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Competition winners

CONGRATULATIONS to the winners of Friday's OptiDerma competition: Rachel Corey, Therapeutic Goods Administration; Wade McDougall, Synthon; Peter Dimitrakopoulos, TorchMedia; Irene Nimorakiotakis, Pharmore Pharmacies; Eta Chow, Manrex; and Gayleene Chapman, Health Focus Pharmasave.



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A decade of drug approvals

SEVEN hundred and ninety five medicines have been approved for use in Australia over the last decade, with treatments for cancer, cardiovascular disease and vaccines commanding the majority of new approvals.

The figures are outlined in a new report *Medicines Milestones: a decade of persistence, prevention and promise*, commissioned by Medicines Australia, and found that over the last ten years cancer treatments accounted for 115 of the 795 medicines approved for use in Australia.

"As an industry, we're still working on that elusive cancer cure, but we are edging closer with every new treatment," said Dr Brendan Shaw, Medicines Australia Chief Executive.

"Looking at the last ten years, we have medicines which are extending life expectancy, improving quality of life, and even preventing some diseases altogether," he added.

Hot on the heels of cancer treatments, cardiovascular disease drugs also featured prominently, with 82 new medicines for CVD conditions such as treatments for blood pressure, cholesterol and prevention of blood clots being approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration in the last ten years.

Vaccines also numbered highly, with the report showing 57 new vaccines scored TGA approval in the past 10 years, including childhood vaccines on the National Immunisation Program such as measles, mumps, rubella, polio,

diphtheria and whooping cough, as well as other vaccines for meningococcal, cervical cancer, influenza, tetanus, smallpox and cholera.

Other conditions which saw a number of new TGA approvals over the last decade included arthritis (33), gastrointestinal disorders (39) and diabetes (27).

Meanwhile, according to the report, of the 795 drugs approved, one in four was a medical breakthrough using a newly discovered molecule, unique to any other currently used to combat disease.

Of these new discoveries, one in six was for the treatment of cancer.

"On average it takes the testing of 10,000 new molecules, 15 years and \$1.4 billion to get one medical breakthrough from microscope to medicine," said Shaw.

"These 224 medical breakthroughs represent a \$313 billion investment in research and development and have changed the way we treat 52 different diseases," Shaw added.

Looking at approvals in relation to depression (a National Health Priority area), the report found that there were just six approvals for the condition.

Medicines Australia however said that this could be attributed to depression being the only mental health National Health Priority.

"There were some 59 treatments approved for mental health conditions overall, including social anxiety disorders, addictive disorders and Alzheimer's," Shaw said.

Mental illness shame

PARENTS with a mental illness are ashamed to ask for help to raise their children, according to a new study by the national mental health charity, SANE Australia.

The study of 330 people, 84% who were women, with the most common conditions being depression (50%), followed by bipolar disorder (23%).

The survey results found that only a third of respondents told their child's school that they have a mental illness, whilst those that did disclose their condition found the experience unhelpful, and even in some cases leading to stigmatising by other parents and, in some cases, bullying of their child.

In addition nearly 50% of respondents surveyed said they have not sought help for their mental illness on occasions because they feared losing custody of their child; whilst 64% indicated they would resist going to hospital because of concern for their child.

Worryingly more than 10% of the people surveyed said they had no one to call on if they are ill.

"It is unacceptable that in 2012, people are too embarrassed to say they have a mental illness," said Jack Heath, CEO of SANE Australia.

"Many parents managing a mental illness are acutely aware that their illness is a recognised risk factor for their child to develop mental health problems later in life, such as depression.

"That's why it's so important they get support when they need it," he added.

For more information visit www.sane.org.

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Weekly Comment

Welcome to *PD*'s weekly comment feature. This week's contributor is **Roma Cecere**, GM for Patient Care division of GuildLink.



MedsCheck Services

Medicine Use Review (MUR) or MedsCheck/Diabetes MedsCheck services are now available in Australian pharmacies.

