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 Guild

## No to palliative paracetamol

**THE** dosing of palliative care patients with paracetamol, in addition to their other medications, has been discouraged by Queensland researchers who claim the practice makes no difference to the patient's pain levels.

The study, published in the *Journal of Pain and Symptom Management*, took into account responses reported by 30 patients already on 200mg of oral morphine a day, and found that the addition of 4g of paracetamol daily had no additional effect on pain levels.

However the researchers did find that the administration of paracetamol may help to prevent pruritus in palliative care patients.

"We would suggest that for this group of patients, clinicians consider ceasing paracetamol, thus decreasing the burdensome tablet load for this vulnerable population," the authors suggested.

## Eating during pregnancy

**FOOD** Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) has released a multi-media educational package featuring seven tips for safe eating and drinking practices prior to and during pregnancy.

"Women can often rely on female friends and relatives for advice when they become pregnant but much of this current advice from FSANZ is based on the latest science that may not have been around even a few decades ago," said FSANZ's head scientist, Dr Paul Brent.

The tips cover information about eating a healthy balanced diet, ensuring the right amounts of iron and folate are consumed, eating fish (and the safe types), as well as what foods to avoid and advice on alcohol, tea and coffee intake.

"Many of these tips take a bit of planning and it is best to start before you become pregnant, for example starting to take folic acid supplements one month before conception and for the first three months of pregnancy to reduce the risk of spina bifida," said Brent.

Packaged in a variety of media, the information kit includes brochures, fact sheets (incl Thai, Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese and Khmer translations) web videos and seminars.

Click here to view the info package.

## Europe suspends Reductil

**THE** European Medicines Agency has recommended that the marketing licence for weight-loss drug Reductil (sibutramine) be suspended across Europe.

The move follows a review of evidence suggesting that "there is an increased risk of non-fatal heart attacks and strokes" with the medication, which outweighs the benefit of weight loss.

The EMA said weight loss associated with Reductil is "modest and may not be sustained in the long term after stopping treatment."

Pharmacists across the UK and Europe are being advised not to issue any new prescriptions, and to review the treatment of patients taking the drug.

Patients are being told to make a routine appointment with their

## Myfortic designation

**THE** Therapeutic Goods Administration has designated Novartis Pharmaceutical's 180mg and 360mg Myfortic (mycophenolic acid as sodium) enteric tablets as an orphan drug.

Working as an immunosuppressive agent, Myfortic is designed for induction and maintenance treatment of lupus nephritis.

doctor to discuss alternative measures to lose weight, with the UK Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency advising there are no health implications if people wish to stop treatment before seeing their doctor.

The suspension follows a furore last weekend which saw the TGA deny that it had told doctors to stop prescribing the drug (**PD Tue**).

"Prescribing of the product has not been restricted and it has not been withdrawn from the market," the TGA said, with a circular issued to doctors just before Christmas just updating details of changes to Reductil's Product Information.

## MIMS sports integration

**MIMS** has integrated its medicines database onto the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authorities new website, in the hopes of providing athletes, healthcare providers and coaches with the most up to date information about medications, substances and also whether they are permitted for use in sport.

The website also provides specific gender and sport-type medication information, as drug permission and anti-doping rules can vary between sports.

## Mental lapse risk

**MENTAL** lapses in the elderly may be more than just the aging process- but may in fact signal the onset of Alzheimer's disease.

A study conducted by the American Academy of Neurology has found that 12% of participants suffering dementia had mental lapses, whilst around 10% of those suffering mild dementia also reported mental lapses.

Researchers defined a mental lapse as combining three or more of the following symptoms: constant drowsiness; sleeping for two or more hours prior to 7pm; disorganised, unclear or illogical thought processes or staring for long periods at nothing.

Of the 295 study participants who did not suffer dementia only two were found to have mental lapses.

"When older people are evaluated for problems with their thinking and memory, doctors should consider also assessing them for these mental lapses," said senior study author James Galvin.

## WIN AN AUSTRALIS FOUNDATION



Australis has teamed up with *Pharmacy Daily* this week, giving readers the chance to win an Australis Mineral Purity Powder Foundation. Valued at \$17.95, the pure mineral powder formula allows you to create buildable even coverage that lasts all day.

The lightweight powder looks and feels like you are wearing no make-up. It contains no talc, parabens or

fragrance ensuring that your skin is free from any irritations. It includes an inbuilt kabuki and mirror.

For your last chance to win your very own Australis Mineral Purity Powder Foundation, simply send through the correct answer to the following question below:

**Is Australis Mineral Purity  
a heavy foundation?**

Email your answer to: [comp@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:comp@pharmacydaily.com.au).

The first correct entry received will win!

Hint: Visit the Australis website: [www.australiscosmetics.com.au](http://www.australiscosmetics.com.au).

**CONGRATULATIONS** to Emma Carter of Australian Pharmaceutical Industries who was the fastest reader yesterday to tell us that you are able to layer and build your foundation.

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women's health ...  
a 'battle of the sexes'*

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27.5  
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For more information visit  
[www.psa.org.au/nsw](http://www.psa.org.au/nsw)



### 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](mailto:info@pharmacydaily.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](mailto:melenyhui@psansw.org.au).

