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NPS MedicineWise has released a guide to starting oral anticoagulants in atrial fibrillation, including identification of suitable patients and to "personalise the selection of an oral anticoagulant in three easy steps" - [CLICK HERE](#) for details.

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Pharmacists up adherence

A NEW study published online in *JAMA Internal Medicine* has confirmed the positive impact on medication adherence of having a pharmacist-led program in place.

However despite the improved adherence there was no significant improvement in the proportion of patients who achieved blood pressure and cholesterol goals.

In a 12 month post-hospitalisation follow-up trial involving 253 patients in four centres in the USA, adherence to cardioprotective medications were evaluated in two groups - one with the "multifaceted intervention" led by the hospital pharmacist and the other group as a control with no intervention.

The intervention group scored 89.3% on adherence, versus 73.9% in the control group.

According to *MJA Insight*, Andrew Matthews, Pharmacy Guild national director for quality assurance and standards, said that as medicines experts, pharmacists considered improving medicine adherence as a key role of their profession.

He said the study results were consistent with other research showing improvement in patient outcomes associated with higher levels of adherence.

"The Guild sees this as further evidence supporting the expansion of pharmacists' primary health care role", he said.

HOWEVER the findings were hailed by Dr Evan Ackermann, chair of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners' National Standing Committee for Quality Care, who said "the ongoing bid

by pharmacists to expand their primary health care role has been struck a blow."

In the *MJA Insight* report Ackermann said that given the study demonstrated "no positive health impacts" from the improved adherence, there was "no evidence to support medication interventions in primary care, or for medication reconciliation by a pharmacist at hospital admission or discharge."

Ackermann called for further research into medication safety interventions in diseases where medication was an important part of care, and where patients were prone to high hospital admission rates, the use of drugs associated with a high risk of adverse events, and high-risk settings such as aged care facilities and transfer of care.

He said that evidence about the factors contributing to adverse drug events should be used to develop strategies that improve early detection and prevention.

"I believe this can only occur within the confines of a general practice, using pharmacy funding schemes that do not rely on the sale of medications," he said.

MJA Insight noted a *JAMA Internal Medicine* editorial suggesting that if the studied intervention was applied to every patient with Acute Coronary Syndrome in the USA "it would add \$1 billion annually to health care costs" and that before spending this money "it would be prudent to know that patient outcomes will actually improve".

[CLICK HERE](#) to read the full paper.

NZ Society president

AUCKLAND pharmacist Dale Griffiths has been elected as the new president of the Pharmaceutical Society of New Zealand.

Formerly the Society's vice-president, he takes over from Elizabeth Plant who stepped down last Thu at the Pharmaceutical Society's national executive meeting after five years in the role.

Griffiths said he was pleased to take up the position, adding "it is an exciting time to lead the profession as pharmacists take on more direct patient care roles".

The meeting also saw the executive sign a merger agreement between the Pharmaceutical Society and the New Zealand College of Pharmacists, which will become effective from 31 Dec.

Bayer on Berocca

BAYER Australia Limited has told the TGA that it will no longer claim that "Berocca Performance" has been clinically trialled.

According to the TGA website, Bayer was responding to a 2010 complaint about the product, with the company advising that it "has complied with and will continue to comply with the regulation 48 decision by the delegate of the Minister of Health on 15 July 2013".

Bayer said it has withdrawn any representations that Berocca Performance has been clinically trialled and demonstrated to improve concentration and reduce tiredness, and will not use such representations in any other advertisement.



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Diabetes & CHF - RGH

CONGESTIVE Heart Failure (CHF) or Congestive Cardiac Failure (CCF) is increasing in patients with diabetes mellitus, according to this week's RGH Pharmacy E-Bulletin.

One study of hospitalised patients with heart failure and low ejection fraction found diabetes to be present in 40% of participants.

Hospital stays were also longer with this group as well as higher rates of hypertension, coronary arterial disease and chronic kidney disease.

Further aspects of managing comorbid diabetes and CHF will be examined in subsequent bulletins.

CLICK HERE to see the bulletin.

New Pradaxa trials

BOEHRINGER Ingelheim has announced plans for two new global clinical trials of its novel anticoagulant Pradaxa (dabigatran etexilate mesylate).

One of the trials, RE-DUAL PCI is designed to evaluate the efficacy and safety of Pradaxa in patients with non-valvular atrial fibrillation who have undergone angioplasty with stent placement.

And the other trial, RE-SPECT ESUS will look at Pradaxa's efficacy and safety as a secondary stroke prevention therapy in patients who have suffered an embolic stroke of undetermined source.