UK, Canada and NZ have reported great success, with 80% of the patients who took part in the first audit of MURs in UK stating their knowledge on medicines and how to use them had improved because of an MUR.

These services became available as of July 2012.

MedsCheck services are an in-pharmacy review of patients who are taking multiple medications and/or have newly diagnosed or poorly controlled type 2 diabetes.

These services are aimed at improving the quality use of medicines and reducing the number of adverse drug events experienced by patients.

GuildCare launched its MedsCheck module in July 2012 with an outstanding number of pharmacy registrations and program adoption to date.

GuildCare's module has seamless integration with dispensing software, patient data is pre-populated from dispense, with software prompting pharmacist for patients who may be eligible.

Ability to print Patient and Health Professional's reports incorporating the Patient Medication Profile including image and medicine information.

GuildCare is in the process of piloting iPad and Android applications which will provide pharmacies with flexibility needed to provide effective service in pharmacy.

For more information on GuildCare's MedsCheck module, visit our website www.guildcare.com.au or contact our support team at support@guildcare.com.au.

Aussies don't chuck sickies

EIGHTY-three percent of Australians go to work when they are unwell, according to a new Betadine Sore Throat Gargle survey.

The online survey took into account responses from 1,007 Australians currently in paid employment and found that despite the old Australian adage of "chucking a sickie", 72% of Aussie workers never pull a pretend sickie.

Indeed it seems that the call of work is too strong to keep people in bed recuperating, with 52% of people saying they will have too much work to do if they take a sick day, whilst 14% worry about job security if they take a day off and 12% simply do not trust their co-workers to cover their job to the same standard.

Interestingly, the survey also indicated that 91% of Aussies would prefer that their co-workers took a day off when sick, with 71% saying that their main problem with their colleagues turning up sick was being exposed to that sickness.

The key symptom that Aussie workers said that they would battle through was a sore throat (67%), followed by aches and pains (64%) and a bad back (52%).

Commenting on the findings, Dr Raymond Seidler, GP said "I understand about people being nervous with potential absenteeism - however it is important not to spread infectious diseases in the work place".

"The important thing to remember is when it comes to bugs and viruses often the best thing for you, your boss and your colleagues is to take the time to recuperate and come back to work when you are at your best," he added.

Organ appointments

DAVID Koch has been appointed as the new chair of the Advisory Council to the Australian Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Authority.

DISPENSARY CORNER

DANGEROUS sleep.

A woman in the US is thanking her lucky stars that she is a good swimmer, after she awoke to find that, rather than just sleepwalking, she had indulged in a spot of sleepswimming.

The 31-year old woman sparked a police hunt after she was discovered missing in the middle of the night by her husband.

Barefooted and pajama clad, the sleeping woman had made it all the way to the Snake River, taken a dip and crawled back on the bank, by the time police found her, safe but shivering and with no memory of what had happened.

THE prince better make sure he's brushed and flossed- twice.

It may be a childrens story, but one artist in the Ukraine, Taras Polataiko, is taking the fable of Sleeping Beauty very seriously, inviting a group of females to be 'sleeping beauty' waiting for her prince.

These beauties are contracted by Polataiko to sleep in his installation artwork space in the National Museum of Ukraine for two hours at a time.

Whilst the beauties slumber male visitors to the museum have the opportunity to 'wake' the women from their sleep with a kiss.

But here's the catch: if the beauty opens her eyes upon true love's kiss, both parties are legally obliged (via a signed contract which the beauty entered into prior to taking a nap, and which the prince signed prior to kissing the lady) to get married.

"The tension of the performance is in the seductiveness and fear of the ultimate moment," a press statement for the exhibit said.

"The viewer will have to think twice before kissing the Beauty.

"The Beauty will have to decide if the ultimate moment has come or not.

"The show will end the moment the Beauty opens her eyes," the statement added.

WIN A LUXURIOUS SKINCARE PRIZE PACK



This week *Pharmacy Daily* has teamed up with A'kin and is giving five lucky readers the chance to win one of their luxurious skincare packs, valued at \$90.

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