

OTC Update Oral Health

This week is the final instalment of our series on oral care, and focuses on

Gum disease

Gum disease is the leading cause of tooth loss and is easily prevented with a simple oral hygiene regime.

There are three stages of gum disease, all of which are classified as periodontitis.

Gingivitis is the first stage, and is simply described as an inflammation of the gums.

It's caused by plaque, which if not removed by daily brushing and flossing, produces poisons which irritate the gum tissue.

Symptoms of gingivitis include tender, swollen gums and bleeding during toothbrushing.

More severe cases see gums receding from teeth, and some people may also experience recurring bad breath.

Moderate periodontitis is the next stage, and describes what happens when the bone and fibres which hold teeth in place are irreversibly damaged.

Pockets develop around the teeth, which in turn create an ideal environment for infection.

Sulphur compounds produced by bacteria in these pockets are a leading cause of bad breath.

Periodontitis can be treated by a dentist by scaling and cleaning, which may cause the pockets to recede and stop the damage becoming worse.

Advanced periodontitis is the final stage of gum disease, when the damage is so bad that teeth shift or loosen.

Sometimes aggressive dental treatment can save the teeth but often they need to be removed.

It is important to note that the early stages of gum disease are painless and the process is slow.

Pharmacy staff can help patients detect and prevent gum disease by being aware of the symptoms which include puffy, swollen or bleeding gums, teeth which look longer because of receding gums, constant bad breath or a bad taste in the mouth and in extreme cases pus coming from between teeth and gums.

Preventative health agency

THE Federal Government's preventative health agenda moved forward on Friday with an announcement by Health Minister Nicola Roxon that she would shortly introduce new legislation to "formally establish the National Preventative Health Agency."

The news was part of an official communique from the Australian Health Ministers' Conference, which saw officials from across the country meet in Canberra.

The National Preventative Health Agency is part of the govt's plan to address the ongoing crisis of preventable illness such as some cancers, diabetes and heart disease.

It's understood the agency will be in charge of public health education campaigns and research, as well as providing policy advice, with funding of \$17.6m over four years - which doesn't include money for specific programs.

The Pharmacy Guild welcomed the formal establishment of the agency, and urged that allied health professionals be well represented on its board.

"Pharmacists are the most accessible health professional for advice so it would be appropriate to have a pharmacist on the independent agency's board," said Guild President Kos Sclavos.

He added that to date there had been a "disconnect" between some public health awareness campaigns and health professionals - such as the recent 'How do you measure up' campaign.

This promotion saw millions spent on TV advertising, moving from Body Mass Index as the weight measurement standard to a waist measurement without any consultation with pharmacy.

"There was never a 'kit' sent out to pharmacists or pharmacies yet we are at the front line of weight loss," Sclavos said.

"The agency needs to set targets and measure outcomes from health campaigns in the same way the

UK "fat camp" move

A NEW UK government scheme to tackle obesity will see overweight primary school pupils offered a place in a state-funded diet and exercise program.

Critics have branded the "fat camp" initiative as likely to damage participants' self confidence.

Government wants to measure outcomes of health professionals' intervention," he added, emphasising that any campaigns should provide linkages from consumers to health professionals.

The conference also endorsed the Fourth National Mental Health Plan, which for the first time includes a "robust accountability framework with governments agreeing to develop targets and data sources for each of the indicators in the first twelve months."

Compliance report

MORE than 100 pharmacist audits were completed by Medicare Australia's National Compliance Program for the PBS over 2008/09.

The program also investigated 10 pharmacists for suspected fraudulent behaviour, with the details revealed in a 'snapshot of achievements' for the compliance program published in the Spring edition of Medicare's *Bulletin Board* publication for pharmacists released this week.

32 individuals were referred to the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions, including three pharmacists, while during the year the CDPP also successfully finalised prosecution of 46 individuals including one pharmacist.

Almost \$600,000 in incorrect payments to 78 pharmacists was identified - an average of \$7700 - with action taken to recover the incorrect payments, and repayments of over \$200,000 were received from 17 pharmacists.

Medicare said it continues to receive tip-offs on its fraud line from the public, with more than 1700 tip-offs "subjected to initial analysis." during the year.

And assessments were completed in relation to streamlined authorities, unapproved pharmacies and claiming for PBS medicine and MBS services after the date of death of patients, as part of a data analysis program.

The compliance program also provided face-to-face education to over 1950 pharmacy students and almost 3000 other health professionals during the year.

Medicare's compliance unit confirmed that it was "continuing to work with the Pharmacy Guild of Australia to develop education for pharmacy assistants."

Grow sales by 77c per script!



Comp winner

CONGRATULATIONS to Amanda Elliott of Apotex, who was the first **PD** reader on Fri to tell us that Bio-Oil should be applied **TWICE** daily for a minimum of **THREE** months for best results.

Today we launch another competition, this time offering daily prizes of Le Tan tanning cream - **see page two** for details.

PharmX adds sanofi

ONLINE pharmacy ordering gateway PharmX this morning announced the addition of products from sanofi-aventis Consumer Healthcare.

