

Drug Safety conference

THE Queensland Branch of the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia has secured the hosting rights to the 4th International Global Drug Safety Conference and Exposition.

Themed 'Revitalising Drug Safety - the Decade of the Patient', the conference will bring together government leaders, drug regulatory agencies, drug safety specialists, healthcare professionals, pharmaceutical industry, healthcare technology providers, health insurance providers, patient safety advocates, and consumer groups from all over the globe.

The Conference will take place at the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre from 14-16 Oct 2013.

PBS price correction

THE Department of Health has published a correction to the Dispensed Price for max quantity for entries in the 01 Dec 2012 Schedule for brands containing risedronate and docetaxel.

The correction follows a Court Order issued last week.

The subsidies for claims made for PBS and RPBS supplies to patients from 01 December 2012 onward will accord with the amended prices set out in the errata.

Claims submitted by pharmacists for risedronate and docetaxel supplies will be correctly paid from 1 January 2013.

All claims submitted from 1 Dec 2012 to 31 Dec 2012 will be retrospectively adjusted by the end of January 2013 to ensure that pharmacists are reimbursed based on the corrected prices set out in the errata published with this note.

NPS takes on rivaroxaban

THERE is no evidence that people with non-valvular atrial fibrillation (NVAf) who are well controlled on warfarin will benefit clinically from a switch to rivaroxaban, according to NPS.

Australian cancer rise

THE Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's latest *Cancer in Australia: an overview 2012*, report estimates that this year 120,700 Australians will be diagnosed with cancer, excluding basal and squamous cell carcinoma of the skin.

According to the report, more than half (56%) of these cases are expected to be diagnosed in males, with the most common cancers in 2012 expected to be prostate cancer, followed by bowel cancer, breast cancer, melanoma of the skin and lung cancer.

The report also found that between 1991 and 2009, the number of new cancer cases diagnosed almost doubled from 66,393 to 114,137.

This increase has been attributed to the rise in the number of prostate cancer, breast cancer in females, bowel cancer and lung cancer, and is partly explained by the ageing and increasing size of the population.

Interestingly, the report also found that despite this increase for all cancers combined, the age-standardised mortality rate decreased by 17% from 210 per 100,000 in 1991 to 174 per 100,000 in 2010.

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CHC52587-09/12

The comments come from an article in the latest edition of *NPS Radar* which reviewed the new oral anticoagulant rivaroxaban, now available as an alternative to warfarin.

Currently the drug is TGA approved for use in stroke prevention in NVAf, however it is not PBS listed for this indication and is currently only available on private prescription for stroke prevention in atrial fibrillation.

In analysing the data surrounding the drug, NPS looked at the recent pivotal clinical trial ROCKET-AF, which found that rivaroxaban 20mg once daily is no worse than warfarin for reducing the incidence of stroke in people with NVAf.

Interestingly the ROCKET-AF trial did find that rivaroxaban showed a significantly lower incidence of intracranial bleeding but significantly more gastrointestinal bleeds.

"If a patient is able to tolerate warfarin then keeping them at their optimal warfarin dose with regular monitoring is the best way to prevent a stroke," said NPS MedicineWise clinical adviser Dr Philippa Binns.

"If people at risk of stroke are not able to maintain a therapeutic INR (International Normalised Ratio) on warfarin because of food or drug interactions, or regular monitoring of INR is difficult or impractical, rivaroxaban may be an alternative," Binns added.

In addition, Binns said that due to the fact that there is a lack of long term safety data for rivaroxaban with regards to its safety profile in people at high risk of bleeding, the drug should be avoided in people who have, or are at risk of, active bleeding, such as those with intracranial or gastrointestinal bleeding.

"It should also be avoided in people with significant hepatic disease or renal impairment," she said.

AspenBio name change

IN vitro diagnostic company AspenBio Pharma has changed its name to Venaxis Inc.

Organ tender

THE Organ and Tissue Authority (OTA) is currently seeking the services of appropriately qualified individual(s) or organisation(s) to deliver training modules that provide health professionals with skills to: communicate with families in acute grief due to critical illness or sudden death of a family member; support families dealing with sudden death of a family member; inform families about the opportunity of organ and tissue donation; and support families to make a proactive and informed decision about donation.

See www.tenders.gov.au for details.

Triple Zero for all

THE National Heart Foundation of Australia is arguing for universal ambulance cover for all Australians, saying that the cost of ambulance care influences many people to delay or avoid calling Triple Zero.

The comments a national survey of over 11,000 people that identified cost as a barrier for calling Triple Zero (000) for up to 650,000 people.

According to the results, the survey found that 43.5% of respondents (who live outside of QLD and TAS-these states already have universal ambulance cover) who were not covered for an ambulance said it would be too expensive to call Triple 000 if they thought they were experiencing a heart attack.

"Sadly of the 10,000 people who die of heart attack each year, 50% fail to even make it to hospital because it took too long to call 000," said Dr Lyn Roberts, National CEO of the Heart Foundation.

"What this research highlights is that the ambulance service is an integral part of heart attack care, not just a transport service," Roberts added.

