

Price rises due to PBS

THE workings of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme is responsible for the March quarter surge in pharmaceutical prices as seen in the Australian Bureau of Statistics, according to Medicines Australia.

"The fall of the pharmaceutical price index throughout the year to December 2009 quarter was largely due to patients reaching the PBS safety net and paying either a reduced co-payment in the case of general patients, or no co-payment in the case of concession card holders," said Medicines Australia ceo Dr Brendan Shaw.

According to Shaw, the apparent price rise for the Mar quarter was due to patients reaching the PBS safety net and paying either a reduced co-payment for medicines or no co-payment for concession card holders.

Shaw responded to speculation which suggested the price rise was due to price hikes by manufacturers, saying "the apparent annual surge in pharmaceutical prices each March quarter is a product of Government policy rather than any changes in pharmaceutical company pricing policy".

API half year soars 54.5%

AUSTRALIAN Pharmaceutical Industries has released its half year results for the period ending 28 Feb, which reveal a net profit increase of 54% to \$10.3 million.

Overall sales for the period were \$1.85 billion, with pharmacy sales revenue of \$1.43 billion up 7.4% on the previous corresponding period.

MD Stephen Roche said the API pharmacy division was continuing to grow solidly "despite a very competitive and dynamic regulatory environment."

"The division has focused on working capital and consumer trading terms, whilst at the same time planning for the continued PBS reforms," he said, adding that API's alliance with Alphaharm "has continued to deliver value and positions the company to deal with competitive pressures in the growing generics market".

He also said that new formats introduced for Soul Pattinson and Pharmacist Advice, along with the API member program, had been well accepted and had "secured a strong foothold in the core pharmacy categories".

The retail division recorded

comparable store sales growth in Priceline of 2% "in what has been one of the most competitive markets experienced," Roche said.

"Our significant investment in the brand through media and other mediums has paid off, with consumers recognising the value and quality offering in both our Priceline and franchised Priceline Pharmacy stores".

He confirmed that API was continuing to focus on controlled expansion of Priceline, aiming for 400 stores in 2011.

The Priceline ClubCard loyalty scheme now has a member base exceeding 3.1m members, making it one of the biggest retail loyalty schemes in Australia.

And API's Revitalise supply chain consolidation program is well under way, with the first distribution centre in Melbourne close to finalising transition to an integrated retail/pharmacy operation.

Roche confirmed previous guidance of an expectation of \$24.6m profit for the full year, adding "we continue to ensure the company is in a sustainable, profitable position".

ASMI urges NRT

THE Australian Self-Medication Industry today called on the government to "embrace Nicotine Replacement Therapy" as part of its package to reduce smoking.

The move follows a govt move announced overnight which will see taxes on cigarettes increase, as well as uniform packaging for all brands of tobacco products.

ASMI executive director, Juliet Seifert, said the Government's National Preventative Health Taskforce had already suggested subsidising NRT to help people to quit smoking, possibly via the PBS or telephone help services such as Quitline.

"Nicotine Replacement Therapy is an approach that has been scientifically demonstrated to have a significant impact in reducing smoking," she said.

More AusPARs

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration has published new Australian Public Assessment Reports detailing the prescription medicine application and approval process for Abatacept (rch), Ropivacaine and Telmisartan.

See www.tga.gov.au.

May MIMS Monthly Medicine Update

NEW INDICATIONS

Micardis (**telmisartan**) is now indicated in the prevention of cardiovascular morbidity and mortality in patients 55 years or older with coronary artery disease, peripheral artery disease, previous stroke, transient ischaemic attack or high risk diabetes with evidence of end organ damage. The recommended dose is 80 mg once daily.

Erbix 5mg/ml (**cetuximab**) is now indicated in the treatment of patients with epidermal growth factor receptor (EGFR) expressing, K-RAS wild type metastatic colorectal cancer in combination with chemotherapy and as a single agent in those who have failed or are intolerant to oxaliplatin based therapy. Erbix is also now indicated for the treatment of squamous cell cancer of the head and neck in combination with platinum based chemotherapy for recurrent and/or metastatic disease.

