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DDS tackles asthma

DISCOUNT Drug Stores has launched a new asthma testing service in all 100 of its stores.

The free-of-charge service involves a pharmacist assessment of patient's device use (using a placebo of the patient's current asthma device), followed by a consultation with the pharmacist where they inform the patient of the steps they missed, and provide informative stickers on the personal asthma device to help the patient easily remember the proper process the next time they self-medicate.

Additional tools are available for asthma sufferers using a Turbuhaler device.

If the patient is concerned they are not receiving the correct dosage of medication they are then provided with a small cloth which is placed over the mouthpiece to gauge the amount of medication being inhaled with every puff.

To assess their inhaling technique, a whistle device is available which indicates whether the patient is breathing in deeply enough to get the full dose.

"Asthma can be deadly if it's not treated properly" said Discount Drug Stores' Professional Services Manager Casey Clark.

"And unfortunately there are a number of sufferers who are inadvertently putting themselves in danger by not following all of the steps required when taking their medication.

"This is what we're really looking to reduce through our program," she added.

For more program information see discountdrugstores.com.au.

Fish oil is good for hearts

THE overwhelming weight of evidence supports the use of omega-3 fatty acid supplements for patients with heart disease, according to the Australian Self Medication Industry.

The comments come in response to discussion over the effectiveness of fish oil for the prevention of heart attacks following the release of a study which found that omega-3 PUFA supplementation was not associated with a lower risk of all-cause mortality, cardiac death, sudden death, myocardial infarction, or stroke (**PD** 12 Sep).

According to ASMI Regulatory and Scientific Affairs Director, Steven Scarff, the meta-analysis study is at odds with the large body of evidence which demonstrates the benefits of fish oil supplements in providing primary and secondary prevention in patients with CVD.

The study's findings, according to Scarff do not change the balance of scientific evidence which demonstrates a cardiovascular benefit of omega-3 fatty acids in healthy populations, as well as in the majority of populations with pre-existing cardiovascular ailments.

"Consumers should therefore continue to take omega-3 products for heart health," said Scarff.

Meanwhile Scarff also said that the study itself warranted "careful consideration", adding that it was important to note that the research only looked at people who had already suffered heart attacks or strokes, rather than the general healthy population, and it failed to take into account the effect

of cardiovascular disease drugs consumed by subjects in the studies.

Scarff also noted that half of the included trials in the analysis had been conducted during the period where statins were routinely recommended for cardiovascular risk modification, whilst earlier studies looked at were carried out in the pre-statin era.

"Subjects in the more recent trials were also given multiple prescription medicines (e.g. cardiac glycosides, antiarrhythmics, antihypertensives, hypolipidemics, antianginals, anticoagulants, beta-blockers, calcium channel blockers, diuretics and/or vasodilators) as well as Omega-3s," he said.

"This makes it very difficult for researchers to work out what benefits any individual substance, whether fish oil or medication, may have had," he added.

Scarff contrasted the study with what he called the "strong body of evidence that supports fish oil", including a recent Deloitte study, which identified savings of approx \$4.2b through avoidance of disease burden if heart attack survivors began taking fish oils.

Kennett wows at ACP

THE Hon Jeffrey Kennett AC wowed attendees at the recent Australian College of Pharmacy Victorian Chapter dinner, sharing with them his insights into the future of pharmacy.

Eighty ACP members and guests were in attendance at the dinner, at which Kennett called for the industry to have a clear view of where pharmacy needs to be in 20 years time.

According to Kennett the key point of difference must be community pharmacy's relationship with customers.

Kennett went further to stress that a key objective for community pharmacy is to make a difference by providing primary health care services and contribute to the Government's aim of keeping people out of hospital.

Meanwhile the evening also saw College Board member George Tambassis and Chapter Chair Andrew Rewell present Kennett, who is the Chairman of depression and anxiety charity *beyondblue* with a cheque for \$2,100- the proceeds of a silent auction of a signed cricket bat which was donated to the College by Cricket Australia.

WIN A
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Every day this week *Pharmacy Daily* is giving two lucky readers the chance to win a skincare pack, courtesy of **Sukin**.

Flaunt your sensitive side with the introduction of Sukin's mini-range, created specifically for fragile skin. The pack is valued at RRP \$30 and includes two soap-free cleansers which gently remove excess dirt, whilst calming actives soothe the skin. The team is completed with the non-greasy facial moisturiser, offering long-lasting hydration and a soft, nurtured and smooth complexion.

For your chance to win, be the first person to send in the correct answer to the daily question below.

Sukin's sensitive range was created specifically for;
A) Oily skin B) Fragile Skin C) Rosy complexions

Email your answer to comp@pharmacydaily.com.au

Hint! Visit www.sukinorganics.com

Congratulations to yesterday's winners **Jae Yeo**, from Medicare and **Lauren Kelly**, from Ethical Strategies.