Both trials, which are planning to begin enrolment in 2014 and 2015 respectively, would add to the existing clinical trial program for Pradaxa which includes ten completed phase III trials involving about 40,000 patients.

Pharmacists trusted less

A **NEW** survey of people taking prescription medications has found that patients overwhelmingly prefer doctors to pharmacists when it comes to being a "trustworthy source of information".

The wide-ranging poll also found that Australians "overwhelmingly value the PBS system, support R&D and are concerned about delays in accessing new medicines," according to Medicines Australia.

The Galaxy survey of almost 2,000 people was sponsored by research firm Ethical Strategies and the *Pharma Dispatch* journal, and found that 51% of people surveyed take a prescription medicine daily - equivalent to 9 million adult Australians.

That figure increased to 81% among those aged 65 or more.

86% of those on medication think the PBS is a good investment of taxpayer dollars, while 80% said they were concerned about reports of delays in accessing new medicines in Australia compared with other countries.

60% also said they believed that pharmaceutical R&D will improve the treatment of their condition in the future.

MA ceo Brendan Shaw said "This survey shows that the medicines industry's concerns about protecting the PBS and ensuring new medicines are made available quickly are shared by the Australian community.

"When 86% of people say that the PBS is a good use of taxpayers' money, this is a strong signal that the community supports the

current scheme," he said.

Shaw went on to say that there is a broad concern about missing out on new medicines, particularly for those treating debilitating diseases such as cancer, diabetes and rare diseases, compared to other countries.

He said this suggests that Australians "value the \$1 billion invested in R&D each year by the Australian medicines industry."

Interestingly, the study also found that 96% of patients were confident their condition is being effectively managed, while 60% would recommend their prescription medicine to friends or family.

And two thirds of patients considered their doctor to be the "most trustworthy source of information" - compared to just 18% who trusted their pharmacists the most.

82% of patients also confirmed they had recently been asked whether they would like the generic form of their medication.

CLICK HERE to view the survey.

Contraceptives safe

A **EUROPEAN** Medicines Agency review has concluded that the benefits of combined hormonal contraceptives still outweigh the risks, particularly the well-known but small risk of venous thromboembolism (VTE).

However the EMA says it will mandate updated product information for oral contraceptives "to help women make informed decisions about their choice of contraception".

The review also looked at the risk of arterial thromboembolism and found it was "very low," with patients who have been taking contraceptives without any problem told there is no reason to stop on the basis of the review.

"But it is important that you are aware of the risk of blood clots associated with these medicines, even though it is very low".

Oral contraceptives differ in terms of VTE risk depending on the type of progestogen they contain, with the lowest found for those containing levonorgestrel, norethisterone or norgestimate.

WIN A DESIGNER BRANDS SHOWTIME COLLECTION



DB DESIGNER BRANDS

This week **Pharmacy Daily** is giving five lucky readers the chance to win a Designer Brands Showtime Collection kit, valued at \$39.99.

This year Designer Brands has Christmas all wrapped up with inspiring gift ideas starting from only \$7.99.

The 2013 beauty must-have is Designer Brands Showtime Collection, it is an essential make-up palette - contains over 150 products!

Inside you will find an extensive range of 70 Eye Shadows, 12 Crème Eye Liners, 54 Lip Glosses, 3 Blushes, 6 Lip & Cheek Crèmes, 3 Illuminators and Applicators.

To win this exciting prize pack, simply be the first person to correctly answer the question below to: comp@pharmacydaily.com.au

What product would you like to see added to the DB range?

Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winners, **Cathy Martin** from **HNE Pharmacy Services**. The correct answer was **Yes**.



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Abbott strips recall

ABBOTT Diabetes Care, in consultation with the TGA, is recalling two lots of its *FreeStyle Lite* blood glucose test strips due to the potential for giving incorrect bg results when used with the *Freestyle Papillon Mini* meter.

The two lots of affected strips are #1366540 & #1366621 and were distributed in Australia in Sep and Oct this year.

Guild Update

Sunscreen advice includes sports venues

A RECENT finding of the Cancer Council suggests Australians should take as much care at sports venues as at the beach. Pharmacists can advise customers of these newly-identified dangers when providing guidance on sunscreen products.

Louise Baldwin, Chair of Cancer Council Australia's Skin Cancer Committee said over the next three years, 44 000 Australians (40 a day) would be told they had the deadliest form of skin cancer, melanoma. Almost two in three would be men.

'The figures are startling when you put them in perspective,' Louise said. '44,000 people is more than a full capacity crowd at the Gabba.'

