

Hormones for the heart

TESTOSTERONE has been found to aid the growth of new blood vessels around heart/stroke related injury, a recent study has found.

Previously thought to contribute to heart disease the male sex hormone may in fact protect the body against it; leading researchers to believe that lowering hormone levels in old age may be the reason for the increased rate of heart disease.

A follow-up human hormone trial is now underway, with hopes that its success could provide a range of possible preventive treatments.

Obese kids at risk

OBESE pre-diabetic children have almost double the risk of dying prematurely than their thinner counterparts, a new study has shown.

Researchers tracked a group of obese kids from over several decades from childhood through to adulthood and found that obese pre-diabetic children had double the rate of dying before they hit 55 years of age than slimmer children, whilst obese kids with high blood pressure were also found to have increased rates of demise before the 55yr mark.

"This suggests obesity in children, even prepubescent children, may have very serious long-term health effects through midlife- that there is something serious being set in motion by obesity at early ages," said researcher Helen Looker.

No reason for suffering

AROUND half of cancer patients are suffering from unrelieved pain, according the director of the Pain Management Research Institute at Royal North Shore Hospital, Dr Michael Cousins.

He said some palliative care patients are not receiving any or enough pain medication, despite the fact that at least 90% of cancer sufferers' pain could be treated effectively with existing drugs.

"It's amazing that we have this in a civilised country, which you would think would be pretty focused on human rights," he said.

Cousins, who is set to speak at the national pain summit in March, said sedation for palliative patients was not a form of euthanasia, but rather a treatment of symptoms to offset the 'excruciating' pain often suffered in their final days.

Award submissions rejected

THE Pharmacists division of union group APESMA has hailed a decision by Fair Work Australia which has rejected three variations to the Pharmacy Industry Award 2010 which were proposed by the Pharmacy Guild.

The Guild changes included a variation of the part-time provision to allow for less than the current three hour minimum by agreement of the employee concerned.

Also proposed was a change to the definition of a casual employee to include students and others who currently work as part-time staff under the new Award, as well as a reduction in the penalty rate on Sundays from double time to time-and-a-half.

APESMA strongly opposed the variations, which had been proposed during last year's hearings in the lead-up to the creation of the award, which became law on 01 Jan 2010.

"The Pharmacy Guild has not established any changed circumstances since this matter was considered during the award modernisation process," the Fair Work tribunal said.

US pharmacy fine

NORTH American pharmacy giant CVS has agreed to pay almost US\$2 million to the state of Indiana, to settle a case in which it allegedly employed pharmacists who weren't properly registered.

Prosecutors said that between 1997 and 2007 CVS employed two pharmacists in Nashville and Marion who had "long-expired licenses" and who over that time dispensed more than 60,000 prescriptions.

One of the pharmacists allegedly forged a new license himself each time a renewal was due, while the other didn't bother renewing at all.

CVS said it would now implement a screening program to ensure that none of its pharmacists attempted to operate without a license.

The company pointed out that "there were no allegations that any customers were harmed in any way as a result of the employment of these individuals."

The US\$1.95m settlement is not a fee, a fine or an admission of guilt, but is being used to reimburse the Indian Medicaid program and investigative costs.

"...sales have increased markedly"

Read what Natalie Willis has to say, click here.



Dispensary Loop



Google pharmacy ads

INTERNET giant Google has announced a "new, tougher stance" on advertisements from online pharmacies, which will see its sites only show ads from US and Canadian pharmacies in the countries in which they are accredited for operation.

The move, which is effective from the end of this month, may be significant for Canadian online pharmacies, many of which target US consumers with advertisements for drugs such as Lipitor, Plavix, Nexium and Viagra.

A financial analyst who covers the Google stock, Benjamin Schachter, said he believed there was "very likely regulatory pressure that influenced this change."

Google said the policy change doesn't affect its approach to online pharmacies for countries outside of the US and Canada.

EMU SPIRIT WINNERS!



