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## Asthma in Australia

**WHILST** the rates of Australian asthmatics have dropped over the past ten years there is still much work to be done, according to a new Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) report.

The *Asthma in Australia* study found that between 2001 and 2007-08 the prevalence of asthma declined in people aged between five and 35 by over 25%.

Asthma figures during this period however remained stable in adults aged 35 years and over.

Interestingly, mortality rates due to asthma between 1997 and 2009 were also found to have dropped by an impressive 45%.

"Despite these improvements, asthma prevalence and mortality rates in Australia remain high on an international scale," said lead author, Professor Guy Marks, Director of the Australian Centre for Asthma Monitoring at the Woolcock Institute of Medical Research in Sydney.

Based on figures from 2007-08, around one in ten Australians have asthma, with researchers finding that "overall levels of asthma symptoms and frequency of dispensing reliever medication in the Australian community are higher than is consistent with good asthma control".

Worryingly, the report found that Australians with asthma also smoke at least as much as people with asthma, despite the known adverse effects, and that the condition is more common among Indigenous Australians than among other Australians, particularly in adults.

## Different drug reactions

**PERSONS** of European and South Asian descent may react differently to common drugs, according to new Australian research.

Undertaken by University of Sydney PhD Faculty of Pharmacy student, Vidya Perera, the research looked at ethnic differences in CYP1A2 enzyme activity (responsible for the metabolism of numerous antipsychotic and antidepressant drugs whilst also being involved in the metabolic conversion of carcinogenic compounds) between people of Indian and European origin.

166 South Asians and 166 Europeans took part in the research which included a lifestyle, demographic and diet questionnaire and measurements of their CYP1A2 levels.

The research found that genetic differences between the two groups only accounted for 3% of variability in CYP1A2 levels, whilst environment, diet and lifestyle factors accounted for 35% of the differences.

Discussing his research, Perera posited that people from South Asia may require lower doses of depression and psychosis drugs because they are likely to have lower levels of CYP1A2 than their

European counterparts.

"Vegetables such as cabbages, cauliflower and broccoli are known to increase levels of CYP1A2, as was demonstrated in this study and previous studies in people of European background," said Perera.

"The lower levels of CYP1A2 in South Asians, however, appears to be due to the common practice of cooking these vegetables in curries using ingredients such as cumin and tumeric, ingredients known to inhibit the enzyme, overriding the effect of the vegetables," he added.

Perera's research is the first to look at CYP1A2 levels in South Asians, and has won him the NSW AusBiotech/GlaxoSmithKline Student Excellence Award.

"Most drugs are approved in clinical trials conducted in Europe and North America using healthy, middle-aged European men," he said.

"Understanding the correct dose of a medicine is crucial to achieving beneficial results and avoiding adverse drug reactions," he added.

## Ferriprox approval

**THE** US Food and Drug Administration has approved Ferriprox (deferiprone) to treat patients with iron overload due to blood transfusions in patients with thalassemia, who had an inadequate response to prior chelation therapy.

## ASMI conference 2011

**INDUSTRY** experts including Dr Rohan Hammett, National Manager, Therapeutic Goods Administration and Rhonda White, Co-Founder of the Terry White Chemists group of pharmacies have been locked in to present at the upcoming Australian Self-Medication Industry Conference.

Taking place in Sydney on 16 November, the national conference is themed 'Promoting Self Care Literacy' and will hear from a series of experts on the latest trends in consumer self care and health literacy.

See [www.asmicongress.com](http://www.asmicongress.com).

## Better mental health

**THE** Department of Health and Ageing has announced 61 new research grants, valued at a total of \$35.7 million to benefit Australians living with mental illness.

See [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au).

## WIN AN AUSTRALIS LIPGLOSS PACK

Each day this week *Pharmacy Daily* is giving readers the chance to win a pack filled with Mint Condition Lipgloss valued at \$35.80, courtesy of Australis.

Each pack includes four Mint Condition Lipglosses: x1 Happily Ever Laughter, x1 Malice in Wonderpink, x1 Freely Innocent and x1 An Evening With.

Get Your Lips in Perfect Condition!

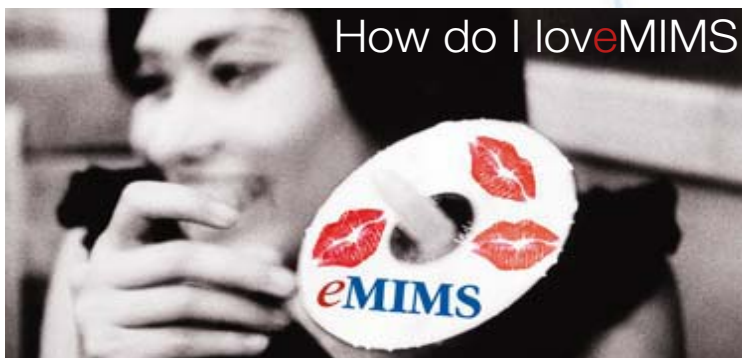
Australis Mint Condition Lipgloss have been specially named by our Facebook FANS! These lip gloss beauties are packed full of nature's goodness to moisturise and condition the lips. Containing nourishing vitamin rich Guava and Kakadu Plum extracts, Shea Butter and Beeswax for extra moisture and mint and cinnamon leaf oils for a deliciously fresh sensation and full pout!

