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NPS generic push

NATIONAL Prescribing Service is reminding Australians that they should get to know their medicines by asking their pharmacists about them, as part of its 'Generic Medicines are an Equal Choice' campaign in conjunction with Ask Your Pharmacist Week.

In Australia only about 30% of scripts are for generics, compared to over 50% in the US, 44% in the Netherlands and 70% in Denmark.

"Generic medicines can be a good option for many consumers as they are usually less expensive than branded medicines," said Guild President Kos Sclavos.

"Your pharmacist is the best person to answer questions about your medicines and can help you decide if switching to a generic is right for you," he added.

Acting NPS ceo Karen Kaye said consumers were being encouraged to use the NPS Medicine Name Finder to become familiar with the active ingredients in medicines.

New codeine advice in UK

BRITAIN'S Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency has issued new advice on OTC medications containing codeine and dihydrocodeine "to minimise the risk of overuse and addiction."

Measures include "clear and prominently positioned warnings on the labels" as well as patient information leaflets, emphasising the importance of not taking the

Microbiology move

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration has published a presentation giving an overview of Therapeutic Goods Order 77 which outlines new TGA requirements for microbiology.

TGO77 gives standards for finished products, and becomes effective 01 Jan 2010 covering sterile medicines, multidose medicines and non-sterile medicines.

It gives guidelines for a wide variety of medicines including inhalants, transdermal patches, aqueous and non-aqueous preparations for oral use, rectal use, vaginal use, oromuscular, and gingival, cutaneous, nasal and auricular use.

There are also new rules for complementary medicine oral dosage forms.

TGO77 reflects an increased interest in "objectionable organisms" which have potential to cause infection when a medicine is used per label directions, are capable of growth in a medicine and can cause spoilage or reduce the efficacy of a medicine.

See www.tga.gov.au.

US\$2.6b drug deal

JAPANESE pharmaceutical company Dainippon Sumitomo Pharma has announced the US\$2.6b purchase of US drug maker Sepracor.

The move gives the Japanese firm a large US sales force, with 1200 staff specialising in mental health medications, as it prepares for the commercialisation of its experimental schizophrenia drug lurasidone.

The acquisition also includes Sepracor's products such as Lunesta for insomnia, Xopenex for asthma and an experimental drug for epilepsy.

Postmarketing report

THE US Food and Drug Administration has released a report which shows that makers of approved drugs and biologics are generally meeting their regulatory obligations and completing postmarketing studies in a timely manner.

A review of 1531 open studies showed that more than 80% were proceeding according to the established timelines, have been submitted for FDA review or have been determined by the FDA to have met their goals or are no longer needed.

The report also recommended changes to improve the quality of information submitted to the FDA and its review processes, with the administration having already established a postmarketing study development coordinator and a tracking coordinator within each new drug division.

The review was conducted with the help of additional funding allocated by the US congress.

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These assistants are stars



LAST weekend the Guild held the NSW/ACT round of the Pharmacy Assistant of the Year, with 24 top pharmacy assistants nominated and attending a judging day at St Leonards last Fri.

The nominees made personal presentations and took part in interactive workshops, with the day followed by the State Finalist Awards Dinner that evening.

In keeping with the 'star' theme, guest speaker, leading astronomer Fred Watson entertained the audience with his take on "astro-

pharmacy" and the way of the future.

The following day kicked off the second NSW Pharmacy Assistant conference, attended by about 80 assistants from across the state.

Topics included a mixture of personal development and product and industry updates.

The NSW Pharmacy Assistant Conference will return to Bondi in August 2010.

The finalists are pictured above, Tamara Haydin (NSW) on the left with Kate Allen, ACT.

Accounting

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Stay across it all with advice that matters.

 Guild

CPD Calendar

WELCOME to *Pharmacy Daily's* Continuing Professional Development Calendar, featuring upcoming events, conferences and opportunities for pharmacists to earn CPE and CPD points.

If you have an upcoming event you'd like us to feature, email info@pharmacydaily.com.au.

07 Sep: PSA Tas will hold a seminar on Motivational Interviewing at the University of Tasmania - 03 6231 2636.

08 Sep: PSA Vic's Devices Small Group: Diabetes workshop at Parkville - 03 9389 4008.

09 Sep: Short course on Introductory Pharmacotherpaies at Pharmacy House, St Leonards NSW - 02 9431 1109.

12 Sep: Finding Drug Information on the internet seminar at Sydney University 02 9431 1120.

16-19 Sep: Pharmacy 2009: The Pharmacy Management Conference will be held at the Hyatt Regency Sanctuary Cove - www.pharmacyconference.com.au.

17 Sep: ACPPM seminar 'Making Personalities Work for You' in Melbourne - 03 9810 9999.

10-11 Oct: Stage One Accreditation Medication Management Review Workshop in Townsville - 07 4725 8915.

