

Weekly Comment

Welcome to **Pharmacy Daily's** weekly comment feature. This week's contributor is Vanessa Law, General Manager at healthlinks.net.

Mirixa Australia Programs: an investment into your future

It seems that everyone understands the "why do it" when it comes to Mirixa Australia programs.

It's a simple equation: offer your patients an extra service, and they have even more reasons to remain loyal to your pharmacy.

Plus, helping your patients manage their medicines means increased number of scripts they are getting at the pharmacy and you also get paid a professional service fee, but the age-old question remains, "how do I find the time?"

Mirixa Australia programs are an investment.

If you invest the initial time you get the return.

Everyone remembers the first day they worked with a new POS or dispense system – a nightmare!

Until you had put through at least 10 scripts you thought you'd never be able to dispense again!

What about the first time you tried to change the ring tone on your phone?

Bet you thought you would have to listen to Black Eyed Peas – 'My Humps' every time the phone rang because your 12 year old seems to be smarter than you at something.

But just like everything, the more you do something the better, and faster, you become at it; this is the same with these programs.

Ask any pharmacist who has completed more than five cases; just how long does it take you?

To make the step into the future of professional services contact Mirixa on 1300 MIRIXA (647492) or email contact@mirixa.com.au.



GPs mistrust pharmacists

TWO thirds of Australian doctors do not trust pharmacists to dispense prescriptions exactly as prescribed, according to the recently released Originators vs Generics GP Poll.

"While pharmacists often claim that generics are a cheaper alternative to originator medications, they are usually referring to the price the pharmacy pays for the medicine, not the end user," said Dr Jason Cooke, DMC Medical Centre, Drummoyne, NSW.

Questions over MoU

SPECULATION is rife that the Memorandum of Understanding will not pass legislative approval before it was originally planned to come into effect next month.

The speculation comes on the back of the Federal Opposition's refusal to state whether it will support the bill until the release of the Senate Inquiry into the MoU's results on 16 Nov, five days before it is due to come into effect.

Meanwhile generic companies are still hard at work lobbying opposition members to throw their support against the bill, with Alphapharm's managing director, Martin Cross, telling reporters that the proposed changes are "just a cash grab" that would result in the movement of many generic operations offshore.

"Rather than it being an evolution it will be a revolution," said Cross.

In the opposite camp the Pharmacy Guild of Australia is hoping the MoU will not come into effect until March next year, saying that the festive holiday period is too hectic a time to instigate large scale changes to the PBS.

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More maternity money

THE Federal Government is providing \$5m in funding for GPs to complete procedural training in obstetrics and anaesthetics.

The funding is set to provide 110 rural and remote GPs with \$40,000 to attain either the Advanced Diploma of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists; or a statement of satisfactory completion of Advanced Rural Skills Training in Anaesthesia by 2013.

It is hoped that the provision of the additional funds will see rural and remote living women provided with more obstetric and anaesthetic services.

The program will be managed by The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists until 2013.

For info see www.health.gov.au.

MEANWHILE the Govt has also announced the launch of a new booklet designed to provide guidance on how to conduct "important and often difficult conversations around palliative care for women whose breast cancer has spread".

Launched today the 'Finding the Words - starting a conversation when your cancer has progressed' booklet was produced by the National Breast and Ovarian Cancer Centre for women with secondary cancer on how to discuss palliative care options.

The booklet also aims to take the fear out of palliative care, describing it as not only a place for end of life treatment, but is also a place to receive symptom relief and to help to improve the day to day life of cancer sufferers.

The booklet is free of charge and can be accessed at www.nbocc.org.au/resources.

Sigma extends deal

SIGMA Pharmaceuticals has agreed to extend the exclusivity period for the sale of its Pharmaceuticals Division to the Aspen Pharmacare Holdings Limited Group until 29 Oct 2010.



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Gabitril risk approval

THE US Food and Drug Administration has approved a new Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategy (REMS) for Cephalon Inc's antiepileptic medication, Gabitril (tiagabine hydrochloride).

The release of the strategy follows the FDA's 2008 findings which revealed that the class of antiepileptic drugs to which Gabitril belonged increased the users risk of suicidal thoughts and behaviour.

