

## Proactive pharmacists

A NEW online study conducted by Galaxy Research (sponsored by iNova Pharmaceuticals) has revealed that many Australians "unnecessarily" suffer from winter colds because they do not seek the advice of a pharmacist.

The study revealed that 90% of participants chose products that masked symptoms rather than treated the cause of pain, and 70% would seek treatment from 'easily accessible' supermarket or convenience store products, rather than anti-inflammatory pharmacy products.

As a result of the study, pharmacists are being urged to take a more proactive approach to advising customers on treatments that will not only hinder pain, but treat its root cause.

"There are misunderstandings about suitable relief for sore throats and associated symptoms – it is up to the pharmacy staff to educate and provide expert advice as treatments extend to suit everyone's needs," said Gerald Quigley, pharmacist and Associate Fellow of the Australian College of Pharmacy Practice and Management.

## Interventions assist patients

A NATIONAL pharmacy trial utilising the Guild's MedsIndex to improve patient compliance has found that pharmacist interventions had a significant impact on getting patients to take their medications.

132 pharmacies took part in the study, which recruited more than 700 patients on long term medication.

At the start of the trial the patients had a mean MedsIndex score of 65.5, with the interventions resulting in this improving to 77.2 at three months and 81.3 at six months.

"These compliance interventions implemented in the community pharmacy setting led to a significant improvements in patients' medication compliance," said Guild National Councillor, Toni Riley.

"What this shows is that the national implementation of a program based on the intervention used in this trial could result in significant improved compliance for patients on long term medication, and consequential improvements in health outcomes and reduced costs

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to the health system," she added.

The trial was overseen by consulting firm Pricewaterhouse Coopers in conjunction with the University of Sydney, as part of the Fourth CPA R&D program.

The Guild said that the Fifth Agreement includes measures to encourage pharmacists to document clinical interventions.

The findings of the trial can be viewed at [www.guild.org.au](http://www.guild.org.au).

## PSA bipolar module

THIS month's Pharmaceutical Society of Australia online module deals with bipolar disorder.

Presented by Dr Chris Alderman, the module is delivered in four 15-minute units specifically designed for busy pharmacists to allow flexibility in how they access the information.

The podcast, available free to PSA members and gives an overview of bipolar disorder and addresses the available management options

To download the new module go to [www.psa.org.au](http://www.psa.org.au).

## Remicade listing

AN EXTENSION to the PBS listing for Remicade (infliximab) will mean that more patients suffering from fistulising Crohn's disease will be able to access the medication.

The new guidelines no longer rely on the Crohn's Disease Activity Index, which is weighted in favour of patients with luminal disease rather than perianal disease.

A recent report in the Medical Journal of Australia found that about 30% of patients with clinically significant perianal Crohn's disease didn't qualify for PBS-subsidised anti-TNF medication under the previous criteria.

## Kids with diabetes

THE latest report from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare has revealed that there were 8,000 new cases of Type 1 diabetes diagnosed in Australian children

between 2000 and 2008, averaging out at around two new cases a day.

The results also revealed whilst there was a marked rise in diagnosis' between 2000-2004, there was 'little change' noted in new case levels between 2005 and 2008.

## August MIMS Monthly Medicine Update

### NEW PRODUCTS

**Aloxi (palonosetron hydrochloride)** is a selective serotonin subtype 3 (5-HT<sub>3</sub>) receptor antagonist with anti-emetic and anti-nauseant effects. It is indicated for the prevention of nausea and vomiting induced by cytotoxic chemotherapy. The recommended dose is 250 µg administered as a single dose approximately 30 minutes before the start of chemotherapy. Aloxi 250 µg/5 mL solution for injection is available as a single pack of 1 vial.

**Azarga eye drops (brinzolamide + timolol maleate)** is a combination suspension. These two components decrease elevated intraocular pressure (IOP) primarily by reducing aqueous humour secretion, but do so by different mechanisms of action. Brinzolamide exhibits a high affinity for and is a potent inhibitor of human carbonic anhydrase II (CA-II). Timolol is a non-selective beta-blocker that has no significant intrinsic sympathomimetic, direct myocardial depressant or local anaesthetic (membrane-stabilising) activity. Azarga eye drops are indicated for the reduction of intraocular pressure (IOP) in patients with open-angle glaucoma or ocular hypertension for whom monotherapy with either component provides insufficient IOP reduction. Azarga is contraindicated in patients with a history of hypersensitivity to brinzolamide and other sulphonamides, timolol, other

beta-blockers or any other component of the medication; bronchial asthma, a history of bronchial asthma, or severe chronic obstructive pulmonary disease; severe allergic rhinitis and bronchial hyperactivity; sinus bradycardia, second or third degree atrioventricular block, overt cardiac failure, or cardiogenic shock; hyperchloraemic acidosis; severe renal impairment. The recommended dose is one drop of Azarga in the conjunctival sac of the affected eye(s) twice daily. Azarga is available on prescription as a 8 mL drop-tainer dispenser containing 5 mL suspension of brinzolamide (1%) and timolol (0.5% as timolol maleate).

