

Guild innovation

COMPANIES associated with the Pharmacy Guild will this weekend release a range of new initiatives at the APP conference, including a multistore software solution from FRED, live demonstrations from several vendors of the eRx Script Exchange system and CMLs delivered in a range of formats such as Braille, audio and HTML from Healthlinks.net.

Mirixa is also set to reveal the results of a number of pharmacy implementations which have shown a 20% improvement in compliance.

Panadol adds caffeine



ABOVE: GlaxoSmithKline marketing manager Rod Stosic last night showed off the company's new Panadol Extra product, which is being launched at APP today.

The new analgesic product combines 500mg of paracetamol with 65mg of caffeine, and will only be available in pharmacies.

Stosic told **PD** that the product is very popular overseas, accounting for almost 20% of the global Panadol business by value.

The company said there is "clear evidence from a wide range of studies that caffeine acts as an adjuvant in facilitating the analgesic effect of paracetamol".

GSK is also hoping the timing of launch, in the lead-up to the 01 May rescheduling of codeine-containing analgesics such as Panadeine and Nurofen Plus, will provide a new option for pharmacy shelf space vacated by the items which are moving behind the counter.

Pharmacy key to Roxon plan

HEALTH Minister Nicola Roxon today endorsed community pharmacy as a vital part of the government's vision for Australia's future health system.

In her keynote speech at the APP conference on the Gold Coast, Roxon said the govt's vision is for the new nationally funded hospital system to work closely with pharmacies as "key frontline health professionals within the community."

As well as giving an overview of the proposed hospital reforms, Roxon confirmed a number of details of the Fifth Community Pharmacy Agreement, including a 30% overall increase in funding to \$15.1 billion dollars.

She said the negotiations with the Guild had seen savings of \$1 billion on forecast spending which will help keep the system sustainable.

These savings include the removal of the subsidy for PBS online and a two year freeze on dispensing fees.

Although fine details of the pact aren't yet finalised, key aspects of the agreement include a continuation of basic remuneration for pharmacy, the continuation of the full line wholesaler Customer Service Obligation payments, more support for e-Health as well as an expansion of the "reach and range" of professional services on offer through community pharmacies.

Roxon also said the department

UK hospital horror

BRITAIN'S National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA) has issued a report detailing a litany of medicines mismanagement issues in the country's hospitals, showing up to 20% of patients may not be getting their medicines correctly.

The NPSA is urging action over the issue, after compiling reports of more than 20,000 incidents where hospital inpatients were given drugs late or not at all.

Over the period from Sep 06 to Jun 09 this resulted in 27 deaths and 68 cases of severe harm or permanent disability, the NPSA said.

Come and say hello

PHARMACY Daily is now read each day by more than 6500 subscribers - and we'd like to meet you all at our stand (number 137) at APP today and over the weekend - so come and say giddy!

"It generates direct sales and just as importantly good will with customers"

Read what Jo McDowall has to say, click here.



Senate blocks groups

THE government's move to create new therapeutic groups for biphosphonates and antidepressants was yesterday stymied - at least temporarily - after the Senate passed an Opposition motion blocking the move.

The new groups, which were announced last year (**PD** 03 Nov) in the government's Mid Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook, were estimated to save the government \$48m in PBS outlays over four years, by using the cheapest medicine in each group as the basis for the price paid for other drugs in the same group.

At the time Medicines Australia slammed the move as an "unannounced price cut".

The Senate motion will delay the changes at least until a report from its Community Affairs committee into the changes is delivered in Jun.

Trust instincts

DOCTORS and healthcare providers have been urged to listen to parents as well as their own instincts when considering the severity of a child's sickness.

According to a new report which looked into 30 prior studies pertaining to the best indicators of serious infection in children, parents who were overly concerned about the state of their child were usually on to something.

"As a GP, it's important to always be alert to parents who are especially concerned about their child," said researcher Dr Matthew Thompson.

"We should usually trust parents' instincts. After all, they will have nursed their child through many minor illnesses before and often can tell when something is different."

It's not maple syrup

PHARMACISTS in Canada have begun putting dextromethorphan-containing cough syrups behind the counter after a recent spate of teenage overdoses.

Just in the last two weeks four teens aged 14 and 15 are known to have intentionally ingested overdoses of the medications for "recreational purposes", with symptoms of overdoses including dizziness, difficulty breathing, rapid heartbeat, confusion, anxiety and memory loss.

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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.

30 Mar: Finding Drug Information on the Web, University of Canberra - 02 6201 5897.

06 Apr: PSA Qld evening lecture - Infant Feeding: Unpacking the Evidence, Wolloongabba - details michael@psaql.org.au.

20-21 Mar: PSA Vic clinical weekend on Reproductive Health, Lorne - 03 9389 4012.

