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Thursday 10th June 2010

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## Osteoporosis approval

**THE** Therapeutic Goods Administration has registered Amgen Australia's new twice-yearly osteoporosis treatment, Prolia (denosumab) which is indicated for the treatment of osteoporosis in postmenopausal women.

The announcement follows a similar move by the US Federal Drug Administration (PD 04 Jun).

Prolia is a fully human monoclonal antibody injection which targets the cells that break down bone to decrease resorption and improve bone density.

Professor of Rheumatology at Sydney's Royal North Shore Hospital, Philip Sambrook, said the approval was a "significant new advance in the treatment of postmenopausal osteoporosis in Australia."

He said that with compliance and adherence being major issues for patients with the condition, the twice-yearly 60mg subcutaneous injection will potentially make it easier for patients to comply.

Osteoporosis is estimated to affect at least 510,000 Australian women and have a \$7.4 billion annual burden of disease.

## Compounding info wanted

**THE** National Coordinating Committee on Therapeutic Goods (NCCTG) is seeking feedback from pharmacists as it seeks to finalise proposals for new regulatory arrangements around extemporaneous compounding.

In response to previous submissions from the industry, the revised NCCTG proposal will not limit the range of active ingredients used in compounding or require prior approval of compounded medicines.

It will also no longer differentiate between the previous Class 1 (extemporaneous compounding) and Class 2 (extemporaneous dispensing) pharmacies.

However 'Class 3' pharmacies which manufacture medicines will require a GMP (Good Manufacturing Practice) licence from the TGA where they compound sterile medicines other than topical sterile medicines and single-use injections, or "where the pharmacy compounds in excess of a specified quantitative limit".

The committee wants input from non-hospital pharmacies in NSW, Victoria and Tasmania which

dispense, on average, at least 50 compounded scripts per month; as well as non-hospital pharmacies in Queensland, the NT, the ACT, South Australia or Western Australia which are "incorporated entities, or supply interstate, or supply compounded medicines under the PBS/RPBS, and that would compound, on average, at least 50 compounded prescriptions per month".

Information sought also relates to the types of medications compounded such as eye drops, eye lotions, eye ointments; injections and if so whether single or multi-use; and other sterile dosage forms.

Pharmacies are invited to provide information by 30th July, with submissions to be emailed to [ncctg@tga.gov.au](mailto:ncctg@tga.gov.au) with 'compounding' included in the subject line of the email.

## Counterfeit seizure

**THE** UK Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency has seized more than £150,000 worth of counterfeit and unlicensed medicines in a major bust which involved a simultaneous raid on six locations across London and two in Yorkshire in the UK's northern regions.

Six people in the UK believed to be linked to a gang in Asia were arrested "in connection with the illegal sale and supply of a range of medicinal products, most of which are suspected to be counterfeit."

The information was initially passed to the MHRA by Pfizer, Lilly and Sanofi-aventis, covering products relating to treatment for depression, erectile dysfunction, painkillers and sedatives.

## Pharmacists urged to connect on eyes

**JUST** 7% of mothers who have discussed their child's eye health with a healthcare professional listed pharmacists among those they had turned to for advice, according to a survey commissioned by Wyeth Nutrition during March this year.

The findings are claimed to highlight a "significant opportunity for the profession to engage with an important group of customers - pre- and post-natal women," with pharmacists ideally placed to educate mothers on the importance of their children's eye development.

The study found that while almost all mothers (90%) believed nutrition plays an important role in the health and development of young eyes, the same number also hadn't heard of lutein or the role it may play in protecting developing eyes.

The Eye Foundation's ceo, Jacinta Spurrett, said "Pharmacists are a very important source of health advice for Australian mothers."

"It is important the profession is equipped with the latest information and ready to respond to questions relating to paediatric eye health," she said.

## 5CPA now online

**THE** Pharmacy Guild has placed the full text of the Fifth Community Pharmacy Agreement on the public section of its website.

The agreement was signed in Melbourne on 3rd May and takes effect from 1st July 2010.

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## 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.

**CRADLE MOUNTAIN LODGE** in Tasmania is running a range of Christmas in July festivities next month, with rates starting at \$199 per room per night including full Lodge breakfast for two.

The resort's Highland Restaurant will also offer Christmas themed dining with an Aussie touch including local succulent Freycinet Oysters, Roast Turkey with all the trimmings.

More info 1300 806 192.

**SEVEN DESCENTS** is offering a fantastic ski deal to Bariloche in Argentina, with seven nights at Punta Condor in the Cerro Catedral ski resort from \$2842.

The package includes lift passes, breakfast and airfares from

anywhere in Australia, with availability from mid June until early in October.

Catedral Alta Patagonia is officially the largest single mountain resort in South America, with a 1130m vertical drop, powder bowls, groomed runs and tree lines. Call 1300 66 76 77.

**JETSTAR** has announced new direct flights between Melbourne and Singapore, with prices starting at just \$249 one way.

The non-stop services will commence in December this year and the special launch fares are on sale until 5pm today.

