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Malaria treatment

A NEW PBS subsidy is available this month for patients suffering from malaria due to *Plasmodium falciparum*.

Novartis' Riamet (artemether 20mg with lumefantrine 120mg) is the combination of two anti-malarials to treat acute, uncomplicated malaria caused by the parasite.

About 350 cases of malaria reported in Australia are due to the bug, with clinical studies showing a 96% cure rate after 28 days of treatment with Riamet.

The tablets are indicated for patients 12 years and older, but registration and reimbursement of a dispersible tablet for infants and children has recently been approved, with a PBS listing expected later in the year.

Singapore recruits

THE Chief Pharmacist of Singapore is in Australia at present, and will today brief students at the University of Sydney on career opportunities available for Australian pharmacists in the Singapore public healthcare sector.

Industry brings in big bucks

PHARMACEUTICAL and medicinal exports in Australia for 2009-10 tallied to \$4.12 billion, up two percent year on year, according to the latest statistics released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Responding to the June quarter results, Medicines Australia has said that the figures confirm the pharmaceutical industry as "Australia's most valuable hi-technology exporter" and highlight "the significant contribution Australia's medicines industry is making to the economy."

"The industry has continued to export more goods around the world than any other hi-tech industries, including the car industry, the wine industry and scientific and medical equipment," said Medicines Australia chief executive Dr Brendan Shaw.

"Australia's overall exports fell 11 per cent in the 12 months to June 2010 compared with the previous year," Shaw added.

"Pharmaceuticals were one of the very few manufacturing industries to have actually posted a growth in

a very challenging global market. Most other manufactured exports declined during this time," he said.

Currently employing around 14,000 Aussies and having grown 800% over the last twenty years, the medicines industry in Australia, according to Medicines Australia, is an "unsung hero".

"It is precisely these sorts of results that show why business certainty and a predictable policy environment are so important to the Australian medicines industry," Shaw concluded.

Coalition proposes Health Card indexing

THE Federal Opposition says that if it comes topower in the upcoming election it will index the income threshold for the Commonwealth Seniors Health Card to inflation.

Other coalition health policies include a proposal for a \$10,000 annual bonus for nurse practitioners who practice in regional towns where there is no GP, as well as a pilot "rural bonded scholarship scheme" for dentists.

Opposition leader Tony Abbott, who was previously Minister for Health in the Howard govt, has also promised to spend \$3.1b on expanding hospital beds, with the move criticised by many parts of the health sector because the policy doesn't take into account the need to reduce demand for hospitals by improving primary care across the Australian community.

The Biggest Loser

JILLIAN Michaels, the personal trainer made famous by the hit US 'Biggest Loser' television show is facing down the barrel of a \$10m lawsuit over claims her diet supplement contains toxic ingredients.

In her claim the un-named defendant alleges that the supplement "might kill you" and that it is made with a "potentially lethal combination of toxic ingredients".

Not a stranger to controversy, Michaels is also facing three similar lawsuits, including one surrounding her popular 'Jillian Michael Maximum Strength Fat Burner' product, and two revolving around her 'Calorie Control' appetite suppressant.

FDA approval

THE US Food and Drug Administration has approved a new formulation of Sanofi Aventis' Taxotere (docetaxel) intravenous chemotherapeutic agent.

Indicated for use in treating patients at specific stages of 5 types of cancer: metastatic and adjuvant breast cancer, metastatic androgen independent prostate cancer, advanced non-small cell lung cancer, advanced gastric adenocarcinoma and locally advanced squamous cell carcinoma of the head and neck, the new formula comes in a one-ial dose which eliminates the need for initial dilution.

NSW assistant finalists

THE organisers of the upcoming NSW Pharmacy Assistant Conference have named 19 finalists in the state's 2010 Pharmacy Assistant of the Year competition.

The finalists will compete in a Judging Day at the NSW Pharmacy Guild branch office on Friday 27th August, which will be followed by the State Finalist Awards Dinner at Bondi Beach.

The next day the NSW PA conference will kick off at the Swiss Grand Hotel.

Tickets for the dinner are still available to purchase at \$85 and including a 3-course menu, beverages, guest speaker Velia Nicholls from Courage to Speak, and live entertainment.

For more information see www.nswpharmacyassistant.com.au.

GMiA consultation

THE Australian Competition and Consumer Commission is inviting submissions from any interested parties on its proposed conditional authorisation of the Generic Medicines Industry Association Code of Conduct (PD Wed).

The approval proposes that manufacturers fully disclose the costs of any incentives and promotional activities provided to pharmacists.

The ACCC is requesting written feedback by Friday 20th Aug, and is also happy to meet with stakeholders who notify it of their request to hold a 'pre-decision conference' in writing by 17 Aug.

The final determination is expected to be made in September.

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:

How many walking & running events make up the Blackmores Sydney Running Festival?

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

The first correct entry received will win!

Hint: Visit www.blackmores.sydneyrunningfestival.com.au

Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner: **Hayley Fejer** from **High Tech Health**.



Prostate campaign

PROSTATE health organisations are calling for the federal govt to fund a national campaign urging Aussie men over 50 to visit their GP to talk about prostate testing.

The calls come on the back of new research presented at this week's 'Advancing Quality of Life' prostate cancer conference on the Gold Coast which revealed that prostate cancer mortality rates could be reduced by as much as 44% through the use of prostate-specific antigen blood tests.