**Cimzia (certolizumab pegol)** is a recombinant, humanised antibody Fab fragment that is expressed in an *Escherichia coli* bacterial expression system, subsequently purified and conjugated to polyethylene glycol (PEG). Certolizumab pegol selectively neutralises and has a high affinity for human TNFα and was shown to neutralise membrane associated and soluble human TNFα in a dose-dependent manner. Cimzia is indicated for the treatment of moderate to severe active rheumatoid arthritis (RA) in adult patients combined with methotrexate (MTX) in case of either an inadequate response or intolerance to previous therapy with one or more disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs (DMARDs) or as monotherapy in case

of a contraindication or intolerance to MTX. Cimzia is contraindicated in active tuberculosis or other severe infections such as sepsis or opportunistic infections; concurrent administration of Cimzia and anakinra (an interleukin-1 receptor antagonist) and moderate to severe heart failure (NYHA classes III/IV). There is no experience with the use of Cimzia in children or adolescents below 18 years of age. Cimzia treatment should be initiated and supervised by specialist physicians experienced in the diagnosis and treatment of rheumatoid arthritis. Cimzia is administered by subcutaneous injection at a dose of 400 mg in adults (2 x 200 mg subcutaneous injections) at weeks 0, 2 and 4, then 200 mg every 2 weeks or 400 mg every 4 weeks. Cimzia is available as 200 mg/1 mL in a single use pre-filled glass syringe (2's) in a carton with 2 alcohol pads.

Targin contains **oxycodone hydrochloride** (a full opioid receptor agonist) and **naloxone hydrochloride dehydrate**. Targin is indicated in the management of moderate to severe chronic pain unresponsive to non-narcotic analgesia. The naloxone component is indicated for the therapy and/or prophylaxis of opioid-induced constipation. Targin is contraindicated in situations where opioids are contraindicated including concurrent administration of MAO-inhibitors and for 2 weeks after their cessation. The

analgesic efficacy of Targin tablets is equivalent to OxyContin tablets. The usual starting dose for adults and children over 12 years who are opioid-naïve or patients presenting with moderate to severe chronic pain uncontrolled by weaker opioids is one Targin tablet 10/5 mg at 12 hour intervals, or one Targin tablet 5/25 mg at 12 hour intervals for patients with mild hepatic impairment or renal impairment. Targin is available on prescription as 5/25mg, 10/5 mg, 20/10 mg, 40/20 mg controlled release tablets (20's).

### NEW INDICATIONS

**Roferon-A (interferon alfa-2a)** is now indicated in advanced and/or metastatic renal cell carcinoma.

### SAFETY RELATED CHANGES

**Idiopathic thrombocytopenic purpura, lymphadenopathy and acute disseminated encephalomyelitis** have been spontaneously reported during post-approval use of **Gardasil (quadrivalent human papilloma virus (types 6, 11, 16, 18) recombinant vaccine)**.

**RotaTeq (rotavirus vaccine, live, oral, pentavalent, MSD)** is now contraindicated in individuals with severe combined immunodeficiency disease (SCID).

**Tolvon (mianserin hydrochloride BP)** is now contraindicated with the concomitant use of monoamine oxidase (MAO) inhibitors.

### NEW FORMULATIONS

**Ziprasidone mesilate** is now available as an intramuscular injection (Zeldox IM). Zeldox IM is indicated for the acute treatment and short term management of agitation and disturbed behaviour in patients with schizophrenia and related psychoses when oral therapy is not appropriate. It is contraindicated in recent acute myocardial infarction; uncompensated heart failure; conditions with a potential to increase QT interval; QT interval prolongation or history of QT prolongation, congenital long QT syndrome, and use with other drugs known to increase the QT interval. The recommended dose is 10-20mg administered as required up to a maximum dose of 40 mg/day. Zeldox IM is available as a powder for injection in a single dose vial as ziprasidone mesilate equivalent to 30 mg ziprasidone (20 mg/mL ziprasidone when reconstituted). An ampoule containing 1.2 mL of Sterile Water for Injections Ph. Eur. is also supplied for reconstitution purposes.

**Norvir (ritonavir)** is now available as Norvir 100 mg film coated tablets. The recommended dose of Norvir tablets is 600 mg (6 tablets) twice daily.

*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*

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## eRx accreditation

**THE** Pharmacy Guild-backed eRx Script Exchange has successfully completed an independent Security Assessment and Privacy Impact Assessment, which is a key condition of the Fifth Community Pharmacy Agreement ePrescription Incentive Payment scheme.

The assessments are based on the National eAuthentication Framework, and also ensure all requirements of the Privacy Act are met by the system.

