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Single conduct code urged

THIS week's meeting of the TGA-Industry Consultative Committee (TICC) saw an "open and frank" exchange of views about the operation of the current codes of conduct, which are set to be overhauled by Parliamentary Secretary for Health, Mark Butler (PD 09 Sep).

Industry groups spoke about their current codes and how they operate, their limitations and the level of commitment to a change in current practice.

Although Butler has already indicated consultations with industry groups it appears likely this will be expanded to include consumer representatives, and he's also now said he will attend next week's meeting of the Healthy Skepticism group in Adelaide.

This event will be held 24 Sep with a panel discussion on *Regulating Pharmaceuticals* chaired by Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee chairman Professor Lloyd Sansom and also featuring representatives from Medicines Australia, pharmacists, physicians and academics.

The TICC meeting was attended by Carol Bennett, executive director of the Consumers Health Forum of Australia who shared her belief that the increasing focus by the media

on health regulation "reflects a lack of public confidence in the current self-regulatory system."

"Confidence will not improve unless there is a serious attempt by government and industry to provide a transparent, accountable and rigorous process that affords adequate protection to Australia's health consumers," Bennett said.

She urged as a starting point the creation of a single code covering both therapeutic complaints and advertising, a single and independent complaints mechanism and monitoring system, and sanctions for non-compliance which go "beyond retraction to substantial fines."

Bennett said she believes it's possible to develop an industry-wide 'principles'-based code to cover the whole industry, while addressing separate industry issues under this overarching ethical code.

It was noted during the meeting that the development of further policy will be co-ordinated by the Health department, rather than the TGA specifically.

The Consumers Health Forum said the TICC meeting was a productive start to the process "but there is a long way to go."

"We are hoping this is the start of working towards a transparent, accountable and effective industry code that Australia's health consumers can have some level of confidence in," Bennett concluded.

US diabetes move

THE US National Community Pharmacists Association has announced a new partnership with the American Association of Diabetes Educators which will provide a way for community pharmacies to be compensated by the US Medicare system and other insurers for diabetes management.

In the past Diabetes Self-Management Education/Training services have been limited to hospital settings, but the new agreement will allow community pharmacists to obtain the training to conduct intensive educational classes targeted at diabetes patients.

Pharmacists will undertake 16 hours of training after which they will be allowed to instruct in diabetes education programs and "raise their profile as clinically-trained health care professionals".

Erectile drug bust

A SIXTY-YEAR old UK man is facing up to two years in prison and a hefty fine after the British Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency discovered more than \$70,000 worth of unlicensed erectile dysfunction medication in the boot of his car.

The drugs included a range of Indian products including Kamagra, Savitra and Apcalis, jammed into "tattered cardboard boxes and dirty plastic bags," the MHRA's head of enforcement, Mick Deats, said.

"What we found yesterday were shockingly unhygienic conditions for the handling of medicines."

"Illegal suppliers such as this have no quality control or standards to abide by and people who purchase medicine from these sources will never know where the tablets they are putting in their mouths have actually been," he added.

The unlicensed products all contain ingredients that are found in prescription only medicines, with Deats concluding that taking them without a prescription or associated healthcare consultation "leaves people vulnerable to harm."

Walk for long life

AN article published this week in *Archives of Internal Medicine* shows the benefits of daily exercise, even for people aged in their eighties.

The researchers from Hadassah Hebrew University in Jerusalem found that octogenarians who exercised for four or more hours per week had a much higher three-year-survival rate than those who were sedentary.

The results "clearly support the continued encouragement of physical activity, even among the oldest old. Indeed, it seems that it is never too late to start," the researchers wrote.

In fact four hours per week was found to be just as beneficial as more vigorous or prolonged activity.

The study of 1861 Jerusalem residents aged over 70 found active older people also reported less depression and loneliness.

New Vic agm date

THE Victorian Branch of the Pharmacy Guild has postponed its annual general meeting, which will now be held at 7pm on Tue 06 Oct at 40 Burwood Rd Hawthorn.

WIN MOOGOO PRODUCTS

Finally an alternative to chemicals for troubled skin



CONGRATULATIONS to Cynthia Foo from Collie Chemmart Pharmacy in WA, who told us yesterday that a common name for seborrheic dermatitis is Cradle Cap.

This week *Pharmacy Daily* teams up with MooGoo to give our readers the chance to win a selection of MooGoo skin care products.

For your chance to win MooGoo's Eczema and Psoriasis balm, as well as their Anti-Ageing Cream, Udder Balm and Milk Wash, simply be the first reader to email the correct answer to the question below:

FRIDAY MOOGOO QUESTION:

What is the major oil used in
sorbolene and aqueous creams?

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

Hint: Most answers can be found on the MooGoo website at www.moogoo.com.au.



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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.

