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Poor ovarian survival

AN average of one in 77 women will be diagnosed with ovarian cancer by the time they reach 85, with older sufferers noted to have lower survival rates than their younger compatriots, according to a new report released this week by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare in conjunction with the National Breast and Ovarian Cancer Centre.

According to the report *Ovarian cancer in Australia: an overview, 2010*, although mortality rates for ovarian cancer have improved since 1982, they are still not good.

The survival rate of women five years after initial diagnosis was 40% between 2000-2006, up 7% on rates between 1982-1987.

Researchers have highlighted the need for a better understanding of the key biology of ovarian cancer, coupled with the development of an early detection test as the key areas of focus for future research.

PI, CMI for codeine products

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration has confirmed that the removal of OTC combination analgesics containing codeine from Schedule 2 from 01 May will mean the products need to have product information (PI) and consumer medicine information (CMI) documents.

The move, announced by the National Drugs and Poisons Schedule Committee last year (PD 05 Aug) applies to all combination analgesics containing codeine except for phenylephrine-containing combinations for the treatment of coughs and colds, and will see all packs containing up to 5 days supply move to S3; while larger packs will be reclassified as S4 (prescription only) medications.

In consultation with the Australian Self-Medication Industry, the TGA has allowed the

development of core PI and CMI documents to assist sponsors in making the required changes.

There are PI and CMI templates for codeine/ibuprofen combinations, codeine plus paracetamol, and codeine plus aspirin currently on the TGA and ASMI websites, and all affected product sponsors have been contacted by the TGA to advise of the new requirements.

ASMI herbal response

THE Australian Self-Medication Industry has added its voice to comments on the recent Byard report into complementary medicines (PD 11 Feb), saying consumers should be wary of any claims about the potential for harm caused by herbal remedies.

ASMI said the study does not relate to Australian products, based on unregulated US remedies as opposed to the "stringent quality control rules and regulations" which apply in Australia.

The study also cited cases where patients had taken extremely high dosages of the medicines, ASMI said.

Alendronate warning

OSTEOPOROSIS medication alendronate has the potential to cause arrhythmia, according to a report released this week by the University of Sydney's Associate Professor Gustavo Duque.

Although past studies have hinted at an association between arrhythmia/atrial fibrillation and alendronate, Duque's study has for the first time found a direct cause and effect chain between the drug and the conditions.

"It appears that these drugs trigger the heart's atrial cells to become agitated and overexcited, causing a pacemaker-like effect," Duque said.

"Our data represents the first evidence linking alendronate to arrhythmia at the cellular level," he added.

Duque has urged health care practitioners to warn 'high risk' patients of the potential for alendronate to cause arrhythmia/atrial fibrillation as well as blood clots and strokes, before they begin taking the drug.

He also said that medications similar to alendronate may not have the same risk profile.

The Guild's new home in Qld



THE Queensland branch of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia this week celebrated the official opening of its new Guild House.

Nine years in the making, the new House is located in Summer Hill and was designed to meet the increased demand for Guild services

including its new IT pharmacy specific solutions including Project Stop.

Amongst its many features, the new Guild House includes new improved meeting areas, greater office space and state-of-the-art training rooms to keep everyone up to date with the latest pharmacy information.

Special opening ceremony attendees included The Honourable Paul Lucas, Deputy Premier and Minister for Health Queensland, who enjoyed a tour of the facility as well as a spot of celebratory morning tea and cake.

Pictured above from left are James Delahunty; Robyn Ede, Queensland branch director and Richard Malouf cutting the commemorative cake, while at right is Guild national president, Kos Sclavos with Paul Lucas inspecting Kos' collection of antique medicine jars.



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.

ORION Expedition Cruises has expanded its popular Kimberley cruise program to include a visit to the port of Wyndham, complimentary sightseeing over the famous Bungle Bungle ranges and one night's pre-cruise accommodation at The Broome Hotel including airport transfers and breakfast, all at no extra cost.

The luxury Kimberley voyage from Broome to Darwin is priced from \$9100pp

Call 1300 361 012.

CORAL Seas Travel is promoting a special offer at the Sinalei Reef Resort & Spa, in Samoa.

The "stay four, pay two" accommodation deal is valid for bookings before 03 Mar, starting

at just \$999 per person twin share including return economy flights from Sydney or Brisbane.

Transfers plus daily breakfast and afternoon tea are also included - call 1800 641 803.

ERAKOR Island Resort and Spa in Vanuatu is offering one of the best deals in the South Pacific at themoment, with 50% off all accommodation and 3500 vatu resort credit per day to spend on food, beverages or spa treatments.

The deal is available for sales until 31 March and travel to 30 Jun 2010, with the resort located on its own tropical island but just five minutes from the Vanuatu capital, Port Vila.

See your travel agent for details.

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Arthritis & osteo rise

OVER the past ten years the variety of available medications for the management of arthritis and osteoporosis has increased significantly, according to the latest report 'Medication use for arthritis and osteoporosis' by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

The report looks into the rise of new and improved medications that retard disease progression, reduce its severity and prevent complications, whilst also juxtaposing new drug benefits with the associated rise in consumer and government medication spending.