Also joining the PharmX system is WA pharmacy buying group SWAPS, with PharmX saying 3400 pharmacies across Australia now use the system - up 37% in the last twelve months.

PharmX is a joint venture between pharmacy IT vendors Corum Health, PCA NU, Simple Retail and Mountaintop Systems.

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PAC on schizophrenia

THE PSA's upcoming Pharmacy Australia Congress will include a special presentation on the pharmacotherapeutics of schizophrenia, which is estimated to affect up to 1% of the global population.

Professor Tim Lambert of the University of Sydney will cover current forms of therapy including drug classes and mechanisms, new developments in formulation and elements of pharmacotherapeutic treatments currently in development.

See www.pac2009.com.au.

RGH E-Bulletin

THIS week's edition of the Repatriation General Hospital Pharmacy E-Bulletin deals with refeeding syndrome and vitamin supplementation - free copies available from Chris Alderman at chris.alderman@rgh.sa.gov.au.

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Sigma \$60m BMS purchase

SIGMA Pharmaceuticals this morning announced an agreement to purchase an "established pharmaceutical brand portfolio and manufacturing facility" from Bristol-Myers Squibb (BMS) for \$60 million.

The deal will give Sigma the right to manufacture, market and distribute 15 ethical pharmaceutical and healthcare brands in Australia and New Zealand, including Lipostat and Pravachol.

Most of the acquired brands can also be exported by Sigma to New Zealand, and the purchase also includes BMS' Noble Park manufacturing facility.

"The acquisition from BMS is consistent with Sigma's stated strategy of investing in and growing its branded prescription portfolio," said Sigma ceo Elmo de Alwis.

"The acquired brands are well recognised originator brands with established positions in large market segments. They are a strong fit with existing Sigma brands, further broadening Sigma's existing product offering to the pharmacy channel," he added.

Sigma and BMS will also enter into a contract manufacturing

agreement for certain BMS products in overseas territories.

Sigma said the acquired brand portfolio and contracts currently generate \$50m in annual turnover.

The company also announced its preliminary first half results, with revenue up 3.5% to \$1539m and net profit after tax up 4.9% to \$32.2m, with de Alwis saying the result showed Sigma's "ability to weather the poor economic environment of the past 12 months."

In conjunction with the BMS deal Sigma announced a \$297m capital raising to help fund the acquisition and reduce the company's gearing.

UK workload report

THE Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain has launched a new report looking at possible solutions to the workplace pressures facing UK pharmacists.

It's part of an ongoing campaign on work pressure, which has recently seen the Society calling for adequate pharmacist rest breaks.

The *Professional Workload* report was released at the annual British Pharmaceutical Conference and is online at www.rpsgb.org.



DISPENSARY CORNER

FAMILY planning has come a long way since the introduction of The Pill - or has it?

A stunning UK survey has revealed there's still lots of confusion about contraception, with about 20% of female respondents say they'd heard that kitchen items - such as cling film, bread and even chicken skin being used as alternative barrier methods, according to the *BBC*.

1000 women aged 18-50 were questioned in the study which was sponsored by Bayer Schering Pharma.

Unusual oral contraceptive methods described by respondents included potato chips, kebabs and Coca-cola.

POLICE in Holland have made an embarrassing drug bust, after swooping on a marijuana farm which was part of an authorised scientific experiment.

The University of Wageningen was conducting trials on the use of cannabis fibres in textiles, paper and other materials.

A spokesman for the university confirmed that more than half of the plants were destroyed.

"The project had been under way for years and was in its final phase, which would have allowed us to introduce these new fibres to the market," he said.

Police had initially trumpeted the discovery of the massive crop of about 47,000 cannabis plants worth over \$5m on the street.

But the university said the plants weren't saleable as illicit drugs because of an extremely low content of psycho-active compound THC.

A RAP song produced by a New York doctor is one of the finalists in a US Department of Health competition to produce a swine flu health warning.

The lyrics from Dr John Clarke include *H1N1, showing hate, never pity/nicknamed swine flu, coz it ain't ever pretty/H1N1 is in the hood/Use hand sanitiser and wash your hands good!*

For the full version see youtube.com/user/USGOVHHS.

WIN TANNING CREAM

Le Tan has teamed up with **Pharmacy Daily** once again this week to give readers the chance to win a tube of Le Tan's new Original Tanning Cream. Valued at \$12.99, the Le Tan Original Tanning Cream is an easy to apply cream that spreads on evenly, leaving a no-streak flawless finish.

With the colour developing over four hours, apply at night to wake to a beautiful healthy glow.

The delicious caramel fragrance also eliminates any 'fake tan' smell.

Proudly Australian, Le Tan has been providing affordable sun care and self tanning products to Australians for many years.

To receive your very own tanning tube for FREE, simply send through the correct answer to the following question:

Where is Le Tan made?

Send your answer through to comp@pharmacydaily.com.au.

The first correct entry will win the prize, so be quick!

Hint: Most answers can be found on the Le Tan website at www.letan.com.au.