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Guild Update

PBN delivers the goods

Pharmacy delegates from every state and territory in Australia assembled at the National Convention Centre, Canberra for the first ever Pharmacy Business Network (PBN) that ran from 13-16 September.

The PBN took a practical approach to putting on an event with a unique focus on providing attendees with the tools to improve business planning, management and profitability in their pharmacy.

In a positive learning environment the attendees interacted with industry experts and networked with people from all levels of the pharmacy industry. Pharmacists, pharmacy students and CEOs all mingled in the open forum provided by the PBN.

"The delegates attending the PBN have strongly endorsed our practical and interactive style as unique and rewarding" PBN Chair, Patrick Reid said.

The PBN also hosted the final presentations of the National Student Business Plan Competition with the University of South Australia announced as the winner at the Gala Dinner on Saturday night.

The encouraging atmosphere at the PBN and the "hands on" methods used in different sessions throughout the event ensured that all delegates had real action plans to take back to their pharmacy.

Highlights included presentations by the 2012 Pharmacy of the Year winners, how to deal with tricky human resource issues, and the launch of the Guild's new guidelines on reporting turnover to landlords.



The Pharmacy Guild of Australia

PSA plans bigger & better

FOLLOWING the success of this year's PSA Clinical and Practice Expo, the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia has unveiled plans to reprise the event in 2013.

Speaking at a lunch to announce CPE 2013, Charlie Benrimoj PSA NSW branch President and Chair of the CPEXpo Committee said "the old style trade fair has had its day".

"It's about information exchange...CPEXpo is a major event to extend information and give clinical knowledge," he added.

According to Benrimoj, next year's expo will be bigger and better than this year's effort, which attracted 1300 individuals, featured 84 professional development workshops and presentations, 55 presenters and integrated learning space with 12 patient support groups and more than 40 pharmaceutical companies.

The program will take place from 31 May to 02 June 2013, and according to the preliminary program, will cover topics pertaining to: professional practice (medscheck, pharmacy technology, dementia and more), primary care (diabetes, respiratory, integrated medicine and more), health awareness (cardiovascular, diet and skin care), therapeutic updates (mental health, women's health and aged care) and advanced

clinical pharmacy (palliative cancer care, kidney disease, rheumatic diseases and more).

"The focus on the quality use of medicines, therapeutic updates, clinical and professional services will be maintained and built upon," Benrimoj said.

"Delegates will also have great access to interact with the medical information and pharmacovigilance departments of major pharmaceutical companies," he added.

Meanwhile, addressing industry members at the CPEXpo lunch, PSA NSW Committee Member John Bronger highlighted the importance of pharmacists in the emerging healthcare space saying "with the changing state of pharmacy that is clinical interventions, meds checks and diabetes checks, the influence of pharmacists during this next period of time is really going to increase vastly".

"We are interested in maximising opportunities for pharmacists," he added.

Pictured above at the launch of the preliminary program is PSA NSW branch members (from left): Lachlan Rose (VP), John Bell (Committee Member), John Bronger (Committee Member), Warwick Plunkett (Committee Member) and Charlie Benrimoj (Branch President).



OTC reforms consult

MEDSAFE and the TGA are seeking comments from interested parties on proposed reforms to the business processes for the evaluation of over-the-counter (OTC) medicines.

See tga.gov.au for details.

Social media policy

THE National Boards have announced the release of a draft social media policy to targeted stakeholders for initial feedback, ahead of a wider public release in October/November.

For details see ahpra.gov.au.

DISPENSARY CORNER

WOULD you pay for an accident?

An American man, known only as Jim, is trying to sell his 1968 Cessna 172 H on the bidding website Craigslist despite having recently landed it upside down.

Jim wants US\$10,000 for the plane, and describes the accident as akin to "a bad hair day".



MIA in space.

A tiny space explorer, Mojo Man, has gone missing in the line of duty, however his would-be rescuer has high hopes for his recovery.

One may be forgiven for thinking that getting lost in the stratosphere in -55C temperatures was a sure death sentence, but Mojo Man should be okay- as the 10-inch tall astronaut is made from super-tough ABS plastic.

Dressed in an aluminium foil suit, replete with a plastic helmet, Mojo Man was sent up into the stratosphere with the express purpose of capturing images 110,000-feet above the earth.

To undertake his mission the brave explorer was mounted on a CD of The Planets Suite by Gustav Holst, which was itself attached to electronic equipment and a hi-tech mini camera.

"The project worked perfectly and we captured 2.5 hours of high definition video of the flight from launch to landing," said mission commander Shaun Whitehead.

"The rest of the equipment eventually landed but sadly there was no sign of the astronaut.

"We've looked at the video and think he was knocked off his perch when the balloon burst and fell somewhere around Leicester".