"Pharmaceutical innovations over the last several years have improved the efficacy and diversity of medicines available to manage these conditions, however the adoption of new and more effective drugs is often costly," said Kuldeep Bhatia of the AIHW's Centre for Monitoring Arthritis and Musculoskeletal Conditions.

According to the report the most common anti-rheumatic drug methotrexate, was prescribed to 1.6 million Aussies in 2007, at a cost of more than \$7.4m to the consumer and \$36.9m to the gov.

In addition to pharmaceutical drugs, the report found that many doctors are also recommending complementary medicines for the treatment of arthritis and osteoporosis, however researchers are quick to point out that the rates of complementary drug usage are much lower than traditional prescription uptake.

Territory on dialysis

MORTALITY rates for patients on dialysis in the Northern Territory have dropped from around 66% above the national average 20 years ago, to equal those of most other Australian states.

"The Territory now has a real success story in terms of survival rates for people on dialysis - this is proof the NT Government's renal strategy is working, with better early identification and treatment and better access to dialysis throughout the Territory," said NT Health Minister, Kon Vatskalis.

This year, the NT government has earmarked \$25 million to address kidney disease throughout the territory.

Blackmores sales soar 14%

THE global financial crisis doesn't appear to have had a significant impact on Blackmores, which today reported a 14% increase in first half sales and a 7% profit increase.

The company's result for the six months to 31 Dec was \$12.8m after tax, and ceo Christine Holgate said the sales boost reflected increasing market share for Blackmores, almost doubling the growth of its competitors.

"This is a pleasing result for the first half, with strong performances in both Australia and our Asian markets," said Holgate.

Blackmores also strengthened its foothold in both the Asian and NZ markets with respective sales increases of 11% and 2.7%.

"We are continuing to strengthen our Asian business with a dedicated focus on reducing time to market with new products and increasing our range, breadth and customer distribution points, especially in Singapore, Taiwan and Hong Kong," Holgate said.

First half product development

saw Blackmores release more than 40 new products, formulations and international product range extension.

This product increase was also married with a complete review of all Blackmores product labelling, branding and merchandising throughout Asia.

December 09 also saw the introduction of a new Blackmores Enterprise Agreement, which saw 96% of its workforce vote in support of the new terms of employment.

"This is an outstanding outcome given that collective bargaining and enterprise agreements can often divide management and employees," said Holgate.

"It shows that Blackmores' board, management and staff are all committed to working together.

"It demonstrates that our positive workplace culture has remained strong through a year of considerable change," she added.

Holgate said Blackmores' larger retail partners are expecting sales to slow in coming months.



DISPENSARY CORNER

THIS is truly disgusting.

A theme park in the UK is inviting members of the public to submit urine samples, in a bid to find the country's "most pungent smelling wee".

It's part of the development of a new attraction at Thorpe Park, in Chertsey, billed as "the world's most extreme horror maze."

The attraction features iconic scenes from the SAW horror film series - including a washroom scene which aims to create a "realistic and truly gut wrenching sensory experience" - including the stench of urine.

The park's entertainments manager, Laura Sinclair, will be responsible for picking the most revolting smelling urine.

"We are looking for a sample that will really get the public gagging," she said.

GRANDMA, what's that funny smell?

A recent US govt study has predicted that in the near future more and more older Americans will take up cannabis - particularly in states where medical marijuana is readily available.

The report has hinted that as the tidal wave of stoned baby boomers grows, so will the ground swell support for legalisation - and the heightened possibility of legislative action.

According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration report, over the past eight years the number of marijuana users between the ages of 55 and 59 has tripled and now sits at around 5.1%.

The majority of older users told researchers that they smoked the drug as a means of pain relief, and as an aid to sleep, whilst researchers cited a possible connection between the hippie movement of the 1960's.

Doctors have urged caution, saying the drug's potential side-effects including dizziness and confusion may do more harm than good, increasing fall rates and contributing to potential mental declines.

WIN A LIFT LIP GLOSS



CONGRATULATIONS to Kelly Forrester of Pharmacy Choice in Melbourne who was the first reader yesterday to tell us that new flavours of the Marine Filling Spheres include Amaretto + Coffee or Exotic Sorbet.

Total Beauty Network has teamed up with **Pharmacy Daily** this week, giving readers the chance to win their very own Lip Lift Gloss.

The Lip Lift gloss is a rejuvenating anti-aging treatment that removes the lines in lips! Demaxyl Peptides and Natural Organic Oils ensure that lips are visibly smoother, moisturised and full.

There are two new collections offering luxurious creamy gloss with delicious Amaretto and Coffee Aroma or Exotic Sorbet Flavours.

Each Lip Lift gloss comes in a gorgeous, oversized vial with self-applicator brush and mega doses of Vitamin E.

For a chance to win a Lip Lift Gloss, simply send through the correct answer to the following question below:

What are the 4 flavours in the Soy Sorbet collection?

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

The first correct entry received will win!

Hint! Visit the Total Beauty Network website at: www.tbn.com.au.