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Gaviscon for GORD

TODAY'S issue of *Pharmacy Daily* includes a full page from Gaviscon, detailing how it starts to soothe reflux symptoms within four minutes and lasts for four hours. For details see **page four**.

FDA cancer approval

THE US Food and Drug Administration has approved Gilotrif (afatinib) for patients with metastatic non-small cell lung cancer whose tumours express specific types of epidermal growth factor receptor (EGFR) gene mutations, as detected by an FDA-approved test.

Gilotrif is a tyrosine kinase inhibitor which works by blocking proteins that promote the development of cancerous cells.

The treatment is being approved concurrently with the Therascreen EGFR RQV PCR Kit, a companion diagnostic kit that helps determine if a patient's lung cancer cells express the EGFR mutations.

Gilotrif is marketed by Boehringer Ingelheim, while the accompanying test is manufactured by UK-based QUIAGEN Manchester Limited.

In a clinical trial patients receiving Gilotrif had delayed tumour growth compared to chemotherapy.

Diabetes an election issue

THE Australian Diabetes Council (ADC) says diabetes is a "core issue for Australians living in key electoral battlegrounds," this morning releasing new research mapping diabetes danger zones in NSW.

Western Sydney has been confirmed as having the highest prevalence of diabetes across all ages, genders and stages of the condition, with a majority of sufferers surveyed saying they don't believe the government is doing enough to help them.

"With seven of the top ten diabetes postcodes all based in western Sydney, where many say the federal election may be lost or won, this should be of concern for federal representatives," said ADC CEO Nicola Stokes.

Friday's PD winner

CONGRATULATIONS to Christie Ashford from Muswellbrook Fair Pharmacy in NSW, who was the lucky winner of a pair of Cancer Council sunglasses in Friday's edition of *Pharmacy Daily*.

This week **PD** competition is offering the opportunity to win a year's supply of Carmex products - see **page two** for details.

Stokes said diabetes is already costing taxpayers over \$15 billion a year, with forecasts that the number of people with diagnosable diabetes will hit 2.65m by 2018, an increase of 65% over five years.

The Council is today convening its annual Sustainable Population Forum at NSW Parliament House, and is also launching a new free resource with information about all the *Ages and Stages of Diabetes* - see australiandiabetescouncil.com.

NZ diclofenac alert

NEW Zealand's pharmaceutical products regulator, Medsafe, has issued a safety alert on the use of diclofenac (Voltaren) relating to the risk of cardiovascular events.

Issued as an Alert Communication under the Trans-Tasman Early Warning System, Medsafe is citing recent publications which it says have suggested an increased risk of heart attack and stroke with the use of diclofenac.

"Medsafe and the Medicines Adverse Reactions Committee have concluded there is a very small increased risk of these effects with diclofenac, when used at high doses and for long-term therapy," a Medsafe statement said.

Consumers are being told that for most people, taking diclofenac is safe, but people who have high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes or smoke should consult healthcare professionals to check that the medicine is appropriate.

Roche after Alexion?

ROCHE Pharmaceuticals is reportedly seeking financing as part of a potential offer to purchase Alexion Pharmaceuticals, according to news service *Bloomberg*.

Shares in Alexion soared almost 24% on the news, and if the deal proceeds it would see Roche take ownership of Alexion's only marketed product, Soliris, which is an orphan drug approved by the US FDA for the treatment of paroxysmal nocturnal haemoglobinuria and atypical haemolytic uremic syndrome.

GSK China claims

GLAXOSMITHKLINE says it is willing to cooperate with authorities in China over claims of bribery, but has not found any evidence of corruption in its operations in the country.

According to an announcement from China's Ministry of Public Security late last week, some GSK executives have admitted to claims of bribery and tax violations.

It's claimed that a probe in several cities found the company had "tried to establish new sales channels and increase drug prices" by directly bribing doctors, hospitals, pharmaceutical industry associations and government workers.

GSK responded by saying that it continually monitors its businesses to ensure they meet requirements and has found no evidence to support the Chinese allegations.

"I wanted my pharmacists free from the dispensary to consult with our customers. I wanted the waiting times down, and my Rowa has achieved both of those goals absolutely beautifully. It's also removed the stress from the rest of the staff and it is a lot more fun in the dispensary now."

Guy Ewing
Owner of Barossa Chemplus Pharmacy

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New option for acne

NEW Zealand-based dairy biotechnology firm Quantec has presented encouraging results from a US clinical trial on acne, utilising the company's patented complex of "bioactive milk proteins" called IDP.

Attendees at last weeks' NZ Dermatological Society Annual Meeting which took place on the Qld Sunshine Coast heard about the trial where IDP was the active ingredient in a specially formulated skin cream which went head-to-head in a double blind study against a premium US-based clinical brand of acne treatment cream, containing 2% salicylic acid plus retinal.

At the conclusion of the 42-day trial involving 84 subjects, both creams showed statistically equivalent results in terms of total reduction in acne lesions; however the IDP-based cream showed a major improvement of over 52% in reduction of redness and inflammation.

The clinical assessment saw the IDP product also pass specific testing for use on subjects with sensitive skin.