This week *Pharmacy Daily* gave readers the chance to win one of four gorgeous all Aussie made Emu Spirit packs, courtesy of Emu Spirit.

Valued at \$125, the Emu Spirit pack contains a Moisturising Soap, Arthritic and Muscular Rub, Oil of

Emu, Day Crème Refresh & Renew, Night Crème Repair & Restore, Advanced Hand & Body Crème and a genuine Emu Egg!

Congratulations to everyone who entered - we've had a great time reading all your entries.

Alas there can only be four winners and they are:

Katrina Heck from Lowood Guardian Pharmacy who sent in: "I would love to win an Emu Spirit pack for my Nan. She suffers from arthritis and has tried everything to gain a bit of relief, but nothing works. She is my Pop's full time carer which keeps her very busy."

Angela Mullaney from Blooms the Chemist who sent in: "As a bearer of sensitive skin, I am also a proud patriot for Australian products. Emu Spirit encapsulates a quality Australian product that will also make my skin feel radiant, inside and out!"

Kaye Hazel from Angel Medicine who sent in: "I've developed allergies to many skin care products, so am very cautious with what I use, and am continually looking for good products. I prefer natural products, especially ones that contain soothing and calming essential oils which also smell nice. The Emu Spirit range appears to be perfect for me."

Jodie Hume from Australian Pharmaceutical Industries: "I'd like to win an Emu Spirit Pack as this would be a lovely Birthday gift for my friend as she loves everything Emu and it would make her day to have a real Emu egg! She would get a kick out of the Emu decorated girly products for sure."

Check out the Emu Spirit website at www.emuspirit.com.

12 FREE
Months
Standard Membership!Offer ends March 31. ACT NOW!
Click here for more information
DAVID PATTON: 0432 515 717

Chemsave

**7.5% PBS
DISCOUNT!**
COST **-0.5%****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.

17 Feb 2010: PSA WA, 'Management of Dyspepsia, GORD and PUD' lecture, 7pm-
lgregory@pcwa.com.au.

4-17 Feb 2010: PSA Expedition Education conference in Chile and Patagonia. Limited to 50 people - 1300 139 293.

20 Feb 2010: PSA Victoria, Pharmacy Management, Saturday Series, Victorian College of Pharmacy board room- 03 9389 4007.

20 Feb 2010: PSA Victoria, Diploma of Management, Victorian College of Pharmacy board room - 03 9389 4007.

21 Feb 2010: PSA NSW First Aid Course, 9am-3pm-
melenyhui@psansw.org.au.

11-14 Mar 2010: The 19th Australian Pharmacy Professional Conference and Trade Exhibition on the Gold Coast - appconference.com.

26-28 Mar 2010: PSA NSW March Weekend on the theme of Men's and Women's Health, at Mantra Ettalong Beach. 27.5 CPD credits - www.psa.or.g.au.

14-18 Apr 2010: Australian College of Pharmacy conference Barossa Valley- 1300 651 239.

28 Apr-7 May 2010: The PSA will hold its 35th annual offshore conference in Beijing and Shanghai - details on 1300 139 293.

26-28 May 2010: The NPS's National Medicines Symposium 2010, Melbourne Conference and Exhibition Centre-
www.nms2010.org.au.

29-31 May 2010: The AACP's annual ConPharm clinical seminar at The Grand Chancellor Hotel in Hobart - details www.aacp.com.au.

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

NPS gains more ground

THE latest National Prescribing Service evaluation report released today has found that awareness and utilisation of NPS services has increased markedly over the last five years.

"This 12th evaluation report demonstrates the value of NPS in contributing to better health outcomes for Australians as well as helping to ensure the ongoing viability of the pharmaceutical benefits scheme," said NPS ceo, Lynn Weekes.

The annual report also highlighted key achievements of the NPS between 08-09, including total saving to the PBS of \$45.9 million and a doubling of the amount of Australian universities who make use of the National Prescribing Curriculum to 23.