15-18 Oct: Pharmacy Australia Congress 2009 will be held in Sydney - www.pac2009.com.au.

29-31 Oct: The Pharmacy Assistant National Conference - www.pharmacyassistants.com.

5-8 Nov: National Medicines Management Conference in Perth - www.shpamm2009.com.

12 Nov: The ASMI annual conference and agm at the Australian Technology Park in Redfern, Sydney - asmi.com.au.

16-23 Jan 2010: Pharmacy Study Tour in Aspen, Colorado - www.medic.com.au/study-tours.

4-17 Feb 2010: PSA Expedition Education conference in Chile and Patagonia. Limited to 50 people - 1 300 139 293.

28 Apr-7 May 2010: The PSA will hold its 35th annual offshore conference in Beijing and Shanghai - 1 300 139 293.

Pfizer updates Champix PI

PFIZER Australia said yesterday it was updating the Australian Product Information (PI) for its smoking cessation medicine Champix (varenicline) after a review of post marketing adverse events reports.

Pfizer said it's been working closely with the TGA to ensure that the Champix PI "is up-to-date and lists important precautions and contraindications such as potential side effects."

In the PRECAUTIONS section, under psychiatric symptoms, the revised PI will now include serious neuropsychiatric symptoms

Swine flu success

NOVARTIS says its novel H1N1 influenza vaccine Celtura gave a strong immune response after a single dose in a trial with 100 patients run by Leicester University in the UK.

Novartis said the results showed a potentially protective immune response in 80% of subjects after one dose and over 90% after two doses.

reported in patients taking the medication including changes in thinking, anxiety, psychosis and mood swings, with a recommendation to follow up patients with neuropsychiatric symptoms until they resolve.

The PI will also detail reports of rare but potential fatal cutaneous reactions including Stevens-Johnson Syndrome and Erythema Multiforme, with a recommendation to discontinue treatment and contact a health care provider at the first sign of rash or skin reaction.

New terms will also be added to the ADVERSE EFFECTS section including the neuropsychiatric symptoms and skin reactions.

Pfizer said that Champix had been on the market for almost three years in the USA and over 18 months in Australia, with more than 11 million people worldwide prescribed the medication including 384,000 Australians.

The company said "there are few things that provide greater health benefits than quitting smoking."



DISPENSARY CORNER

AN English man has described how a huge stroke "miraculously" cured his failing sight - but cost him the ability to speak French, according to the BBC.

70-year-old Malcolm Darby had worn glasses for his entire life, but after waking from surgery to remove a blood clot following a stroke last year found he had almost perfect vision.

The stroke left Mr Darby unable to speak and paralysed, but he's now recovering, can talk again and walks four miles a day.

Experts said the side-effects of his stroke are "unusual".

YUCK!

The US Food and Drug Administration has conducted special DNA tests on a can of Diet Pepsi, confirming that it contained the remains of some sort of amphibious creature.

A Pepsi spokesman said the company is aware of the testing, and has traced the can back to a plant in Orlando which produces 20 cans per second - meaning it's "virtually impossible for a frog or toad to get into a can."

THE bigger your thighs are, the lower your risk of early death due to heart disease, according to a Danish study released this week.

Men and women with thighs over 60cm in circumference were found to have a lower incidence of cardiovascular incidents, even taking into account other factors including body fat, cholesterol and smoking.

The researchers from Copenhagen University Hospital studied 3000 people over a ten year period, with the study published in the *British Medical Journal*.

They found that those with the smallest thighs - under 55cm - had twice the risk of early death or serious health problems.

Experts postulated that the measurement may be an indicator of muscle mass, with low levels meaning the body doesn't respond to insulin properly, increasing the risk of diabetes.

WIN A BOTTLE OF BIO-OIL

CONGRATULATIONS to Anthony Young of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Qld who was the first **PD** reader yesterday to tell us that Bio-Oil is formulated for use on the FACE and body.

Did you know that 9 out of 10 pharmacists recommend Bio-Oil®?

Pharmacy Daily has teamed up with Bio-Oil® this week, giving readers the chance to win their very own bottle of Bio-Oil®.

Bio-Oil® is a specialist skincare product that helps improve the appearance of scars, stretch marks and uneven skin tone.

Its advanced formulation, which contains the breakthrough ingredient, PurCellin Oil, also makes it highly effective for numerous other skin concerns, including aging skin and dehydrated skin.

Bio-Oil® is the number one selling pharmacy skin care and bodycare product in Australia.

For your chance to win a bottle of Bio-Oil®, simply send through the correct answer to the missing word/s in the sentence below:

Bio-Oil® should be applied ___ daily, for a minimum of ___ months for best results.

Email your answer to: comp@pharmacydaily.com.au.

The first correct entry received each day will win!

