

Weekly Comment

Welcome to *Pharmacy Daily's* weekly comment feature. This week's contributor is Instigo's David Zivkovic.

The Importance of Signage

How you use signage in your store (both internally and externally) is essential to your retailing success.

If a customer can't clearly see your store's signage and easily understand what is on offer, they will more likely walk on by.

Effective signage acts as a beacon to potential shoppers drawing them in to what you have to sell.

However, don't try and fit too many messages in the one spot, particularly at your store's entry.

Too many messages, just like physical clutter, can create a barrier to potential customers and turn them off coming in.

The aim is to encourage increased traffic!

Signage needs to be clear and consistent around the store.

Create a hierarchy of signage based on categories and departments, then customers know how to look for what they are after.

Don't neglect the area between the top shelves and the ceiling, the bulkhead or pelmet – this area is often all customers can see of the products on the shelves from a distance.

Get some simple signage designed that both gives clear direction and contributes to the mood of the pharmacy.

Research shows that images of happy smiling people attract attention more than any other point of sale graphics.

The design of graphics is important too – think of the lowest common denominator in terms of the

readers' ability in reading and visibility and create your signs to match to ensure your signs are read and have the right effect.



Australian women at risk

AUSTRALIAN women may be placing their health in jeopardy if they take medicines bought via online websites, according to the Pharmacy Guild of Australia.

The comments come on the back of growing concerns over the increasing availability of the EllaOne pill to Australian women, via purchases made on overseas websites.

EllaOne (ulipristal acetate), can be taken up to five days (120 hours) after intercourse to prevent pregnancy, and works by modifying progesterone levels to stop ovaries from releasing an egg.

So far the drug has not been granted approval for marketing in Australia by the TGA.

Online websites offer the EU prescription-only medicine to patients following the completion of an online consultation which includes a number of medical questions, and is reviewed by an EU registered doctor.

"By purchasing a medicine online, you risk purchasing counterfeit or fake medicines, and medicines that do not meet the strict TGA manufacturing and quality guidelines that protects consumers in Australia," a spokesperson for the Guild said.

"Medicines bought online may contain no active ingredients, too much active ingredients, the wrong ingredients or remnants of toxic compounds.

"There are no guarantees that medicines purchased online will not be exposed to extreme temperatures or other potentially damaging conditions during transit," the spokesperson added.

According to the Guild, last year a British report found that one in

four UK GPs treated a patient for reactions caused by medicines bought by consumers via online websites.

In Australia the online medicines market contributes to the nation's 125,000 adverse medicine reaction hospitalisations per annum.

Qld Pharmacy diabetes launch



YESTERDAY Queensland premier Anna Bligh premiered a new pharmacy based diabetes prevention plan which is set to kick-off in Qld pharmacies from March next year.

The initiative will see patients offered the chance to undertake diabetes risk assessments (free of charge) at Qld pharmacies, with patients who are identified as "at risk" referred to their GP.

In addition 120 participating Queensland pharmacies will also undertake a pilot risk identification program which aims to check 10,000 people via glucose finger prick testing.

The program builds on the success of the Stroke Foundation's 'Know Your Numbers' campaign, and will see Diabetes Queensland join forces

with the Pharmacy Guild of Australia and the Stroke Foundation.

As such, both the 'Australian Type II Diabetes Risk Assessment' and the 'Know Your Numbers' campaigns are set to be integrated and become IT based, available via the Guild's InnovationRx developed technology.

"The Guild is very pleased with the vote of confidence the Queensland Government has given community pharmacy," said Kos Sclavos National President of The Pharmacy Guild of Australia.

"Furthermore their funding of the IT integration of these pharmacy interventions will lead to better documented outcomes and further expansion to professional pharmacy services," he added.

Queensland pharmacies are set to receive full details of the diabetes program early 2011 in time for its commencement in March.

The launch was held at Sclavos' own Qld pharmacy, and was attended by the Qld premier Anna Bligh and Deputy Premier and Health Minister Paul Lucas.

Pictured above at the launch is (back row from left) Michelle Trute, Diabetes Qld ceo; Kos Sclavos; Paul Lucas; and Dr Erin Lalor National Stroke Foundation ceo; (front row from left) Tim Hodgson, Terry White Chemist Myer Centre; and Premier Anna Bligh.



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Medicines online

HEALTHCARE professionals and the public are now able to access information available at www.medicines.org.au via an iPhone icon badge which can be saved to their iPhone home screen.