Pharmacist participation between 08-09 was also found to have increased markedly to around 21%, whilst GP participation sat at a steady 60% and nurse NPS numbers doubled to 2504.

APC directors wanted

THE Australian Pharmacy Council has announced that it's seeking some new directors.

Applications are being sought from people with one or more of a range of attributes, including:

- a clear understanding of governance responsibilities
 - a management/financial and/or legal background
 - educational experience in pharmacy or otherwise
 - understanding of accreditation, registration and/or indigenous issues
 - understanding of the issues of remote and rural practice
- Applications, including a CV, must reach the APC office by 06 Apr; more info 02 6262 9628.

Makover equals profit

A RECENT survey from pharmacy fit-out specialists Instyle Solutions Australia found that following a fit-out makeover, sales in Aussie pharmacies improved on average by 25 percent.

The company is currently offering an incentive of a free in-store sound system valued at \$1800; more info www.instylesolutions.com.au.

"Notably, through our drug utilisation activities NPS has contributed to improved prescribing rates of analgesics and proton pump inhibitors including decreased prescribing of COX-2 selective NSAIDs, tramadol and high dose PPIs, and increased prescribing of low dose PPIs," said Weekes.

Other encouraging NPS statistics found that 27% of Australians aged 15 years and over and 32% of Aussies over 50 years are aware of the National Prescribing Service.

SHPA on E-Health

THE Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia says that having the Pharmacy Guild exclusively negotiate the Fifth Community Pharmacy Agreement with the government is set to "maintain an outdated separation that neither supports today's or tomorrow's models of care."

SHPA ceo Yvonne Allinson said developments in e-health need to be coordinated across the health system - rather than limiting support for the electronic transfer of prescriptions to the community setting only.

She said the "mature software systems" already in use by pharmacists in both hospitals and the community could be used to better link to the information needs of GPs, especially about medicines use related to patient admission and discharge from hospital.

Generic safety change

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration has decided that the review of 'Periodic Safety Update Reports' (PSURs) for well-established active substances or for the registration of generic medicines has benefits which are "limited and not justified by the effort expended."

The conditions specifying the need for the submission PSURs will therefore be varied for products in certain categories.

The TGA said that over the next few months sponsors of medicines which fall into this category will receive a letter varying their specific condition of registration for PSURs.

The variation will be to continue to prepare, but not to submit the PSUR, unless requested by the TGA.



DISPENSARY CORNER

A QUEENSLAND abattoir has come up with a novel cane toad solution - export the pests for use in pharmaceuticals.

An official from the meatworks, John Burey, is currently in talks with potential customers in China to discuss the possibility of exporting cane toad meat for medicines, as well as possibly human consumption.

"In China, they use toads in a lot of medicinal recipes and in provinces in China they eat the meat itself," he said.

The idea came to Burey whilst he was on a trip to China to sell unusual meats including camel, wild donkey and buffalo, and saw toads being cooked into a traditional medicine for pain relief.

The plan as yet does not have either Australian or Chinese government approval, but he remains hopeful saying in the future he foresees running a cane toad collection through clubs and schools, with each toad scoring participants a few cents.

A MAN has been arrested in the US after stealing an ambulance - unfortunately with paramedics and a patient still inside it.

24-year-old Nicholas Pontillo is alleged to have taken the emergency vehicle for a joy ride while he was intoxicated.

The ambulance was parked near a ski resort, with the driver treating an injured snowboarder in the back.

Pontillo was too drunk to realise that the truck's parking brake was still on, meaning sheriffs were able to stop him while still in the car park.

THE world's most obese man has announced plans to reveal his diet tips, after losing 130kg.

48-year-old Paul Mason is still believed to be the heaviest man alive, weighing in at 311kg but managed to drop the 130kg to become eligible for gastric banding.

Before his treatment Mason said he ate around 20,000 calories a day - eight times the average daily requirements.