Quantec founder and md Rod Claycomb said that the bio-proteins in IDP are powerful against certain types of disease-causing bacteria while leaving the natural and beneficial bacteria of the skin largely unaffected, with the product the result of seven years of development and testing.

He said it was important for the company to unveil IDP and its efficacy as an acne treatment to dermatologists prior to developing and commercialising a commercial acne product.

CHC debunks cancer link

THE Complementary Healthcare Council of Australia has slammed a widely publicised US study linking Omega-3 and prostate cancer, saying the report is "inconclusive and contradictory".

Mainstream media, including both Fairfax and News Limited outlets in Australia, have run major stories on the study in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*, which reported a 71% higher risk for dangerous high-grade prostate cancer among men who ate fatty fish or took fish-oil supplements.

The researchers were unable to explain why omega-3s appear linked to a greater risk of prostate cancer, but a large European study also found the same omega-3 and prostate cancer link.

However CHC Executive Director, Dr Wendy Morrow, said the US study was not specifically designed to look at the exact relationship between omega-3 fatty acid intake and prostate cancer, but rather to test the effects of Selenium and Vitamin E on cancer prevention.

"Therefore, no firm conclusions can be drawn from this study as it does not demonstrate cause and

effect," she said.

"While it is important that any recommendation for supplementation of complementary medicines take into account associated risk, the conclusions drawn from this study ignore the totality of scientific evidence that has been collected regarding the health benefits of omega-3 fatty acids," Morrow added.

She said that consumers should not be alarmed by the claims, and should continue to take their fish oil supplements and include fish in their diet, and consult their doctor in case of any concerns.

EMA probes zolpidem

THE European Medicines Agency has confirmed a review of insomnia medication zolpidem (Stilnox).

The EMA Pharmacovigilance Risk Assessment Committee said it's reacting to "concerns that some patients may experience drowsiness and slower reactions the day after taking the medicine which could increase the risk of accidents during activities that require alertness, such as driving".

The review follows a Drug Safety Communication issued earlier this year by the US Food and Drug Administration, lowering the recommended dose to 5mg for women and 5-10mg for men.

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WIN A YEAR'S SUPPLY OF CARMEX® LIP BALM PRODUCTS

Every day this week *Pharmacy Daily* is giving one lucky reader the chance to win an entire range of Carmex® lip balm this winter, and stay beautiful, all winter long!

Keeping warm, hydrated and looking beautiful during the winter months can prove a little tricky!

Carmex® lip balm is the absolute must-have for helping to keep lips moisturised and more importantly... kissable this winter! The entire Carmex lip balm range is perfect for maintaining your own simple yet sophisticated on-trend make up style as you get out and about enjoying winter, from the mountains to the metropolis!

For more info go to www.mycarmex.com.au.

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

How many products are in the Australian Carmex range?

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



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Weekly Comment

Welcome to **PD's** weekly comment feature.

This week's contributor is **Rob Beveridge**, Commercial Director at **GoPharm**.



eCommerce and Pharmacy

"Toto, I've a feeling we're not in Kansas any more!"
Dorothy, Wizard of Oz

And so it is with pharmacy. Gone are the days of double digit wholesale margins, ever-increasing generic discounts, paper-based PBS claims, complacent consumers and an everlasting pipeline of blockbuster generics; now replaced with PBS Reform, internet-savvy consumers, discount-model pharmacies and increasing revenue pressures. So maybe Pharmacy is not so much the green and lush Kansas of yesteryear, but potentially a more windswept and barren version instead?

e-Commerce, 'apps', cloud-computing...these are much more than catch-cries from Silicon Valley. It's a way of doing business that leverages the high-speed computing and connectivity now at our fingertips; to save money, increase productivity, reach new markets, find new suppliers. Here's a basic list of a growing number of online solutions to drive your business, many of which are free or very affordable:

1. Accounting e.g. Xero
2. Staff rostering e.g. Rostermatic
3. Local Area Marketing e.g. Yelp
4. Professional networking e.g. LinkedIn
5. Small Business News e.g. Entrepreneur
6. Purchasing e.g. GoPharm

This is just a starting point. If you can think of a business problem, it is incredibly easy to find an article online addressing your challenge, and some kind of digital tool to support your solution. It's as simple as clicking your heels and repeating, "There's no place like pharmacy, there's no place like pharmacy!"

Wockhardt recall in UK

BRITISH pharmaceutical regulators have ordered the precautionary recall of a range of Wockhardt Limited prescription medicines sold in the UK, after the identification of manufacturing deficiencies at the company's site in Waluj, India.

At this stage it's not a consumer-level recall, but all unexpired stock of the medications is being recalled to pharmacy, clinic and wholesaler level, irrespective of pack configuration, batch number and expiry date.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) inspection identified deficiencies in good manufacturing practices at the Indian plant, with the GMP certificate for the site having been withdrawn.

The MHRA said it had identified a risk of cross-contamination because of poor cleaning practices and defects in ventilation systems, as well as evidence of forged documents relating to staff training records that had been rewritten.

