



Guild Update

This week's update from the Guild

Clinical Bites

ARE you looking to bring more money into your pharmacy business without having to spend dollars on advertising or marketing activities?

Frequently, the most cost effective solution is to simply strengthen relationships with your existing customers with a view to encouraging customer loyalty.

A key tool to assist you in this process is one that is already available in your pharmacy.

Consumer Medication Information (CMI) forms are an underutilised resource available to all Australian pharmacists that can assist them to not only support their patient's efforts towards achieving positive health outcomes, but can also assist the pharmacy to build lasting relationships with patients who are grateful for the additional service they receive.

Pharmacists wishing to learn more about improving their patient's health outcomes in addition to supporting their own pharmacy are encouraged to attend the CMI Clinical Bites session at the Australian Pharmacy Professional Conference and Trade Exhibition (APP), which outlines how best to effectively use these key resources.

The Clinical Bites sessions are a new feature at APP, which runs from 11 – 14 March 2010 at the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre.

The sessions, which run for 30 minutes, offer a succinct update on key clinical issues to assist pharmacists to maintain their professional competency by staying up to date with the latest products, services and technology in the field.

For more information or to register to attend, head to the event website www.appconference.com, email APP Event Coordinator Kim Thorne on info@appconference.com or phone 07 3831 3788.



The Pharmacy
Guild of Australia

Hydroxycut raised last May

THE warning about dietary supplement Hydroxycut (**PD** yesterday) comes almost 9 months after concerns about the product were first highlighted to the TGA.

Although the product was withdrawn in the US in May 2009, at the time the TGA advised that it had been told that the Australian formulation of the product was

Irish drug prices cut

THE prices of almost 300 branded medicines have been reduced in Ireland by 40% this week, with the move set to save taxpayers an estimated €100m (A\$155m) annually.

The move continues the push by the Irish govt to reduce the costs of pharmacy, which also saw a major confrontation with pharmacists last year, which eventually saw the industry back down over dispensing fees.

This latest price cut follows negotiations with the Irish Pharmaceutical Healthcare Association (IPHA), a body which represents most of the major pharmaceutical manufacturers

The current agreement with the IPHA was due to expire in Sep, with the new deal seeing off-patent drug prices slashed 40%.

However proprietary drug prices won't change for 18 mths, with the new pact valid until March 2012.

The IPHA contradicted suggestions that the big price cut showed manufacturers had been overcharging previously, saying that they had instead "recognised the difficult position of the Irish economy and wanted to play their part in helping to reduce costs."

The changes mean that many branded drugs will become cheaper than their generic equivalents.

\$5.4m asthma boost

HEALTH Minister Nicola Roxon today announced an extension of the Asthma Friendly Schools program which will see it extended to provide information and training in pre-schools as well as a specific focus on support for self-management of asthma in adolescents.

The Asthma Child and Adolescent Program (ACAP) provides information and emergency response training for asthma as well as linked respiratory conditions such as allergy and rhinitis.

different, and told consumers only to "exercise caution" when using the Hydroxycut range.

This month's edition of the *Medical Journal of Australia* has details of "the first reported Australian case of acute hepatotoxicity" associated with Hydroxycut, with the symptoms possibly due to three ingredients in the product: chromium polynicotinate and extracts of the herbs *Garcinia cambogia* and *Camelia sinensis* (green tea root).

La Trobe university's Ken Harvey has raised the issue several times with the health department, including a letter to former Parliamentary Secretary for Health and Ageing, Jan McLucas which details the ingredients listed on the Australian versions of Hydroxycut - which appear to be the same as those in the products removed from sale in the US and Canada.

The TGA is understood to be looking into the matter, but wasn't able to comment before **PD**'s deadline today.

PBS changes

THIS month the first long-acting atypical antipsychotic administered via the deltoid muscle is has been PBS listed for the treatment of schizophrenia and related psychoses.

Risperdal Consta (risperidone) can still be administered via the gluteus, but the new deltoid injection gives greater choice to patients and health professionals.

Other additions this month include a lower 4mg strength of Jurnista (hydromorphone hydrochloride) tablets (modified release) for both dental and non-dental use, for the treatment of chronic severe disabling pain not responding to non-narcotic analgesics.

The new dose adds to the already PBS-listed 64mg, 32mg, 16mg and 8mg strengths to allow improved dose titration.

Also added is a new repeat regime for Bionime Rightest glucose indicator test strips, used by people with diabetes to test the amount of glucose in their blood.

Where patients are receiving treatment under a GP management plan or team care arrangement, prescribers can use a new PBS item to provide up to 11 repeats of the indicators, which is equivalent to one year's supply.

PD keeps growing!

WE'VE seen a surge in new *Pharmacy Daily* readers signing up at our website this month, with subscriber numbers now exceeding 6300 people receiving **PD** each day.

