

Pharmacy DAILY

Monday 01 February 2010

PHARMACYDAILY.COM.AU

Time to Get Healthy

THE NSW Government is encouraging residents to make use of its free individually tailored health information and coaching service, which it says has already helped over 2000 people improve their lifestyles.

Offering free health coaching and guides to healthy eating and exercise, as well as information specifically for health professionals the service is available via phone (1300 806 258) or online at www.gethealthynsw.com.au.

The service has been developed and funded by NSW Health.

Friday's Pouchie win

CONGRATULATIONS to Anna So from Harrison's Pharmacy in Rhodes NSW who was last Friday's lucky Pouchie competition winner.

IGR3 - health spending to soar

THE government today issued the long-awaited third Intergenerational Report (IGR3), which predicts that health spending will increase to around 7.1% of GDP in 2049-50.

That's a huge increase from this year's 4.0%, with health expenditure accounting for more than two thirds of the overall increase in spending.

However unlike previous reports, *Australia to 2050: Future Challenges*, doesn't make a detailed long-term prediction of the growth in the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, instead only forecasting that PBS spending will not grow at all over the next ten years to 2019/20.

Currently PBS accounts for 0.7% of GDP, and while overall health costs are predicted to increase slightly from 4.0 to 4.1% of GDP

over the next decade, this increase is attributed to hospitals rather than other areas of the health budget.

Health spending over the next 40 years is modelled using an "aggregate model" of total health care expenditure, based on trends in the cost of health services per head of population by age and gender, combined with projected population changes.

Major changes in methodology with the new report has seen estimates for non-demographic growth in pharmaceutical benefits done using a linear model, resulting in "higher projections for hospital expenditure and lower projections for other expenditure [including the PBS] than would occur if the projection methodology for IGR2007 was used."

Treasurer Wayne Swan said the figures highlighted the need to build Australia's productivity and workforce participation.

He announced a \$43m package of measures to support mature age work, including initiatives to "support older Australians at risk of losing jobs due to a health condition, injury or disability."

Pharmacy E-Bulletin

THIS week's edition of the Repatriation General Hospital Pharmacy E-Bulletin gives an overview of safety issues with drugs used in obesity management, including sibutramine, phentermine and orlistat.

Copies of the bulletin available via chris.alderman@rgh.sa.gov.au.

Tobacco hits cancer

BAYER has commenced a clinical stage I study using a patient-specific vaccination created from tobacco plants for the treatment of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.

It is hoped that the vaccine will trigger an immune defence response in the study's human test subjects, which will target and destroy the malignant cells.

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FDA Tykerb expansion

THE FDA has expanded its approval for Tykerb (lapatinib) in combination with Femara (letrozole) to include the treatment of hormone positive and HER2-positive advanced breast cancer in postmenopausal women for whom hormonal therapy is indicated.

Nurses call for calm

THE Australian Nursing Federation and the Australian College of Nurse Practitioners have issued a joint statement calling for a standstill in hostilities over the issue of nurse practitioners being granted access to Medicare and the PBS.

"Unfortunately an issue that should be about providing patients with the care they require has spiraled into a turf war," said ANF Federal Secretary Ged Kearney.

"Giving nurse practitioners access to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) and the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) is about caring for consumers," she added.

The nursing bodies accuse doctors and pharmacists of being "prepared to deny patients - some of who are waiting up to six weeks for treatment - more choice."

"On the one hand you have doctors saying they are over-stretched and on the other hand they refuse to share healthcare with capable nurse practitioners... This is an attempt to keep all rebates in doctors' pockets," said Kearney.

The statement reiterates that concerns over NP safety are not warranted given their level of education and experience coupled with strict regulations imposed upon them.

"Nurse practitioners can offer a range of health management and procedural services to patients in a fast and effective manner that will benefit the whole community," Kearney said.

"Nurse practitioners should not have to seek doctor approval for patient care they are capable of doing autonomously," she added.

WIN A PURE SPA PACK



Pharmacy Daily is giving readers the chance to win an All Pure Spa® baby pack every day this week, courtesy of Aromababy.

Valued at \$45, Pure Spa® offers a simple choice in pure and natural baby skincare and an easy way to care for your precious baby and yourself the way Mother Nature intended.

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DISPENSARY CORNER



WHO was the mummy's mummy?

The world's imagination is set to be re-captured by the boy-pharaoh, Tutankhamun, with the secrets of his DNA to be revealed later this month by Egyptian antiquities authorities.

They claim to have tracked King Tut's lineage, with findings set to reveal if the two children buried with him were in fact his own and who his mother was.

THE latest must-have miracle cure in the USA is a lotion originally designed to treat the irritated udders of dairy cows.

Bag Balm is described as a 'goosey, yellow-green ointment' which has been around for more than 100 years.