20 Sep: PSA Tasmania Finding Medicines Information on the Web - Uni of Tas Sandy Bay; more info 03 6231 2636.

20 Sep: Blackmores Sydney Running Festival, crossing the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

23 Sep: Short course - Harm Minimisation at Pharmacy House, St Leonards NSW - 02 9431 1109.

28 Sep: "Last Week in an Allergy Clinic" - managing allergies in community pharmacy, Launceston General Hospital. More details 03 6231 2636.

29 Sep: Parkinson's Disease evening lecture, Lismore NSW - info 02 9431 1120.

05 Oct: Embracing Opiate Replacement Therapy, Monash University - 03 9389 4007.

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 - 1300 139 293.

28 Apr-7 May 2010: The PSA will hold its 35th annual offshore conference in Beijing and Shanghai - 1300 139 293.

Project STOP for Oxycontin

THE manufacturer of OxyContin, Mundipharma, has this week backed the adoption of the Pharmacy Guild's Project STOP real-time medication monitoring technology to monitor the dispensing of the medication.

The company issued a statement saying it "supports the establishment of a real-time database to monitor the dispensing of all controlled drug prescriptions which are potentially subject to misuse or abuse."

Project STOP is currently only mandated in Qld for tracking pseudoephedrine diversion, but the Guild is pushing for wider adoption.

Mundipharma emphasised its commitment to Quality Use of Medicines, saying it's the only pharmaceutical company in Australia with a full-time QUM director working with the healthcare sector and government health authorities to ensure that its medicines are used appropriately.

"Mundipharma is concerned

about any abuse of its medicines and as a responsible member of the community, strives to ensure that its products are used only for the purposes intended," it said.

But with chronic pain affecting about 15% of the Australian population at any one time "we also believe we have an ongoing responsibility to the many thousands of Australians with severe and disabling pain who rely on us daily to provide their pain relief medicine," the company said.

Mundipharma said it was engaged with doctors, government health authorities, law enforcement agencies and community support organisations "to ensure that its medicines, including OxyContin tablets, are used safely and correctly".

Rural project officers

THE government today announced funding of 94 full-time new Indigenous Health Project Officer positions, at a cost of \$34.7 million over three years.

It's part of the \$1.6b COAG National Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap in Indigenous Health Outcomes.

Health Minister Nicola Roxon said the officers would help Indigenous Australians negotiate uncoordinated or fragmented care, get better information and improve their access to health services.

Funds have also been provided to state and territory-based Aboriginal Community Controlled Health peak bodies "to support employment of project officers, recognising the need for close cooperation between mainstream providers and the community controlled health sector," Roxon said.

Recruitment of the new officers is expected to start next month, with Minister for Indigenous Health, Warren Snowdon, also announcing a further 160 full time positions to be funded over four years for local Indigenous Australians to work as Outreach Workers in Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations and Divisions of General Practice.

He said these workers would "encourage and support Indigenous Australians to follow-up care and access health services."

New orphan drug

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration has designated Link Medical Products' Hepatect CP (human hepatitis B immunoglobulin) as a new orphan drug effective 27 Aug.

The medication is indicated for prophylaxis against re-infection of a transplanted liver in patients who carry the surface antigen of hepatitis B virus.

US theft warning

THE Food and Drug Administration in the USA is warning consumers not to use certain respiratory medicines bought after 08 September because they might be part of a shipment which was stolen from a truck in Florida.

The affected products include Ipratropium Bromide Inhalation Solution 0.02% and Albuterol Sulfate Inhalation Solution 0.083% in unit dose vials, "and may be dangerous to use because the drugs have not been stored and handled properly."

The medications were manufactured by Dey L.P which is a subsidiary of Alphapharm owner Mylan Incorporated.



DISPENSARY CORNER

A PATIENT in a UK hospital has begun reporting "on location" from his bed, inviting readers of his internet blog to guess what meals he's being served.

The 47-year-old anonymous male has been on a ward for more than 22 weeks after contracting a rare bone infection.

He calls himself Traction Man to vent his frustration, with his website including a Hospital Food Bingo board game with photos of his meals for readers to identify.

"There's almost a general theme of wallpaper paste made with milk - that's what most of the food seems to taste like," he said.

"Today was vegetable moussaka. I posted a picture, but so far it's stumped everyone."

He said apart from the food his treatment by nursing and medical staff had been "superb".

GET ready for cholesterol!!

The world's biggest hamburger has just been revealed at the USA, weighing in at a whopping 82.5 kilograms.

The massive meal costs about \$600 and is available at Mallie's Sports Grill and Bar in Southgate, Michigan.

The world record meal includes a massive meat pattie which is baked for 15 hours before being topped with several kilos of cheese, lettuce and tomato and wheeled out into the restaurant on a trolley.

And the bun itself took eight hours to bake, according to restaurant owner Steve Mallie.

"Being in the Guinness World Records is the greatest achievement we've ever done."

"I've worked my entire life to build this restaurant and being able to have the notoriety of Guinness makes it just that bit more rewarding," he said.



A glimpse of the humungous hamburger!