Thanks for your ongoing support - we look forward to continuing to bring you all the latest pharmacy industry news.

Corum + MediSecure

CORUM Health Services has confirmed that it will offer an interface to the MediSecure electronic prescription system in its dispensing software later in 2010.

GM product development and customer care, Leah Ford, said: "Pharmacists have so much to gain from the MediSecure and the eRx Script Exchange programs.

"Not only will pharmacies save time and money with every e-script dispensed, but they can also feel confident that data entry mistakes are becoming a thing of the past," she added.

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GSK to cut R&D

GLAXOSMITHKLINE is set to this week announce major restructuring plans at its operations across the globe, including the loss of around 2000 jobs in research and development.

R&D operations in the UK, US and Europe are set to be most affected by the move, which follows a similar slashing by AstraZeneca which plans to reduce R&D numbers by 3500 globally.

Fish oil brain help

A DAILY fish oil capsule can help reduce mental illness in those at high risk of psychosis - as well as having benefits for a healthy heart, according to a study published this week in *Archives of General Psychiatry*.

The research found that a three month course of omega-3 fatty acids in fish oil was just as effective as medications in cutting the rate of psychotic illnesses among a group of 81 people deemed at risk.

PSA urges more services

THE government's Third Intergenerational Report (PD yest) has highlighted the importance of boosting pharmacy professional services, according to the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia.

Acting PSA President, Grant Kardachi, said the report had highlighted increased spending on pharmaceuticals as the population of Australia ages.

"But we can help to reduce the need for medications in the ageing by introducing targeted preventive services through pharmacy which will result in a healthier population less dependent on pharmaceuticals to maintain their wellbeing," he said.

Existing programs such as Home Medicines Reviews, medication services, smoking cessation, weight loss and diabetes had already shown their effectiveness.

"Clearly boosting the number of professional services available through pharmacy will go a long

way to helping the Government manage the increased cost of looking after the growing ageing population," Kardachi said.

MEANWHILE Medicines Australia also reacted to the IGR3 report, with ceo Brendan Shaw saying that medicines can "make an important contribution to increased workforce participation and productivity."

He said pharmaceuticals could help drive long-term economic growth, adding: "It is an investment in human capital in the same way as expenditure in education."

Shaw said PBS pricing models must be sustainable for the companies which research and develop new therapies.

Aboriginal health assn

MINISTER for Indigenous Health, Warren Snowdon, has launched the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers Association, a new peak national body for Indigenous health workers.

The govt will provide \$1.2m over three years to establish the association, which will support the 1600 Indigenous workers providing front line services in urban, rural and remote Indigenous communities.

Snowdon said the Association would look at national registration and accreditation strategies for the next two years, with advocacy, mentoring and support via a new website at www.natsihwa.org.au.

UK smoking push

THE British government has announced plans to help halve the number of the nation's smokers over the next ten years.

Currently 21% of the population smoke, with the 2020 target of 10% to particularly focus on reducing smoking rates in young people.

Possible moves could see the removal of branding from cigarette packets and banning cigarette vending machines, as well as the promotion of smoke-free homes and cars and extending existing bans on smoking in public places.

Health Secretary Andy Burnham said the move aimed to "save even more lives."

"One day, in the not too distant future, we'll look back and find it hard to remember why anyone ever smoked in the first place," he said.



DISPENSARY CORNER

THERE'S been a huge rise in the number of men seeking cosmetic surgery in the UK to rid themselves of so-called "man boobs".

Figures released by the British Association of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons said there had been an 80% rise in man boob-reduction operations during 2009, with 581 procedures carried out.

"There's a lot of pressure on men to shape up," said a spokesman for the association.

"Probably, heightened media attention has allowed men to realise the positive outcomes that can be achieved," he added.

SNIFFER dogs in the South American country of Colombia really liked the smell of these biscuits, which were set to shipped to Barcelona in Spain.

Customs officers who investigated found that the cream had been taken out of the middle of the biscuits "and replaced with compressed bleached cocaine to avoid suspicion from counternarcotics units."

FORMER British prime minister, Baroness Margaret Thatcher, went on a crash diet to lose nine kilograms in two weeks, in the lead up to the 1979 election where she came to power.

The eating regime was revealed in her personal diary for that year, which has been released to the public along with thousands of other personal papers.

Thatcher weighed around 60kg, with the diet involving eating four eggs a day as well as large quantities of spinach, coffee, steak, lamb and fish.

MANY Australians would prefer to give up sex than alcohol, according to a survey released this week by the FebFast charity, which encourages people to give up drinking during this month.

The phone survey during Dec found that one in five drinkers would prefer to go without sex than booze, while 12% said they would give up driving for four weeks if they had to choose between their car and alcohol.

WIN A PURE SPA PACK



Congratulations to Jane Stidworthy from Fresenius Kabi who was yesterday's lucky winner of an All Pure Spa® baby 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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