The new REMS comes in the form of a Medication Guide, designed to inform patients about the risks associated with taking Gabitril.

The Guide will now be given out with every Gabitril prescription, and will also be available via Cephalon's website - www.gabitril.com.

In addition to releasing the Guide, Cephalon has also implemented a REMS assessment plan which will evaluate: the patient's understanding of Gabitril's risk; the distribution of the Medication Guide and the general adherence to distribution and dispensing requirements, as well as penalties in place for non-compliance.

Comment on drug labelling

THE Consumers Health Forum of Australia has released a consumer information and discussion paper titled 'Achieving Best Practice in the Packaging and Labelling of Medicines'.

The purpose of the paper is to consult with consumers on medicine labelling and packaging issues, and it therefore contains information on the current literature, research, legislation and policy debate regarding drug packaging and labelling.

In its paper the CHF contend that labelling should contain clear info on what the medication is, what it

is used for, how to use it, how to store it, shelf life, information for the person dispensing the drug, a batch number, and any risks associated with the product.

The paper also poses questions to the consumer such as: What information do you expect to find on the packages and labels of medicines?; Have you experienced problems reading the directions for your medicines?; and Have you ever incorrectly interpreted the directions for use on your medicines, or been uncertain about how to use a medicine after reading the directions for use?

The CHF is now calling for consumer comment on the paper and drug labelling issues, see www.chf.org.au for details.

Brain infection

BIOGEN Idec Inc has reported five more cases of the brain infection, progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy, in MS patients taking Tysabri, bringing the total number of cases to 68 as at Sep 2010.

Friday comp winner

CONGRATULATIONS to Melissa Wigginton of Amcal Max Yeppoon Central who was the lucky winner of Friday's Organic Pamper comp.



DISPENSARY CORNER

HAVE a wine instead.

According to reports surfacing from the land of the long white cloud, alcohol has become the cheaper alternative to bottled water in NZ.

The comments come on the back of the latest research presented by the University of Otago, which found that a standard drink of wine cost NZ\$.62, as opposed to a 250ml bottle of H2O which came in at NZ\$.67.

"Our analysis suggests alcohol is now probably the cheapest recreational drug in NZ and has become increasingly affordable," said lead researcher Nick Wilson.

Coming in as the cheapest beverage option however at just NZ\$.43 was a 250ml glass of milk.

SERIOUSLY it's a rat emergency!

Police in the UK region of Greater Manchester decided that for the benefit of better public understanding they would post the subject of every emergency call they received between 5am last Thursday and 5am the next morning, on Twitter

Clocking a total of 3,205 incidents over the 24 hour period, officers reported calls ranging from the mysterious appearance of a rat inside a woman's house, to a woman reporting a yelled "you're gorgeous" complement, to more serious injuries and motorcar pile ups, in addition, officers arrested 341 people during the period, 126 of which are still in lock-up.

WIN AN AROMABABY PACK



Pharmacy Daily has teamed up with **Aromababy** again and is giving readers the chance to win 3 products every day this week.

From category

leaders in natural baby care, comes the nappy care trio. Aromawipes, Barrier Balm and Nappy Cream are on offer in this edition. As used in select hospitals for fifteen years, this professional, world-leading brand is not sold to supermarkets assuring you of a pharmacy-focused approach to expanding your baby care category. Totally safe for mother to be/new mother and sensitive skin, Aromababy is a long time supporter of the Eczema Association.

To win this great pack, simply send in your answer to the question below:

Is Aromababy suitable for eczema?

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

The first correct entry received will win!

Hint: Visit: www.aromababy.com

World Menopause Day

AUSSIE comedian Jean Kittson, has been named as the ambassador for Remifemin, with the move coinciding with World Menopause Day today.

"Menopause is the last frontier for women's liberation and it really is liberating," said Kittson.

"Menopause is rather like puberty, only backwards," she added.

Remifemin is also endorsed by pharmacist, Gerald Quigley, who said "menopause is an opportunity for a woman to improve her physical health and appearance, as well as to maximise her energy and enhance her quality of life.

"As Remifemin is all natural and standardised, with extensive clinical trials involving 12,000 women, I see it as the first line treatment to help alleviate symptoms" he added.



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