To this end, the Heart Foundation has developed a position statement that outlines the rationale for universal ambulance cover, along with options for aligning ambulance care to ensure more reliable and consistent funding Australia wide.

To view the statement **CLICK HERE**.

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THE Solar Springs Health Retreat in the NSW Southern Highlands has released new, value-priced summer packages including accommodation for two nights, a 'Cool as a Cucumber' facial, a Swedish massage, activities and all meals from \$540 per person.

The two-night 'Summer Sizzle' deal includes two nights' midweek accommodation at the historic retreat, a 'Cool as a Cucumber' facial, a full-body Swedish massage, all meals and activities such as fitness classes, bushwalks, archery, meditation and yoga and seminars and is available from \$1,080 per couple (or \$540 each), \$570 per person if sharing with a friend in a twin bed room and \$630 for single guests.

ADVENTUREBOUND has released a new weeklong Active Adventure in Hawaii.

Described as an "Un-Cruise", the voyage will take place onboard the 76-guest *Wilderness Explorer* and will include adventure activities by sea and ashore for up-close explorations of sea life and four islands of Oahu, Maui, Lana'i and the Big Island of Hawaii, with stops at Ka'ena Point State Park, Wai'anae Harbor, Maui, Molokini, Lana'i, Honomalino Bay, Opihihali and Kailua-Kona.

Rates begin at US\$2,495 per person, see www.innerseadiscoveries.com.

Sargent takes ASMI to battle

THE Australian Self-Medication Industry has elected Mark Sargent, General Manager, Australia & New Zealand, Consumer Care, Bayer, Australia, as its new President.

Sargent comes to the position with 15 years worth of experience in senior marketing, sales and management roles, including 10 years in the over-the-counter medicines sector in Australia and globally.

He also has a MBA from the Australian Graduate School of Management and a Bachelor of Commerce (Marketing) from the University of NSW.

"I would like to congratulate Mark Sargent on assuming the role of President of ASMI," said Executive Director of ASMI, Dr Deon Schoombie.

"He is an extremely experienced senior executive with a deep understanding of the industry.

"I am delighted that we will have the benefit of one of our most accomplished executives to help guide our future direction at this

critical time," Schoombie added.

Prior to his Presidential appointment, Sargent served as an active member of the ASMI Committee of Management, and Chair of the Self Care sub-committee.

Speaking about the future for ASMI, Sargent said "There are a number of key policy and regulatory issues that will be extremely important for the industry over the coming year".

"These include business reform at the TGA, reviews into medicines labelling and packaging, a new trans-Tasman regulatory model, reform of complementary medicines, fresh approaches to medicines scheduling and promotion, and the advancement of consumer self care," he added.

MEANWHILE ASMI has also appointed Ralf Dahmen, Managing Director, Omega Pharma Australia & New Zealand, as its new Vice President (Secretary); and has also re-elected Trevor Norman, General Manager, Combe Asia-Pacific, as its Vice President (Treasurer).

WIN A DARE TO BE BARE BIKINI READY PACK



This week *Pharmacy Daily* is giving five lucky readers the chance to win Dare to be Bare Bikini Ready Pack by Andrea Hair Removal, valued at \$66.80 each.

Time to peel off your winter clothes! A smooth set of legs, underarms and a flawless bikini line are essential for the warmer weather. Get bikini-ready in a flash with Andrea Hair Removal products for use in the comfort and privacy of your own home.

For your chance to win this great prize pack, simply be the first person to send in the correct answer to the question below.

What are the benefits of hair removal in your own home?

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

Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner, Amanda Seeto from Good Price Pharmacy Ashmore.

DISPENSARY CORNER

WOULD you like heart surgery with your order?

A new YouTube webisode series, *Epic Meal Time*, is aiming to put the cellulite back into legs and the cholesterol back into blood streams with its brand of cooking.

The only rules for the show are that recipes must contain bacon and Jack Daniels whisky, whilst "pandemonium is encouraged".

"We're here to say pizza is good, cheeseburgers are good, but pizza-cheeseburgers are even better," said host Harley Morestein.

During the show contestants are pitted against one another to create the most heart-attack inducing, densely meaty dishes, which have the highest calorie, fat and cholesterol content.

A panel of judges then assesses the creations based on taste, ingredients and presentation.

Past winning creations have included a gingerbread house made of meat, meat brekkie cereal with gravy milk, deep fried chicken wrapped in bacon and stuffed with Doritos and Cheetos, and a human sized egg roll.

PREHISTORIC Obama.

The recently re-elected US President Obama has had yet another honour bestowed upon him, after researchers at Yale named a newly discovered dinosaur *Obamadon gracilis*.

According to reports the researchers chose the name because of physical similarities between the President and the dinosaur.

"The dinosaur has these very tall, straight teeth and Obama has these tall, straight incisors and a great smile," said one researcher.

Obamadon died out a cool 65 million years ago, and was only recently re-discovered.

Researchers believe the dinosaur looked similar to a lizard, and would have mainly eaten insects.