There's no evidence at this stage of a patient safety risk, with medicines affected by the precautionary recall in the UK not specifically identified as defective.

"However the MHRA has to act in the interests of public health as poor manufacturing practices cannot be allowed to continue," the regulator said.

Affected Wockhardt products include aciclovir, atenolol, clopidogrel, donepezil, entacapone, levetiracetam, losartan, metformin, pantoprazole, pramipexole, propylthiouracil, risperidone, ropinirole, sertraline and ursodeoxycholic acid.

Check-Your-Pay day

AUSTRALIA'S pharmacists have been urged to check their pay packets to ensure they are getting paid the correct amount as part of a union initiative called National Check Your Pay Day.

Dr Geoff March, President of Professional Pharmacists Australia, said many aspects of the award changed on 01 Jul this year and the past has shown not all pharmacy owners keep up with the new legal rates of pay.

Dr March said that he was concerned about the "culture of underpayments that had been exposed by the Fair Work Ombudsman last year" when a significant proportion of Queensland pharmacies had been found to have underpaid their pharmacists.

Online pain program

NEXT week is National Pain Week, and activities on offer include free online programs which allow interested people to view the latest developments in the treatment of pain including research updates and management strategies.

Convened by Chronic Pain Australia, topics of the daily updates will include Post Traumatic Stress Disease and chronic pain; Who cares for the carers of people in pain; Medical acupuncture; What is a pain program; Treatments for Pain; and Pain after cancer.

The program will also include a live discussion on Fri 26 Jul - for info see www.nationalpainweek.org.au.

NAPSA 'scrap the Cap'

THE National Australian Pharmacy Student's Association (NAPSA) is the latest peak pharmacy body to join the line of those opposing government plans to cap self-education expenses at \$2,000 per annum (**PD** 08, 10 Jul).

"Our members do not want to see a future that will restrict their ability to advance their knowledge and broaden their skill set," said newly appointed NAPSA National President, Xavier Agostino.

New orphan drug

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration has designated elosulfase-alpha, sponsored by BioMarin Pharmaceutical Australia Pty Ltd, as a new orphan drug.

Elosulfase-Alpha solution for infusion is indicated for the treatment of mucopolysaccharidosis IV type A (Morquio A syndrome, MPS IVA).

DISPENSARY CORNER



CHILDREN and teachers in the USA are being encouraged to practice good hand hygiene for the upcoming school year, in a quirky campaign with the tagline "KILL A GAJILLION GERMS".

It's an initiative of a company called Gojo which makes Purell Hand Sanitiser, with the program hoping to encourage healthy hand habits which Gojo says will in turn reduce absenteeism.

AND a quest for hygiene in New York last week led to the partial collapse of a building, after a woman attempted to get rid of some pesky cockroaches.

Emergency services workers said the woman was trying to rid herself of an infestation in her Chinatown apartment by setting off twenty fogging "bug-bombs".

Unfortunately the cloud of insecticide was ignited by a kitchen appliance, causing a significant explosion.

Several ceilings and walls in the building collapsed, with 14 people injured in the incident.

STEVE Hunter from Ballarat in Victoria is being hailed as a pet-loving hero, after he saved the life of a dog which had been run over by giving the pooch mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.

He was delivering some building materials when he saw Salty, a fox terrier-Jack Russell cross, suddenly run out of a driveway and get hit by an oncoming car.

According to the Ballarat *Courier* newspaper, Hunter sprang into action, carried the seemingly dead dog to the side of the road, puckered up and "did the deed".

"I gave him CPR, did the whole works. I pulled his jaws apart - and by the way he didn't brush his teeth," he said.

"I thought, 'you've gotta give him half a chance' because you never know," Hunter added.

His quick thinking kept the lucky dog alive long enough for a trip to the veterinary hospital, where he is now recovering well.



A PHYSICAL BARRIER SCIENTIFICALLY PROVEN TO KEEP ACID IN THE STOMACH^{1,2}

Most patients with heartburn don't excrete excess acid.² In fact, up to 80% of reflux disease (GORD) episodes are caused by transient relaxations of the lower oesophageal sphincter (LOS). This allows acid, pepsin and bile to reflux into the oesophagus and cause pain and damage.²⁻⁴

Gaviscon starts to soothe reflux symptoms within four minutes and lasts for four hours.^{1,5}

GAVISCON



References: 1. Chevrel B. *J Int Med Res* 1980; 8(4): 300-2. 2. Lowe RC. *GI Motility online* 2006. Available at www.nature.com/gimo/contents/pt1/full/gimo54.html. Accessed 14/02/2013. 3. Howden CW and Freston JW. *Gastroenterology Today* 1996; 6(2): 32-7. 4. Kahrilas PJ. *Cleve Clin J Med* 2003; 70 Suppl 5: S4-19. 5. Aubertin G *et al. Dietology* 1985; 4: 27-30. Always read the label. Use only as directed. If symptoms persist see your healthcare professional. ® Gaviscon is a registered trademark of Reckitt Benckiser Australia. 44 Wharf Road, West Ryde, NSW 2114. RBGA6389/PD/FP. 03/13

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