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Benzo dementia link found

NEW use of benzodiazepines has been linked with an increased risk of dementia, according to research published in the *British Medical Journal*.

The French study was designed to evaluate the association between use of benzodiazepines and incident dementia, and looked at 1,063 men and women (mean age 78.2 years) who were free of dementia and did not start taking benzodiazepines until at least the third year of follow-up.

The researchers followed-up the participants for 15 years and confirmed 253 incident cases of dementia.

According to the findings, new use of benzodiazepines was associated with an increased risk of dementia (multivariable adjusted hazard ratio 1.60, 95% confidence interval 1.08 to 2.38).

Interestingly, using sensitivity analysis researchers also found the existence of depressive symptoms showed a similar association (hazard ratio 1.62, 1.08 to 2.43).

In addition, a secondary analysis pooled cohorts of participants who started benzodiazepines during follow-up and evaluated the association with incident dementia.

The pooled hazard ratio across the five cohorts of new users was 1.46, whilst the results of a complementary nested case-control study showed that ever use of benzodiazepines was associated with a 50% increase in the risk of dementia, compared with never users.

"Considering the extent to which

benzodiazepines are prescribed and the number of potential adverse effects of this drug class in the general population, indiscriminate widespread use should be cautioned against," researchers said.

Botox for the bladder

A **NEW** study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* has found that Botox (onabotulinumtoxinA) may help reduce the frequency of daily episodes of urinary incontinence.

The six-month trial involved 249 women with idiopathic urgency urinary incontinence who had five or more episodes of urgency urinary incontinence per three-day period.

Participants received either a daily oral anticholinergic drug or one intradetrusor injection of 100U of Botox.

The results found the mean reduction in episodes of urgency urinary incontinence per day was 3.4 in the anticholinergic group and 3.3 in the Botox group.

Complete resolution of urgency urinary incontinence was also reported by 13% and 27% of the women, respectively, whilst quality of life improved in both groups, without significant between-group differences.

Interestingly, the anticholinergic group had a higher rate of dry mouth (46% vs. 31%) but lower rates of catheter use at two months (0% vs. 5%) and urinary tract infections (13% vs. 33%).

Typhim Vi recall

SANOFI- Aventis is recalling some batches of its Typhim Vi Vaccine (Salmonella typhi Vi polysaccharide typhoid vaccine) because they may have lower than expected antigen content, which may result in reduced efficacy.

The issue resulted from a problem with the filling process at one of Sanofi's manufacturing facilities.

The affected batch cartons include: E1246-3, G0461-2, H0078-3, H0078-4, H0101-1, H0198-5 and H0507-1.

Other batches of Typhim Vi Vaccine are not affected and can still be used.

For consumers who have had the vaccination from the recalled batches, Sanofi Pasteur has said that whilst they may have received less than the intended amount of antigen, the manufacturer is not recommending revaccination earlier than otherwise.

Meanwhile the TGA advises individuals who are planning to travel to regions where typhoid is endemic to discuss their individual situation with a health professional or travel doctor.

At present Sanofi Pasteur is looking to source unaffected batches of the vaccine as quickly as possible, however it has warned that there may be a shortage until normal supply resumes in early 2013.

In the vaccine's absence the TGA has named three alternative products that may be used: Typherix (GSK), Vivotif (CSL), and Vivaxim (Sanofi) - a product which also contains hepatitis A.

See www.tga.gov.au for details.

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Guild Update

The Pharmacy Guild of Australia is very excited to announce Dual Olympic Medallist Christian Sprenger will be a feature speaker at this year's Pharmacy Assistants' Conference 2012. Christian will share his story of determination and strength, which led him to win Olympic Silver (100m breaststroke) and Bronze (men's 4x100m medley relay) at the recent London Games. Also hear Commonwealth Games medallist and Australian representative at three Olympic games, Melinda Gainsford-Taylor share her journey from athlete to weight loss ambassador.

Plus, visit the Palmers exhibition stand on Friday 26 October and meet Channel Nine TV Presenter and retired Olympic and Commonwealth Games Gold Medallist, Giaan Rooney.

Don't miss out on this exciting lineup. View the full program at www.pharmacyassistants.com.

Register now and save valuable training dollars. The conference runs from 25 to 27 October on the Gold Coast.

Pharmacies who register three or more pharmacy assistants will also be entitled to an APP2013 registration, valued at \$750.00.

To download a registration form go to the Registration page.



The Pharmacy Guild of Australia

Look out, shingles rising

THE number of cases of Australians with the herpes zoster virus, which causes shingles, has doubled in the last decade, according to NPS.

The NPS backed up its statement saying that hospital emergency departments have been reporting a 2–6% increase in cases per year.

Infectious diseases specialists, at Sydney's Westmead Hospital, Professor Dominic Dwyer and Dr Michael Wehrhahn, writing in NPS' *Australian Prescriber*, attributed the rise to several factors, including Australia's ageing population.

"Shingles commonly presents as a painful blistering skin rash on the abdomen," they wrote.

"It is more common in people over the age of 60, so as our population ages we are likely to see more of it.

"Evidence also shows that recurrent attacks of the virus are more common than previously believed," they added.

Meanwhile the duo also said that other reasons for the rise may include the increased use of immunosuppressant drugs – making people more susceptible to the virus – and the widespread use of the chickenpox vaccination in kids.

"It is thought that because there is now less chickenpox in children, older people are not boosting their immunity to the virus and so may be more susceptible to shingles later in life," NPS said.

Discussing treatment, NPS said that if a person is diagnosed with shingles, an antiviral medicine given within 72 hours of the onset

of the rash can reduce the severity and duration of the illness.