Although marketed for use with animals it's highly popular for people too, particularly during the current northern winter.

It's said to be effective for a variety of complaints incl dry skin, psoriasis, burns, nappy rash, sunburn and even saddle sores.

A POLISH man is back at his job as a beekeeper, some weeks after he was found to be alive as his coffin was being sealed up.

76-year-old Josef Guzy had collapsed and been pronounced dead, but during his interment the undertaker detected a faint pulse and called an ambulance.

Paramedics, who had previously found no sign of life, discovered he had a pulse rate of around 20 beats per minute and managed to resuscitate him.

A spokesman for the ambulance service said that when Guzy's wife initially called for help after his collapse "an experienced doctor with a specialist qualification in resuscitation found that the patient was not breathing, there was no heartbeat and the body had cooled - all the characteristics of death."

Doctors have described it as a case of suspended animation, while Mr Guzy says he owes his life to the undertaker.

"The first thing I did when I got out of hospital was take him a pot of honey," he said.

Diet supplement scare

THE Therapeutic Goods

Administration is reviewing its approval of the body-building supplement Hydroxycut Hardcore, after a 23 year old Sydneysider was hospitalised for illnesses following a course of the supplement.

The man was admitted to RPA suffering from severe 'acute hepatitis' - becoming the first reported Australian case of acute hepatotoxicity associated with the weight-loss product Hydroxycut Hardcore.

According to RPA doctors, the man did not exceed the daily recommended dosage of the dietary and muscle toning aid, and made a full recovery following the cessation of his ten-week old supplement regime.

"We advise medical practitioners and consumers in this country to be wary of the product and call on the TGA to re-examine its continued availability," said doctors Nudrat Rashid of Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and Jason Grant of Ryde Hospital in a joint letter.

Last year the US Food and Drug Administration urged US consumers to avoid use of Hydroxycut Hardcore, following 23 individual reports of serious health complications caused by the supplement and one case of death.

According to the TGA, the US Hydroxycut Hardcore formula is different to the Australian version, but it has issued a warning to consumers and healthcare providers over its use and whilst reviewing its approval, has asked that users who develop any liver disease symptoms seek medical advice and report back 'such events'.

Medicines Safety update out

TODAY the first-ever issue of the Medicines Safety Update has been published on the TGA website - formally replacing its former incarnation, the Australian Adverse Drug Reactions Bulletin.

The TGA said the move marked "a new era of medicines safety monitoring and communication of risk-benefit information", with the Update offering practical info on drug safety as well as the latest data on emerging safety issues.

Risk management is a key focus of the new arrangements, with the former Australian Drug Reactions Assessment Committee being replaced by a new expert advisory committee on medicines safety called ASCOM - the Advisory Committee on the Safety of Medicines.

ASCOM exists as a statutory committee in its own right, and has broader and enhanced terms of reference with a key role being the provision of expert advice to the TGA about the "appropriateness of risk management plans and risk minimisation strategies for new high-risk medicines.

Under new guidelines adopted last year applications submitted for

new chemical entities, paediatric use, new dosage forms, new routes of administration and significant extensions of indication, are now required to include a Risk Management Plan with post-marketing pharmacovigilance arrangements for monitoring the medicine after approval.

The Update also confirms that the existing Blue Card system for notification of adverse events and incidents is not changing, with spontaneous adverse event reporting described as "the cornerstone of medicines safety monitoring."

As well as being published on the TGA website the Medicines Safety Update will also be included in the regular NPS *Australian Prescriber* publication.

Suicide follow-up

THE latest data from national mental health charity, SANE Australia has found a surprising lack of follow-up treatment for people suffering from a mental illness who have attempted suicide.

SANE found that of the 285 people it surveyed one in three were not referred for ongoing mental health treatment, and 57% were not offered psychological therapy following a suicide attempt.

The report also found 80% of respondents were not provided with a Crisis Plan to help them, if in the future, they felt they were going to self-harm.

"We know that people with mental illness are already at high risk for suicide, and those who have made a suicide attempt are even more vulnerable," said SANE executive director Barbara Hocking.

"We also know what can help reduce the risk, yet many people who have survived a suicide attempt appear to be left to fend for themselves," she added.

The "5 day after" pill

A NEW type of emergency contraceptive pill has been found to be effective against pregnancy up to five days after sex, according to researchers in Scotland, who found that ulipristal acetate worked "well after" the three day limit of the 'morning after pill' levonorgestrel.

Spray skin boost

SPRAY On Skin is one step closer to becoming a reality after the US Armed Forces Institute of Regenerative Medicine donated US\$450,000 to help its manufacturer Avita Medical speed up its US regulatory approval.

The donation backs up the institute's first US\$1.45m fast track donation in May last year.

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