The medicines.org website is operated by healthlinks.net, and provides a centralised source of approved Australian medicine information for both healthcare professionals and consumers.

The free of charge website contains no advertising and is aimed at supporting the national Quality Use of Medicines strategy 'to make the best possible use of medicines to improve the health outcomes for all Australians'.

For iPhone users, the website icon looks similar to an App, and is designed as a small blue square with two black and white capsules.

Clicking on the icon will take users directly into the site.

To download, users need to open Safari and browse to medicines.org.au, and then click on the '+' at the bottom of the screen; from here users need to choose the 'add to home screen' option, and click add.

Meanwhile the website itself is accessible to all internet-enabled mobile devices.

Collaborating for better care

THE establishment of genuine healthcare partnerships will be critical to the viability and credibility of Medicare Locals, according to the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia's submission to the Government on the program.

"Effective and enduring partnerships will underpin the capacity of a Medicare Local to meet the needs of patients," the PSA said in a statement.

In its submission, the PSA said that it welcomes Medicare Locals as a mechanism to improve patients' access to services by improving the coordination and integration of care within the healthcare system.

Medicare Locals are "fundamental elements of the Government's National Health and Hospitals Network which will build upon the strengths of our current health system, while encouraging more locally responsive and flexible services, better supporting health practitioners and patients, and improving integration and accountability across the health system," the PSA said.

The PSA also advocated a greater utilisation of the medical

expertise of pharmacists, saying that "pharmacists are a key point of access into local communities".

"There are approximately 5000 community pharmacies across Australia each serving an average community of 4000 people and it is estimated that the average person visits a pharmacy 14 times per year," the PSA said.

"Pharmacists are thus a valuable health professional resource who can provide practical assistance in the evolution of Medicare Locals."

The Society also called on the government to ensure the program had a sound and sustainable funding base, "to enable Medicare Locals to employ or contract staff with the skills required to help meet community needs and expectations."

Aussies access block

THERE has been no significant improvement in access block and overcrowding in Australian and New Zealand hospitals, according to the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine.

Access block is the situation where patients are unable to gain access to appropriate hospital beds in a 'reasonable' amount of time (no greater than eight hours).

A study, conducted earlier in the year found that 77% of Australian emergency departments had experienced access block during the year, with the worst effected hospitals located in urban district areas.

"Western Australia performed worst, with 13.3 access block patients out of 39.0 but with only 6.7 waiting," said Associate Professor Drew Richardson, chair of road trauma and emergency at the ANU Medical School.

A second study conducted in September found that the level of access block nationwide increased between May and September this year, even, according to Richardson, "in hospitals that had introduced a 4-hour rule."

"The study found that access block was seen more in tertiary than secondary hospitals (64% compared with 23%), and that no hospitals with access block were able to meet the Shorter Stays in ED target of 95% discharged or admitted within six hours," he said.



DISPENSARY CORNER

IMPRESSIVE employee incentives!

The Yubulu Nickel Refinery in Queensland has given pharmacy bosses around the nation food for thought after handing out 55 luxury cars and over 700 Pacific Island holidays to workers as part of their Christmas holiday bonus'.

The rewards were doled out to employees as a extra-special thankyou for helping to save the company from shutting down.

According to reports the Refinery was facing closure, before its change in ownership earlier in the year, as well as boosted worker efforts which saved the company around \$16 million throughout 2010.

YOU'D need more than bandaids to fix this backyard bite.

Police passing through a NT community last week, were rather shocked to discover the front yard of one family home had seemingly been commandeered by a three-metre salt water crocodile.

Pulling over for a closer inspection, police discovered the croc lying comfortably in a puddle of water pooled at the front of the property, being sprayed with a gentle misting of water from a nearby sprinkler.

Only after cautiously moving closer did the police discover the offending reptile had its mouth and feet bound.

Speaking to the property owners they then found out that the croc had been caught lazing in a local swimming hole, and was awaiting extradition and relocation by the Parks and Wildlife Service to the East Alligator River.

RADIOACTIVE mouse hunt.

Crews currently involved in the cleanup of several billion gallons of solid and liquid nuclear waste at the former US nuclear weaponry plant, Hanford, are now on the hunt for what they believe is a nuclear mouse.

According to reports, radioactive mouse droppings have been found in the plant, leading the investigators to believe the mouse may not, at present, have left the site.

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Every day this week, **Pharmacy Daily** is giving readers the chance to win a Eye Candy Palette courtesy of **Total Beauty Network**.

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