24 Mar: APSIG Clinical Forum 2 presented by Dr Josephine Thomas at Unley, SA - details Anne Curran 08 8272 1211.

31 Mar: PSA SA Maintenance Treatment in Chronic Pain - Unley - more information sa.branch@psa.org.au.

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

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

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

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

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

04-06 Jun: Pharmacy Expo in Sydney - earn up to 20 CPD points in 3 days. More info www.pharmacyexpo.com.au.

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

11-14 Nov: The 36th National SHPA Conference, Medicines Management 2010 in Melbourne - mm2010shpa.com.

Guild maps out the future

THE Pharmacy Guild has today released a formal "roadmap" which outlines its strategic direction for community pharmacy in Australia.

Speaking yesterday at the APP State of the Industry Symposium, Guild president Kos Slavos emphasised that pharmacy is the only health profession with the available capacity to handle Australia's growing health needs.

He again highlighted the yet-to-be-released pharmacy workforce research report (*PD* 04 Mar) which showed that by 2015 there will be about 3000 under-employed pharmacists in Australia.

Slavos said the national coverage of pharmacists - in contrast to just 50 nurse practitioners able to prescribe on the PBS - meant pharmacy should be involved in primary care, with the proposed Minor Ailments scheme a key area for participation.

Keys to success will include systemised and national programs, documented interactions, delivering savings to the health system and better health outcomes, he said.

MEANWHILE also during the Symposium yesterday, David Learmonth from the Health Dept

delivered the disappointing news that the PBS is continuing to grow.

"We're seeing higher expenditure after the PBS reforms than we expected," he said, with the savings delivered by the reforms overtaken by "larger growth in the PBS."

"It's clearly something we need to keep looking at," he added.

Oncology growth

AUSTRALIA'S top 20 cancer drugs will account for more than \$1 billion in sales by 2018, according to an analysis by pharmaceutical data specialist Datamonitor.

The top 20 cancer therapy brand sales totaled \$545m here in 2008, having grown on average by 30% a year since 2005.

The entry of generic products and maturing markets is expected to see this growth slow in the coming years, but the total will still hit the \$1 billion mark in eight years time.

Datamonitor said molecular targeted therapies were the leading class of cancer treatment, and had been responsible for most of the overall growth driven by the increased uptake of high-price products and a lack of generics.



DISPENSARY CORNER

YESTERDAY at APP Sigma Pharmaceuticals ceo Elmo de Alwis made a brave appearance (because his company's shares are currently suspended from trading) at the Guild's State of the Industry Symposium, representing NPSA, the group of full line pharmacy wholesalers.

Although he didn't shed any light on Sigma's travails, Elmo was in a characteristically chipper mood, amusing the crowd with a number of wry observations.

De Alwis clearly doesn't think much of expensive consulting firms, showing a graph of PBS estimates produced by PriceWaterhouse Coopers.

"They made a low guess and a high guess. I would have shown you their medium guess too but there wasn't room on the slide," he quipped.

OUT of bounds areas are: the monkey bars, bubblers and oh...the gravesite.

A human skull has been unearthed in Hobart's Albuera Street Primary School during recent excavation work.

Morbid as it may seem in a less historic schoolyard, the skull is not so out of place in the former 19th century cemetery.

According to the principal, the skull is the second human remains find at the school, and almost certainly dates back to the 1800's.

"It's part of the history of the school and it's one of the interesting, different things about the school," she said.

"I think the children will be interested and excited and they'll want to know all the details, but I don't think it'll be too scary."

IT seemed like a good idea...

The New York chef who has been re-educating adult palates to the taste of breast milk (*PD* 09 Mar) has been warned by city officials to cease the sale of his "Mothers Milk Cheese" - made from his wife's excess breast milk.

One prominent food critic who taste tested the cheese delivered a one-word verdict: "Eeeew!"

WIN AN AUSTRALIS EYE PENCIL



CONGRATULATIONS to Michelle Barnes from Mercurial Insights in North Sydney, who was the lucky winner of an Australis Eye Pencil in yesterday's *PD*.

Australis has teamed up with *Pharmacy Daily* this week, giving readers the chance to win an Australis Eye Pencil. Valued at \$8.95, the Australis Eye Pencil is the softest pencil ever.

The Blackest Black eye pencil creates the perfect smokey eye with ease, providing an intense colour, smooth formula and long-lasting finish.

New shades available include Silver Service and Hello Sailor, formulated with the same long-lasting easy glide formula.

For your last chance to win your very own Australis Blackest Black Eye Pencil, simply send through the correct answer to the following question:

Are these pencils blendable?

Send your entries to: comp@pharmacydaily.com.au.

The first correct entry received each day will win.

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