"In the light of this new evidence, the challenge now is to work out how to fund and frame a new campaign targeting Australian men," said the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia's ceo Andrew Giles.

"There are 3,300 Australian men dying every year from prostate cancer and we believe better use of PSA testing can help save lives. To do this we need significant Federal assistance," he added.

CPD Calendar

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

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

28 Aug-02 Sep: 70th FIP World Congress, Lisbon, Portugal - www.fip.org/lisbon2010.

11-12 Sep: Australasian Conference for Compounding Pharmacists - www.accp.net.au.

15-18 Sep: Pharmacy 2010, the Pharmacy Management Conference on Hamilton Island - www.pharmacyconference.com.au.

28-31 Oct: PSA's Pharmacy Australia Congress in Melbourne - details www.pac10.com.au.

11-14 Nov: The 36th National SHPA Conference, Medicines Management 2010 in Melbourne - mm2010shpa.com.

01-10 May 2011: The PSA's 2011 Offshore Conference in Venice, Italy and Salzburg, Austria - expressions of interest at www.psa.org.au.

NPS pain outreach programs

THE NPS is inviting pharmacists who are providing outreach services to Aboriginal healthcare sectors to enrol in its NPS Outreach Pharmacists for Remote Aboriginal Health Services program, as well as to attend workshops over the next month on chronic pain management free of charge.

Designed to improve the health of remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents, the NPS' outreach program provides quality use of medicines education to communities and support services for pharmacists working with staff at local Aboriginal health services.

"Participating in the outreach pharmacist program will give you the skills to deliver medicines-use education on chronic pain management while building professional networks," said NPS' acting ceo, Karen Kaye.

"Many outreach pharmacists say the program is invaluable in connecting them with others doing similar work, enabling them to share experiences and professional knowledge.

"NPS also provides ongoing support to those in the program which can help address feelings of being isolated professionally," she added.

The NPS' upcoming pain workshop is set to focus in on the complexities of pain, ways to treat individual pain patients and information on pharmacological and non-pharmacological pain management therapies.

Dementia fears

LOSING mental independence is the greatest fear for aging Aussies, according to a new study from Bupa Care Services.

The survey of 1,200 Australians over 50 also revealed that whilst nine out of ten participants expected they would need someone to care for them in old age, only two thirds had "given thought" to how they would pay for that care.

In addition 72% of participants would like the govt to take on more aged care responsibility and 60% said that it was "very important" to have access to straightforward information and advice on aged care, particularly dementia.

The workshops are also tailored to provide attendees with effective facilitation skills in order to be able to host educational sessions with staff at Aboriginal health services, and to develop cultural competency in working with these services.

The NPS said it will cover the costs for eligible pharmacists, including travel, background reading materials, workshop materials, teleconference support and "other useful materials".

The next training session is set to take place in Broome from 10-11 Aug.

For more info, or to sign up call Pippa Travers-Mason at NPS on (02) 8217 8650 or 0402 305 306.

Sun beds & cancer

THE University of Sydney has released the results of its 'Australian Melanoma Family Study' which revealed that the use of sunbeds increased the risk of melanoma in people aged between 18 and 39.

The project involving 23 participants, is the first study to examine the link between sunbeds and melanoma in young adults, and found that those using the UV machines increased their chance of developing skin cancer by 41% compared to those that had never baked in a sunbed.

"Participants who began using sunbeds before 20 years of age or reported more than 10 sunbed sessions during their life doubled their risk of melanoma," said co-author Professor Bruce Armstrong from the University of Sydney.

Researchers also found that sunbeds caused around three quarters of melanomas in users under 30.

"If we extrapolate to all cases of melanoma and not just those among people who had used a sunbed, we estimate that 16 per cent of melanoma cases in patients aged 18-29 years and 3 per cent in patients aged 30-39 years would be prevented by avoiding sunbed exposure," said senior author of the study, Professor Graham Mann.

"The dangers of using sunbeds are now well known, but there is a special message from this research for young people.

"Avoid them completely," he added.



DISPENSARY CORNER

NEXT time just pull over!

A US bus company is facing a lawsuit over an incident which saw a bus driver try to throw up whilst driving a bus full of schoolchildren.

If vomiting whilst driving wasn't bad enough, the comedy of errors (which could have easily flipped to a tragedy) included the bus driver falling out of the open bus door through which he was surreptitiously attempting to puke.

The bus then continued on driverless for a few metres before being halted by a ditch.

The lawsuit, led by a woman who claims her daughter was injured in the crash, could now see the company pay out a total of around US\$48,000.

NUTRITION matters.

An Indian family has successfully sued Asiad Airways for failing to provide them with their pre-requested vegetarian meals, whilst on a 13-hour long-haul flight from Canada to India.

The nutrition conscious travellers were offered a free flight by the airline, however opted to take the matter to court and won 77,000 rupees (around \$1820) for their troubles.

GET this man serious hand sanitiser!

A Chinese citizen has been hauled out of a toilet cesspit after two days of being stuck neck deep in nasty.

The man, who had fallen into the toilet whilst using it, was quickly sucked into the fecal pit below, unable to move or wriggle his way out for 48 hours.

His family had reported him missing to authorities the day of his disappearance, but as no-one had used the outhouse following his fall, he remained undiscovered despite crying out for rescue for two days.

It was not until a until a kind passer-by heard his weakening calls and stopped to investigate that emergency services were called in to dislodge him.

"As soon as he came out, he rushed to a nearby pond to have a bath," a fireman told local media.