'Cancer Council is reminding Australians that the 'slip, slop, slap, seek and slide' message doesn't just apply at the beach.'

CLICK HERE for the Cancer Council findings.



The Pharmacy Guild of Australia

New Sydney lectureship

SYDNEY University Faculty of Pharmacy Dean, Iqbal Ramzan, has announced the introduction of a new lectureship in the Quality Use of Complementary Medicines.

Effective from 2014, the role has been made possible with support from the Blackmores Institute.

"Australia has seen an unprecedented increase in the popularity of complementary medicines, and with that in mind the Blackmores Institute and the Faculty of Pharmacy identify an associated increase in the need for community pharmacists to be experienced in providing advice and recommendation about these medicines," Ramzan said.

The lecturer will be appointed to develop, deliver and evaluate a new evidence-based education program which will be designed to improve pharmacy students' knowledge in

TBN acquires INIKA

TOTAL Beauty Network, the owner of the Designer Brands range of cosmetics, has expanded its portfolio with the acquisition of "luxury natural Australian cosmetic brand INIKA".

INIKA launched in 2006 and its complete makeup range is now sold in over 16 countries globally.

It's a 100% natural beauty brand incorporating mineral makeup, vegan and certified organic products that are free from synthetic chemicals.

All INIKA products are vegan, certified Halal and certified cruelty free, with Total Beauty Network ceo Tony Rechtman saying that with a worldwide cult following "it's the perfect addition to our stable."

"INIKA will be another strong offering we can provide to our retail partners to drive customers into store," he said.

The acquisition is effective immediately, with INIKA adding to the TBN portfolio of Designer Brands, COLOUR by TBN and its Australian distributorship of White Sands haircare.

Rechtman said TBN had experienced strong growth of over 300% in the last three years.

the appropriate and safe use of complementary medicines.

In particular the modules will "focus on demonstrating how the evidence behind complementary medicines can be translated into practice from both health care professional and consumer perspectives," Professor Ramzan added.

He said that currently most pharmacy degree programs are limited in the depth and breadth of education on CMs.

As part of background research into the project, Sydney University undertook qualitative research to explore the attitudes, skills and behaviours of pre-registration pharmacy interns and registered pharmacists with regard to the appropriate and safe use of CMs.

A summary of the research, titled *Community Pharmacists' Opinions about Complementary Medicines* can be accessed by **CLICKING HERE**.

Author, Associate Professor Parisa Aslani, will be speaking about her research at the Blackmores Institute Symposium in Sydney from 28 Feb-01 Mar 2014.

New Zealand formulary for kids

THE New Zealand Formulary (NZF) has launched a new formulary specially for children, incorporating medication expertise from hospitals and paediatricians.

According to the NZ *Pharmacy Today* publication, eventually users will be able to easily "click" between the adult and children's editions to compare and contrast the equivalent pages for the same conditions or drugs.

The NZF, which launched just over 18 months ago, is an "independent resource providing healthcare professionals with clinically validated medicines information and guidance on best practice".

It's based on the latest version of the British National Formulary, and builds on the information in NZ's Universal List of Medicines which shows all the prescribable medications in New Zealand.

See nzformulary.org.



DISPENSARY CORNER

MILITARY officials in Norway have announced plans to put the country's soldiers on a vegetarian diet, but the rationale isn't to improve the health of the troops but instead to fight a new enemy - climate change.

It's only once a week, with the "meatless Mondays" initiative set to "serve food that's respectful of the environment," according to spokesman Eystein Kvarving.

Estimated to reduce meat consumption by about 150 tonnes per year, the army said it was responding to the fact that livestock farming accounts for about 18% of worldwide greenhouse gas emissions.

AN ancient wine cellar discovered in Israel has been uncovered, with a chemical analysis showing that "this is where they kept the good stuff," according to a collaboration of researchers from universities in North America and Israel.

Samples from the 3,700 year old ceramic jars have found exotic ingredients such as honey, mint, tree resins, cedar and cinnamon.

Archaeologists discovered the cellar earlier this year near the town of Nahariya, with 40 large ceramic jars each with a 60 litre capacity in a single room.

An expert in ancient winemaking said the find "sheds important new light" on the development of viticulture in ancient Canaan.

APPS are everywhere - even in relationships (or lack thereof).

A new smartphone application has launched which aims to help people convince their friends that they really have a partner.

Invisible Girlfriend promises to offer "believable virtual and real world proof" of a relationship, via phone calls, voicemails, random gifts and even a Facebook relationship.

There are various levels of membership, ranging from the basic 'just met' package right through to the top level 'almost engaged' offering.