**11-14 Mar 2010:** The 19th Australian Pharmacy Professional Conference and Trade Exhibition on the Gold Coast - [appconference.com](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://www.aacp.com.au).

**15-18 Sep 2010:** Pharmacy 2010, the Pharmacy Management Conference on Hamilton Island - [www.pharmacyconference.com.au](http://www.pharmacyconference.com.au).

**27 Sep-03 Oct 2010:** Inagural Guild Offshore Conference in Penang - 03 9535 3646.

**18 Nov 2010:** The 2010 ASMI Conference - [www.asmi.com.au](http://www.asmi.com.au).

## TGA cost recovery details

**THE** Therapeutic Goods Administration is inviting industry feedback on its cost recovery proposal which will see the industry fund half of the cost of the new drug scheduling system.

The cost recovery impact statement reveals a \$2310 fee for initial scheduling applications, while rescheduling will cost \$4950.

The statement also confirms the

### New BP appointments

**TWO** new pharmacist members have been appointed to The British Pharmacopoeia (BP) Commission, Dr Graeme Cook, senior director in the Global Quality and Compliance Division of Wyeth Pharmaceuticals and Dr Brian Matthews, member of the BP Commission's Expert Advisory Group on Pharmacy, the Panel of Experts on Microbiology and the Working Party on Excipients.

Professor David Woolfson has also been re-appointed as BP chairman.

### Low immunisation risk

**THE** rapid decline in childhood immunisation rates is creating a society at greater risk of mumps, whooping cough, tetanus, polio, measles, rubella and swine flu, according to Australian General Practice chairman, Dr Emil Djakic.

Currently dropping to a seven year low, childhood immunisation rates are at present sitting at around 83% - well below the Australian benchmark of 90%, and according to Djakic are expected to drop further still.

Djakic blames the drop in immunisation on the government's cessation of the immunisation incentive scheme which funded GPs to set up and send out reminders.

"The best defense against these illnesses is vaccination," he said.

"Last year many children presented to general practices with illnesses that could have been prevented," he added.

**MEANWHILE** South Australian Minister for Health, John Hill, has warned that the threat of swine flu has not disappeared from the state, and is urging all parents to take up the free swine flu vaccination for their children before the start of the new school year.

end of the National Drugs and Poisons Scheduling Committee, with scheduling decisions set to be made henceforth by the Secretary of the Health Department.

There's a 16 Mar deadline for comments on the proposals.

### MHRA reclassification

**THE** UK Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency has reclassified domperidone maleate tablets as an OTC drug for the relief of nausea and vomiting of less than 48 hours duration, in addition to its current OTC usage for excessive fullness, nausea, bloating, belching, trapped wind and post prandial heartburn.

### Vic Guild briefings

**REGISTRATIONS** for the Pharmacy Guild of Australia's Victorian branch 2010 member briefings are now being taken.

Primarily centred around the impact, effect and changes to the industry brought about by the Fifth Community Pharmacy Agreement, the briefings will also allow members to highlight and discuss pharmacy issues of concern.

Member briefings will run from 7pm for a 7.30pm start and will cost \$45 including dinner.

For more information and a full list of dates and venues see [www.guild.org.au/vic/](http://www.guild.org.au/vic/), or to register call 03 9810 9999.

### Kids dental decline

**A SOBERING** report released this week by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare has found that Australian teenagers are at increased risk of tooth decay, whilst nearly half of all six year olds had a history of decay in their baby teeth.

Compiled from the 2003-04 data of over 250,000 children and teens, the report found that between 40-57% of teenagers aged 12-15 years had a history of decay, fillings or loss of their permanent teeth.

On average, the report found that 12 year old children had one decayed, missing or filled tooth and that this average doubled by the time the children hit 15 years of age, whilst children aged six years had, on average, two missing, decayed or filled baby teeth.



### DISPENSARY CORNER

**AUTHORITIES** in an Indian state have announced a special new early release scheme for prisoners who attend yoga classes.

Under the scheme in Madhya Pradesh, prison inmates will be granted 15 days off their sentence for every three months spent attending the classes.

"Yoga is good for maintaining fitness, calming the behaviour, controlling anger and reducing stress," said an official, with about 400 prisoners having signed up for the scheme so far.

**NOT** sure how hygienic this is.

Hotel chain Holiday Inn is offering a trial "human bed-warming service" at three hotels in the UK, in which a staff member will dress in a fleecy sleeper suit to warm up the sheets.

"The new Holiday Inn bed warmers service is a bit like having a giant hot water bottle in your bed," said a spokeswoman.

The volunteer bed-warmer will be equipped with a thermometer to ensure the bed reaches the required temperature of 20°C.

Holiday Inn said the warmer would be fully dressed, and promised they would leave the bed before the guest occupied it.

The chain said the initiative is a response to Britain's recent cold snap, as well as marking the launch of a revamp of the 3200 Holiday Inns across the world.

**DOCTORS** at a small medical practice near Washington D.C. had an unusual drop-in this week, when a meteorite punched a hole in their roof.

The cricket ball-sized projectile hit the two storey building in the late afternoon, with staff saying they heard a loud bang before wood, plaster and insulation rained down on them.

Nobody was hurt in the incident which saw the 250g rock split into three fragments.

The Smithsonian Institution has confirmed it was a meteorite, and said it was travelling at around 355 kilometres an hour when it struck the practice.