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To win, simply be the first person to send the correct answer to the following question to: [comp@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:comp@pharmacydaily.com.au)

### What are the Fruit Extracts included in the active ingredients?

Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner, Siobhan Edwards from Cincotta Discount Chemist Glebe, NSW.



## Guild Update

### This week's update from the Pharmacy Guild DVD Training

The Federal Attorney-General Robert McClelland attended a Guild Member's pharmacy in Sydney last week to launch a new DVD training package for workers in community pharmacy to try to stop household chemicals being purchased for potential violence and terrorism.

Mr McClelland said the DVDs - titled 'Know your customer' - are designed to help staff identify suspicious behaviour which may be displayed by people looking to purchase or stockpile chemicals of security concern.

Some chemicals in the pharmaceutical industry that have legitimate everyday uses can also be dangerous if they get into the wrong hands in significant quantities.

The Government is working with industry bodies to educate staff about what to look out for.

The DVD deals with issues including the purchase of unusually large quantities, nervousness on the part of the buyer, paying in large amounts of cash and poor knowledge on the part of the buyer regarding the normal use and quantity of the product being purchased.

The new training will help workers be better informed and vigilant about suspicious activities surrounding the chemicals of security concern.

The DVDs are being distributed to all community pharmacies in Australia in the coming month, along with fact sheets and transaction reporting cards to encourage retailers to report any suspicious customer behaviour to the National Security Hotline.

Increased vigilance by industry and business could make a difference in preventing a terrorist attack in Australia.

If you see suspicious activity or something unusual, report it to the National Security Hotline on 1800 123 400.



The Pharmacy Guild of Australia

## Sigma's new milestone

**SIGMA** has consolidated all of its retail brands including Amcal, Amcal Max and Guardian, as well as its main Victorian warehouse operation and all of the company's Melbourne metropolitan staff into a new national head office in Rowville.

Located in the south-eastern suburbs of Melbourne, the new site has been described as a "milestone" for the company.

"This is an exciting time for Sigma and everyone is delighted to have moved to such a fantastic new location" said Mark Hooper, the Chief Executive of Sigma Pharmaceuticals.

"It's also a tremendous opportunity to have all the brands under the one roof," he added.

Over 400 Sigma staffers made the move to the new 4,000-sqm premises, which saw the merger of the company's distribution centres in Laverton and Clayton, as well as offices in Croydon and Clayton.

The swish new space was redesigned and refurbished by award-winning architect Gray Puskand, from its former incarnation as a retailer call centre and warehouse.

"The numerous benefits to Sigma in combining its various Melbourne operations include improved productivity and staff morale due to open and collaborative work spaces, and the synergies offered by having all departments in the one location," said Hooper.

## iNova looks closer into community pharmacy



**INOVA** pharmaceuticals recently paid a visit to John Bell Pharmacy in Sydney to get first hand insight into patient and consumer needs.

Whilst touring the pharmacy iNova said it was very impressed with the services on offer, including pharmacist consultations; health and medicine advice; screening services, e.g. blood pressure monitoring; diabetes support; weight management; smoking cessation; home medicine reviews; and assisting chronic disease management.

"Today there is increasing demand among pharmacy customers for reliable information and support, which is readily accessible and can assist in managing people's own health and well being," said John Bell, Owner and Pharmacy Self-Care Program Principal Advisor.

"Pharmacists are healthcare

professionals ideally positioned to provide this support with a range of interventions to help identify and manage health issues, treat minor illnesses, as well as provide advice on treatment options," he added.

Pictured above is the team from John Bell Pharmacy with their iNova guests (back row from left) Mai Dinh, Pharmacist; Anne Cochrane, iNova Senior Product Manager; Jack Roizman, iNova Pre-Marketing Manager; Athena Kolivos, iNova Medical & Corporate Affairs Manager; Kristen Heilman, iNova Marketing Manager, Consumer Healthcare; John Bell, Pharmacy Owner; Russell Benda, Pharmacist in Charge; Richard Horsburgh, iNova Senior Product Manager and (front row from left) Nesrine Allam, Pharmacist; Christine Thompson, Pharmacist; Claudia Caballero, Pharmacy Assistant.



## DISPENSARY CORNER

**NOT** dead yet.

A NZ photographer has gone public with the news that he is not dead.

Reports recently spread like wildfire through Graham Brooks' local township of Renwick that he had suffered of a massive stroke, and had died shortly after.

Brooks, who is definitely not dead, at first thought the rumour was funny, and was happy to disavow well wishers who visited to console his "widow" of their belief, however when he started to lose work, he decided it was time for action in the media.

"I'm not on death's door, not yet anyway," he joked.

**NATURE** vs nurture.

Scientists, vets, zoologists and animal experts are banding together in the South American nation of Uruguay, to help rear a baby La Plata dolphin found abandoned with its umbilical cord still attached.

The infant was discovered by three boys at Playa Verde beach with net marks on its body, meaning its mum had most likely been caught by fishermen moments after giving birth.

The orphaned dolphin was quickly scooped up by the quick thinking trio and taken to the wildlife rescue centre SOS Rescate Fauna Marina.

The baby, named Nipper, has since been given round the clock care including feeding with a tasty mix of fish, cream, cereal, water, vitamins and oral rehydration salts, and is now strong enough to be taken out for swims in the sea.

Scientists and vets hope that when Nipper is strong enough they will be able to integrate him with a local wild pod of dolphins.