Seroquel (**quetiapine fumarate**) is now indicated as monotherapy in the treatment of children and adolescents aged 10 to 17 years with acute mania associated with bipolar I disorder and in the treatment of schizophrenia in adolescents aged 13 to 17 years. In acute mania monotherapy, the total daily dose for the first five days of therapy is 50 mg (Day 1), 100 mg (Day 2), 200 mg (Day 3), 300 mg (Day 4) and 400 mg (Day 5). After Day 5, the dose should be adjusted within the effective dose range of 400 to 600 mg/day depending upon the clinical response and tolerability of the patient. In the treatment of schizophrenia in adolescents aged 13 to 17 years, the total daily dose for the first five days of therapy is 50 mg (Day 1), 100 mg (Day 2), 200 mg (Day 3), 300 mg (Day 4) and 400 mg (Day 5). After Day 5, the dose should be adjusted within the effective dose range of 400 to 800 mg/day depending upon the clinical response and tolerability of the patient.

Seroquel XR (**quetiapine fumarate**) is now indicated in the treatment of generalised anxiety disorder in adults. Initial dosing should begin at 50 mg on Day 1 and 2, increased to 150 mg on Day 3 and 4. Efficacy was demonstrated with Seroquel XR at doses ranging from 50 to 300 mg/day, however no additional benefit was seen in the 300 mg group compared to the 150 mg group. Doses above 150 mg/day are not recommended.

NEW FORMULATIONS

Rebif (**interferon beta-1a (rch)**) is now available in cartridges for the treatment of ambulatory patients with multiple sclerosis who have experienced two or more relapses within the last 2 years. The cartridges are for multidose use in one patient only. Rebif cartridges must be administered with RebiSmart, a re-usable autoinjector device. Cartridges should be discarded within 21 days after first use.

Rebif cartridges are available as a PBS Authority item containing 132 microgram/1.5 ml in packs of 4.

Stalevo (**levodopa/carbidopa/entacapone**) is now available in two new strengths as 75/18.75/200 mg and 125/31.25/200 mg tablets for the management of patients with Parkinson's disease who are experiencing motor fluctuations. They are available as a PBS Streamlined Authority item [3305 Parkinson disease in patients being treated with levodopa-decarboxylase inhibitor combinations who are experiencing fluctuations in motor function due to end-of-dose effect; 3306 Parkinson disease in patients stabilised on concomitant treatment with levodopa-decarboxylase inhibitor combinations and entacapone] in packs of 200 tablets.

SAFETY RELATED CHANGES

When **cetuximab** (Erbix 5 mg/mL) is used in combination with radiotherapy or chemotherapy (including infusional fluorouracil, capecitabine or platinum compounds), patients may experience an increased incidence of specific adverse reactions. Refer to full product information for specific details. Decreased haemoglobin to 8.07 mmol/L males, 7.45 mmol/L females on at least one occasion occurred in 11% of **quetiapine** (Seroquel XR) patients in all trials including open label extensions. In short-term placebo controlled trials, decreased haemoglobin to 8.07 mmol/L males, 7.45 mmol/L females on at least one occasion in 8.3% of quetiapine patients compared to 6.2% of placebo patients was observed.

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.

Accounting

Legal

Financing

Investments

Stay across
it all with
advice that
matters.

 Guild

A pharmacy hotel!

THE Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health in the USA is set to acquire the Crowne Plaza Hotel in the state's central city of Worcester for a cool US\$16.8m.

The property will house pharmacy students as well as undergoing renovations and conversions to create some of the hotel's spaces into additional classrooms and laboratory facilities.

The extra hotel conversions are reportedly set to cost US\$2m extra.

Travel Specials

WELCOME to *Pharmacy Daily's* travel feature. Each week we highlight a couple of great travel deals which we're sure will be of interest to everyone in the pharmacy industry.

BROOME Sanctuary Resort has a fabulous Mother's Day special over the 8th and 9th May from just \$399 per night for a 2 bedroom apartment.

The deal also includes a welcome drink, full hot brekkie for four and champagne for Mum on the 9th, roundtrip transfers and 20% off treatments at the Spa. For more info call 1800 153 377.