"It is also important to treat any pain associated with shingles as early as possible," NPS said.

"This can reduce the severity and likelihood of complications, such as prolonged pain," NPS added.

Stem cell grown mice

RESEARCHERS at Kyoto University have successfully created mouse eggs from stem cells, and then used IVF to fertilise them and produce baby mice.

To achieve this, the researchers took embryonic stem cells, as well as induced pluripotent stem cells (which came from skin cells) and grew them into cells similar to germ cells, which were then grown into ovary cells and then into eggs.

The eggs were then implanted into a female mouse and fertilised using sperm which had also been grown from embryonic stem cells, and which resulted in the birth of a healthy clutch of baby mice.

According to the researchers, the work could lead to a new option for infertile humans.

Lead researcher Dr Katsuhiko Hayashi did however temper this statement by saying that it could be many years before the technology is available for human use.

"I must say that it is impossible to adapt immediately this system to human stem cells, due to a number of not only scientific reasons, but also ethical reasons," he said.

Illegal drug warning

THE TGA is warning Australians to stay away from Jinmaoshiwang tablets, saying they pose serious health risks.

The tablets are sold as a 'sex enhancer', and according to the TGA they contain the undeclared prescription substance sildenafil – despite the product label claim that it is made of herbal ingredients and contains no medicines.

In addition, the levels of sildenafil contained in the tablets are higher than the levels approved by the TGA for prescription sildenafil.

"Jinmaoshiwang tablets have not been assessed by the TGA for quality, safety or efficacy as required under Australian legislation, and the place of manufacture is not approved by the TGA," the TGA said.

Australians who have purchased the drug are advised to cease use immediately.

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TGA cracks down

THIS month the Therapeutic Goods Administration worked with Customs and Border Protection as part of an international operation to seize counterfeit and substandard medicines purchased over the Internet.

Dubbed *Operation Pangea V* the TGA and Customs and Border Protection agents confiscated more than 37,000 pills including diet supplements and steroids from the Melbourne and Brisbane International Mail Centres.

In addition, the TGA has also worked with a Domain Name Registrar to remove over 120 overseas websites offering suspect medicines over the Internet.

Terry White's new loyalty

75,000 Australians are now members of Terry White Chemists customer loyalty program, RewardsPlus, despite it still being in its rollout phase.

At present, RewardsPlus is live in 60 of the group's 160+ pharmacies, with the remaining 100+ all trained and the majority set to go live in the next few weeks.

The initial sign-up figures have impressed the company, with one Terry White pharmacy in Toombul, QLD reporting more than 500 sign-ups in the first few days, and Terry White Chemists Rockingham (WA) signing up 1,000 customers in just three days.

"We've been very happy with the initial reporting which is showing members who are redeeming vouchers are spending up to 17% more than those who are not," said Terry White Chemists National Loyalty Manager Sheree Smith.

"The increases in basket size as compared to customers that are not on the program yet are even more significant so these are incredible results for such a young program.

"Although, it has taken some time to develop and deploy, the technological leap on our competitors is significant, so that we will be able to manage a much more dynamic and engaged segment of our customer base," Smith added.

The RewardsPlus program is a key part of Terry White Chemists Retail Strategy 2013, with members earning 1 point for every dollar spent on non-prescription products.

RewardsPlus members also receive instant offers and rewards and do not need to present their card to earn or redeem.

"In less than three seconds from the time a RewardsPlus customer makes a transaction the POS system pushes to the web services, receives individual information from the CRM together with any relevant promotional information and an instant, targeted reward is printed out at the bottom of the customers receipt," the company said.

Jakavi EMA approval

THE European Medicines Agency has approved Jakavi (ruxolitinib) to treat adults with myelofibrosis who have splenomegaly (enlarged spleen) or symptoms related to the disease such as fever, night sweats, bone pain and weight loss.

DISPENSARY CORNER

WOULD you drink this?

An American brewery has released a beer titled Rocky Mountain Oyster Stout, made with bulls testicles.

The beverage was actually conceived as an April Fools joke where the company put out a spoof video which claimed it had made a bull testicle beer.

"When we sent out the press release and the video link last April, we heard from brewers and beer writers who thought the beer was for real and loved the idea," said head brewer Andy Brown.

"So we've turned our joke into a reality," he added.

The beer is described as a foreign-style stout, slightly viscous, which has hints of chocolate syrup, and espresso, along with a savoury umami-like note.

THINK you're tipping the scales? Spare a thought for Jumbo Jack.

Jack, the King Charles spaniel has been named as Britain's best pet slimmer, following an impressive 6.4kg weight loss.

Dubbed Jumbo Jack, the tubby spaniel weighed in at 20.5kgs six months ago, and could barely walk.

Fortunately Jumbo Jack was adopted by new owners who were committed to helping him regain his doggie freedom.

The pooch was put on a strict diet and exercise regime, and managed to trim down to 14.1kgs, just 4.1kgs from his ideal body weight.

"Today he is a different dog and we call him Jumping Jack instead of Jumbo Jack, as he jumps every time he barks," his owners said.



WIN A LUXURIOUS MILKY FOOT CARE PACK

This week **PD** is giving five readers the chance to win a Milky Foot Care Pack, courtesy of **BioRevive**.

Every day our feet are under constant pressure, resulting in rough, hardened skin with painful dry cracks. Smooth silky feet are essential,



especially with summer around the corner, it's time to free those feet! If you don't have time for salon pedicures, simply make a date with Milky Foot Exfoliation Pads and Milky Foot Essence. Milky Foot provides you with an effortless two-step at-home pedicure system.

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Hint! Visit www.biorevive.com/products/milky_foot/

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