Passengers can easily connect onto other destinations in Thailand, Vietnam and Malaysia - [jetstar.com](http://jetstar.com).

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## Mens health tool

**THE** Royal Australian College of General Practitioners has launched a new online health risk assessment tool which is aimed at getting men to take an "active role in focusing on their health and wellbeing".

Dubbed M5 Health Online, the project aims to offer a personalised experience that includes targeted health information and interactive risk assessments, coupled with professional ongoing support and advice.

The RACGP said the program is unique because of its ability to track and monitor behavioural change, keeping participants motivated with "interesting facts and resources, to-do lists and interactive tools and calculators".

See [www.m5project.com.au](http://www.m5project.com.au).

## UK reclassification

**AUTHORITIES** in the UK have announced a public consultation on a request to classify baldness treatment Regaine for Men Extra Strength Scalp Solution (5% v/v cutaneous solution) from Pharmacy Only to General Sale.

## NPS reassures on NSAIDs

**THE** National Prescribing Service has responded to widespread mainstream media coverage of a Danish study into the safety of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, saying it's concerned that "some media reports may exaggerate the risk of using these products".

The study was published in the *Journal of the American Heart Association* and was featured in a number of TV news and current affairs shows last night.

Reports stated that popular pain relievers including ibuprofen, rofecoxib and diclofenac may increase the risk of heart attack and stroke in healthy people.

NPS ceo Dr Lynn Weekes said the research "deserves careful interpretation. Importantly, it highlights that all medicines - including those with a long history of routine use - have the potential to cause harms as well as to provide benefits."

Nurofen maker Reckitt Benckiser last night issued a statement saying there was "no clinical evidence to

suggest that consumers need to be concerned about their safety in relation to an increased risk of cardiovascular events when taking ibuprofen products, such as Nurofen, as directed".

The NPS said that NSAIDs provide significant pain relief and anti-inflammatory effects for many people - but like all medicines have the potential to cause harm too.

"It's vital people realise that just because they can purchase something in a supermarket or petrol station doesn't mean the product is without serious potential side-effects," Weekes said.

"Similarly, people should understand that this study focuses on increased risk," she added, urging consumers taking NSAIDs regularly to talk to their doctor about the lowest effective dose.

## Nicotine patch boom

**NATIONAL** Pharmacies says it's seen a big jump in the sales of nicotine replacement products after the government's recently announced 25% tax hike on tobacco products.

The group's general manager of Professional Services, Neale Burton, said sales of nicotine patches and gum increased more than 30% in the wake of the new law which took effect from the end of April.

"I think you can safely say the substantial increase in the cost of tobacco has convinced thousands of Australians to try to give up smoking," Burton said.

He said the figures going forward indicated that some of those people who decided to give up had slipped back into old habits "but the majority are still in there, working towards a healthier future".

## Major plasma deal

**SPANISH** healthcare company Grifols has announced the purchase of US-based Talecris for US\$3.4 billion "creating a global leader of life-saving and life enhancing plasma protein therapeutics".

The expanded footprint of the combined company would see it "better able to meet the needs of more patients with under-diagnosed disease states around the world," according to an official release announcing the deal.



## DISPENSARY CORNER

**A PRISON** inmate with a false leg has been accused of using the prosthesis to smuggle contraband.

The 42-year-old man is a long-term prisoner in Alexandria, Louisiana, with the scam discovered during a routine check of inmates returning to the penal institution after a work detail.

Correctional officers said they found bags of tobacco, ten cigarettes and four Soma muscle relaxant pills in the fake limb.

**AUTHORITIES** in Russia are considering the frightening move of doubling the price of vodka.

The increase would be phased in over the next three years, with the added tax impost aiming to help government revenues as well as fight alcohol abuse.

The average Russian drinks 18 litres of pure alcohol a year, with the widely opposed vodka proposal following the recent introduction of new taxes on beer.

"Vodka should not be cheap; it is not a product of first necessity," said deputy minister Sergei Shatalov.

**RESEARCHERS** tracking big cats in the wilds of Guatemala are using a secret weapon - Calvin Klein's Obsession for Men.

Biologists Jose Moreira and Rony Garcia are part of the Jaguar Conservation Program run by the Wildlife Conservation Society, and are aiming to record and track the locations of jaguars in the Maya Biosphere Reserve.

"The method we are using to study the jaguars here in Guatemala is an invasive method which is based on photographing the individuals by using camera traps," Moreira said.

"It has been very useful using Obsession for Men to get the jaguars in front of these camera traps," he confirmed.

The US Wildlife Conservation Society discovered the feline fascination with the fragrance during experiments at its Bronx Zoo in New York, with the second most popular fragrance with the creatures being Nina Ricci's L'Air du Temps.

## WIN AN AROMABABY PACK



**Pharmacy Daily** is once again giving readers the chance to win an Aromababy® baby pack every day this week, courtesy of Aromababy®.

The pack contains Aromawipes®, Moisturising Nappy Cream (250ml) and Natural Floral Water (125ml).

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**Congratulations** to yesterday's lucky winner: **Andrea Gray** from **Sigma Pharmaceuticals TAS**.