THE Park Hyatt Sydney is celebrating its 20th birthday by offering a Celebration Package for \$765, which includes an overnight stay, brekkie for two, a bottle of Veuve Clicquot, a dessert plate and two glasses of dessert wine as well as overnight parking.

For info call 12 12 34.

ENJOY a weekend at Thredbo with The Denman Hotel and Spa's 'Weekend Escape' package, including accom in king-bedded Balcony Rooms, dinner at The Terrace Restaurant as well as two-day Kosciuszko Thredbo lift tickets from \$845 per person twin share, for more info or to book call (02) 6457 6222.

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New rego standards update

THE new Pharmacy Board of Australia has published a new fact sheet explaining the obligations for pharmacists under the newly approved national Registration Standards (PD 12 Apr).

The flyer gives a short summary of the new standards, with which all registered pharmacists must comply once they take effect from 01 Jul this year.

Continuing professional development, Recency of Practice, Professional Indemnity Insurance, Criminal History, Supervised Practice arrangements, English

Language Skills and Examinations for General Registration are all covered.

There are also more detailed extracts from the standards on the board's new website at www.pharmacyboard.gov.au, with the exception of the Professional Indemnity Insurance standard which will be published when it becomes available, pending a review ordered by the overarching AHPRA (PD 20 Apr).

PSA agm next month

THE Pharmaceutical Society of Australia has advised that its annual general meeting will be held at the Hyatt Hotel in Canberra on Wednesday 12 May.

All financial Ordinary Members of the Society are entitled to attend and vote at the meeting, which will consider the report of the National Board for the year to 31 December - details at www.psa.org.au.

Indigenous baby boost

THE government today announced additional funding for nine mothers and babies services in WA, Vic, SA and Tasmania which aim to give indigenous mothers and babies better access to antenatal care, improving birth weights and providing support in early years.

WANT YOUR SKIN FEELING SILKY SOFT?



Total Beauty Network has teamed up with *Pharmacy Daily* this week, giving readers the chance to win a Designer Brands Body Butter product.

Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner: **Julie Smith** from **Planet Health** who correctly named two of the following flavours from the Body Butter range: Mango, Olive, Coconut and Pomegranate.

Designer Brands Body Butters are made with Natural Oils to assist you in creating long lasting softness whilst nourishing and hydrating your skin. Suitable for all skin types and Dermatologist tested. Leaves a breathable barrier that leaves skin feeling silky soft and protected from the elements. DB Body Butters are made to penetrate skin and provide all day lasting moisture.

For your chance to win a Body Butter product this week, simply send through the correct answer to the daily question below:

What is the benefit of the Body Butter Pump?

Send entry to: comp@pharmacydaily.com.au.

The first correct entry received each day will win.

Hint! Visit www.tbn.com.au.



DISPENSARY CORNER

SAY bye-bye to butt cleavage!

No, it's not a new weight-loss product, it's designer butt patches.

A US designer, Kimberley Brewer has come up with a novel way to deal with unsightly butt-cleavage often exposed when wearing low-rise or hipster pants - a 'Backtacular Gluteal Cleft Shield'.

The adhesive fabric designer patch is made from hypo-allergenic denim and decorated with studs and rhinestones in a range of different colours and styles, and attaches directly to the skin on the lower back.

The patches are currently for sale on the designers website at www.kimberlilyonline.com.

BANDAGES, antiseptic and some weight-loss shakes STAT!

An obese woman in the US has reacted rather violently to being called fat by a 23-year old male at a party, by taking a bite out of his ear!

The pair were reportedly part of a group arguing at a party over the weekend, when the man ripped out the old "well you're fat" line, which of course resulted in the not so common crash tackle and ear bite response.

The chunk of missing ear is currently still MIA, and the woman is now up on a felony assault charge.

ANYONE for a bit of midnight madness?

Anne Arundel Community College in the US is taking a novel approach to surging enrolments, by launching midnight classes.

The psychology course will be offered for students between midnight to three am every Thursday morning.

The idea came to lecturers Dr Matthew Yeazel in a flash after he battled overflowing class loads for first semester students.

The new time slot, Yeazel argues, will allow him to reach more students and is a "bold move" for the "brick and mortar institution".