Guild President Kos Sclavos said the approvals "underscore our endorsement of eRx Script Exchange as a national provider of exchange services".

## 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.

**SHOAL Bay Resort & Spa** is offering a special rate on stays in its range of 1 bedroom self contained waterview apartments.

Prices for overnight stays start at \$175 including \$100 worth of bonus inclusions such as 11am late check-out, a bottle of bubbly on arrival, unlimited visits to its Aqua Spa Wellbeing facilities and undercover car parking.

Call 1800 181 810 for details.

**AAT Kings**, coach tour specialists are celebrating the launch of Virgin Blue flights to Ayers Rock by offering three-day Uluru and Kings Canyon packages from \$994pp, twin share.

Packages include a guided walk at Kata Tjuta (incl Walpa Gorge), an Uluru sunset viewing, sunrise climb and cultural walk, a visit to Mutitjulu Waterhole and a guided climb to the rim of Kings Canyon.

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## Guild takes home award

**THE** Pharmacy Guild of Australia's healthlinks.net offshoot has been awarded an Australian Business Award for Innovation, at this year's Australian Business Awards (ABA).

The award followed healthlinks' recent completion of a project to improve the appearance and accessibility of Consumer Medicines Information (CMI) for Australians with print disabilities.

healthlinks.net was one of 105 businesses to take out an award, out of a total of 1849 entries.

The project included creating technical infrastructure capable of delivering CMIs in multiple formats, and converting more than 1500 CMI word documents into XML.

The improvements to the system mean that healthlinks.net can now "provide real time distribution of CMIs to pharmacy dispensing systems and online services; deliver CMIs in standard (10pt) and large (18pt) print at the point of dispense; deliver CMIs in HTML for

websites, as well as to deliver CMIs in synthetic voice audio files and Braille (upon request).

In addition to these changes, healthlinks.net has created the "most up-to-date" central repository of drug information in Australia at [www.medicines.org.au](http://www.medicines.org.au).

Services currently provided on this website include the most current CMIs in HTML, standard and large print PDF; and PIs in standard print PDF, with the next stage to roll out the CMI Print application to all dispensing software vendors and complete the online delivery of CMIs and PIs to the TGA.

The Guild has also said that come September [medicines.org.au](http://medicines.org.au) will host synthetic voice audio CMIs, and that plans are in the works to create a mobile version which would enable consumers to listen to the audio CMIs on mobile devices, including iPhones and smartphones using the Android and Windows Mobile system.

## WIN A BLACKMORES PRIZE PACK



**Pharmacy Daily** has teamed up with **Blackmores** and in the lead up to the 2010 Blackmores Sydney Running Festival is giving away exciting prize packs as part of this week's competition.

Each Blackmores Sydney Running Festival prize pack contains Blackmores Men's Performance Multi, Blackmores Women's Vitality Multi and a Blackmores Sydney Running Festival early bird event singlet and cap.

For a chance to win this exciting prize pack, simply send through the correct answer to the question below:

**True or False: Blackmores Women's  
Vitality Multi contains iodine?**

Email your answer to: [comp@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:comp@pharmacydaily.com.au).

The first correct entry received will win!

Hint: Visit [www.blackmores.com.au](http://www.blackmores.com.au)

Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner: **Samantha Andersen** from **Symbion Pharmacy Services**.



## DISPENSARY CORNER

**ANYONE** for 2nd hand dentures?

Winston Churchill's dentures have been sold at an English auction for a whopping \$27,000.

The former English prime minister led the country between 1940 - 1945 (during WWII) and again between 1951 - 1955.

His specially made dentures were an ever present facet of his life, designed to fit into his mouth loosely, in order to preserve his famous lisp.

Former owner of the dentures, the son of the man who created them, Nigel Cudlipp, told media that his father used to regale him with tales of how Churchill would put his thumb behind the front of the teeth and flick them out of his mouth when frustrated.

"My father used to say he could tell how well the war effort was going by how far they went across the room and whether they hit the opposite wall," Cudlipp said.

**THANKS** a bunch for eating my toe Kiko!

A 48-year old man, Jerry Douthett, who woke in a drunken stupor to find his Jack Russell had gnawed off half of the big toe on his right foot has praised his pooch Kiko for saving his life.

Upon waking in a pool of his own blood and seeing Kiko sporting a new blood coloured coat, Douthett woke his wife, a registered nurse, who immediately rushed the him to hospital.

It was in the hospital that the story gets weird-er, as it was there that doctors discovered Douthett was in fact actually suffering type 2 diabetes and his gnawed toe was so badly infected by complications caused by the disease that surgeons had to amputate what was left.

"The moral of the story is that the dog saved my life, because otherwise I never would have gone in to see a doctor," said Douthett.

His wife Rosee told local media that she was 'amazed' at her dog's ability to sense the danger to its master.

"He kind of chewed off the infected part and stopped at the good bone," she said.