficacy of rosehip (*Rosa Canina L.*) in the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis.

Dr Kaj Winther has been involved with rosehip for some years, conducting a range of trials looking at both osteoarthritis and more recently rheumatoid arthritis.

His team isolated the active compound in rosehip which is called Galactolipid (GOPO), and extracted by a process patented by the maker of Rose-Hip Vital, which is sponsoring Dr Winther's visit.

Winther told *PD* yesterday that earlier trials had shown efficacy for osteoarthritis, with double-blind placebo controlled experiments demonstrating a reduction in pain in patients taking the compound.

Even patients severely affected by arthritis, and on waiting lists for hip and knee replacements, improved.

The most recent trial was conducted over a six month period on rheumatoid arthritis patients by the University Hospital of Berlin and

the University Hospital of Copenhagen, and is flagged for publication in the *Phytomedicine* journal later in 2009.

"The results of the study indicate that patients with rheumatoid arthritis can benefit from additional treatment with rosehip," he said.

"This is a huge step forward in terms of treating RA with a naturally derived product and paves the way for further research in this area," Winther added.

Irish accusations

THE dispute between the Irish government and pharmacists has escalated into a war of words, with accusations from the govt Health Services Executive (HSE) that some pharmacists had behaved in intimidating behaviour.

The HSE has written to the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland complaining about "serious patient care and professional/ethical issues" which allegedly took place on Saturday, when resignations of about 800 pharmacists from the government drugs scheme came into effect.

A number of temporary dispensing sites have been set up by the HSE around the country, and the department claimed its staff were subject to intimidation by community pharmacy contractors.

The HSE also insisted that a number of pharmacies which hadn't validly terminated their contracts had closed their doors for part of the day without prior warning.

However the Irish Pharmacy Union has responded, alleging that the HSE was "seeking to intimidate pharmacists to remain with the discredited community drug schemes with threats of legal actions and delays in considering any application by pharmacists to reengage with the Drugs Schemes."

The IPU also said it had "seen evidence of clear mistakes and flaws" with some of the medicines dispensed at the emergency dispensaries.

It was a long weekend in Ireland, and the IPU says the "likelihood of inexperienced and overworked staff in these dispensaries making such mistakes" will rise today as demand for scripts increases after the holiday.



DISPENSARY CORNER

ASPIRING astronauts in China must be extremely healthy, with an official government list of requirements banning people with any sort of illness.

The 100-point checklist says successful candidates must not have body odour, bad breath or other personal hygiene issues, with an Air Force doctor saying: "Bad body odour will affect fellow colleagues in the narrow confines of a space shuttle."

Dr Shi Bing Bing, who's been tasked with creating a shortlist of suitable applicants, said anyone with a history of disease in the last three generations of their family is also barred, as well as anyone with drug allergies, fungal infections, tooth cavities or scars which may "burst open" in space.

The guidelines also specify a "pleasant and adaptable disposition," with Dr Shi confirming that "These astronauts could be regarded as super human beings."

A NEW Zealand school principal has been falsely accused of drink driving after a breathalyser picked up traces of an alcohol-based hand sanitiser.

Margie Sutherland was following health department guidelines to ward off swine flu by using the gel to clean her hands.

Pulled over for a random breath test, an unimpressed police officer at first didn't believe her story.

"I wound down the window and the smell must have hit him in the face. The stuff smells like a big gin," she said.

She failed an initial test in which she was asked to just speak into the machine, but was cleared by a second evidential "blow in" test, which isn't affected by traces of alcohol in the air.

A police spokesman confirmed that officers had been warned that the increasing use of sanitiser was likely to produce positive results on the tests.

Perfume has also been known to have the same effect on some types of breathalysing equipment.

WIN A BURT'S BEES PRIZE



CONGRATULATIONS to Wendy Ridgeon of Camden Hospital who was the lucky winner yesterday of the Burt's Bees Radiance Night Crème.

Each day this week Burt's Bees is giving *Pharmacy Daily* subscribers the chance to win a fabulous Burt's Bees product featuring the highly nourishing goodness of Royal Jelly.

Today's prize is a jar of **Radiance Night Crème**. It's 99.02% natural and replenishes your delicate facial skin with essential amino acids, antioxidants, vitamins and key minerals while you sleep. You'll wake up to renewed radiance!

Valued at \$39.95, Radiance Night Crème is available from David Jones, Terry White Chemists and selected retail outlets.

For your chance to win your very own Radiance Night Crème jar, simply be the first reader to email through the correct answer to the question below to comp@pharmacydaily.com.au.

Which Burt's Bees product has recently won a Glosscar?

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