

WHAT'S YOUR SCAN RATE?

“eRx is the best innovation to be added to dispense programs for the last 5 years”

– Chris Walsh, Amcal Pharmacy Drysdale

[eRx.com.au/ScanRate](http://eRx.com.au/ScanRate) 

## Ca<sup>++</sup>, vit D for bones

THE Australian Self Medication Industry (ASMI) said National Healthy Bones Action Week (03 to 10 Aug) spotlighted osteoporosis and emphasised the role of calcium and vitamin D in preventing it.

It is estimated that 1.2m Australians have osteoporosis and a further 6.3m have low bone density (osteopenia).

ASMI regulatory and scientific affairs director Steve Scarff said calcium was essential in the development, maintenance, structure and strength of bones.

“The other nutrient vital for bone health is vitamin D, which enhances the absorption of calcium and phosphorus, regulates blood levels of calcium and is essential for bone mineralisation and maintenance.”

## Anticoagulant module

DESIGNED for healthcare professionals including pharmacists, an online learning module on anticoagulants has been developed by the UK's Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency.

The interactive program takes the learner through key drug management points, how to manage the risks and benefits.

**CLICK HERE** to access the module.

## Concierge pharmacy

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia has said the time is right for a pharmacy-led, personalised medication concierge service for older Australians - and it is working on a business model for this.

Writing in *forefront*, Guild executive director David Quilty said to bridge the price disclosure gap, the pharmacy sector needed to innovate and build on its medicine expertise to meet the needs of an ageing population, which should be able to live independently as long as possible; a medication concierge service would increase medicine adherence rates and decrease the risk of unnecessary hospitalisations.

A community pharmacy would take responsibility for an elderly patient's medicine requirements including dose administration aids, home deliveries and the taking and monitoring of vital signs, as well as liaising with GPs, carers and relatives, he said.

This could be paid for by the patient or family directly or through health insurance and for patients who could not afford it, the service could be provided on a subsidised basis as part of a home-based aged care support package, Quilty said.

Speaking with *PD*, Quilty said the Guild was working on a business

model for this service which the sector could expect to see in the coming months.

However there was nothing stopping pharmacies or banner groups from taking up this opportunity themselves, he said.

The service would not necessarily involve a large amount of additional resources or time but could involve employment of additional staff, Quilty said.

The Guild was working with state and Federal governments, including on reform of the Consumer Directed Home Care Packages to include medicine management and adherence as important services which should be subsidised as part of the Package, Quilty said.

**CLICK HERE** to read more.

## Stat stroke treatment

NEW research published in *The Lancet* has demonstrated that people treated with a blood clot dissolving drug within three hours of suffering a stroke have better and faster recovery.

Involving more than 6,700 patients, the study showed that those who received the drug alteplase had a 75% better outcome if they were treated within the first three hours of a stroke but the benefit rapidly declined if treatment was delayed by even a few hours.

Study co-author Professor Richard Lindley from University of Sydney said the study showed that treatment with alteplase significantly increased the odds of a good stroke outcome.

## NHMRC, CSIRO team

AN INFECTIOUS diseases forum was held yesterday at the Geelong high-containment facility.

A joint initiative between CSIRO's Australian Animal Health Laboratory and the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), NHMRC ceo Professor Warwick Anderson said more than 70% of new and emerging infectious diseases originated in animals, so there were great benefits to merging the collective genius from both sides to address some of the nation's greatest infectious disease challenges.

The workshops discussed emerging zoonotic disease threats, such as ebola and MERS, as well as medical counter measures.

## Measles outbreaks

NEW Zealand health authorities are alerting residents on the North Island to ensure they and their children are vaccinated against measles, with 265 confirmed cases reported, including more than 100 from a school in Hamilton.

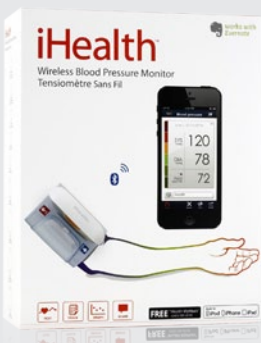
On 20 Mar, the World Health Organisation announced that measles elimination had been achieved by Australia, Macao (China), Mongolia and the Republic of Korea which were the first areas in the Western Pacific Region to receive this distinction.

Just weeks later, Australia's NPS MedicineWise advised people to check their vaccinations are up to date with reports of six measles cases in Queensland (*PD* 29 May) and outbreaks in other states.

## Connecting you to new business opportunities.

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## APC Accreditation Colloquium

19 August 2014, Brisbane

**Mysteries of Time and Space:**

Preparing future practitioners for patient centred care

**Registrations Open**

## Medsafe statin review

**NEW** Zealand's Medsafe regulatory authority has completed a review of statins impact upon the kidney.

Early data indicated a signal for an association between statins and acute kidney injury without the more commonly known side effect of rhabdomyolysis.

While increased risk of acute kidney injury might be linked to the use of high dose statins, Medsafe said that the overall benefit-risk balance of statins remained positive - [CLICK HERE](#) for details.

## PHARMAC likes Eprex

**EPREX** (erythropoietin alfa) will be the only funded brand of erythropoietin in the community and the only brand of erythropoietin able to be used in NZ DHB hospitals from 01 Mar 2015 to 28 Feb 2018.

Access to the drug will be widened to include patients with myelodysplasia and patients for whom blood transfusion is not a viable treatment option (hospital only).

## NPS on anticoagulants

**NPS** MedicineWise has advised people not to stop taking dabigatran (Pradaxa) without speaking to their doctor, after reports that safety information was withheld (**PD** 05 Aug).

NPS said dabigatran, apixaban and rivaroxaban were newer anticoagulant medicines.

Warfarin had been the mainstay of anticoagulant therapy for many years and its anti-clotting effect could be monitored with a blood test (INR test), however there were no equivalent tests for the newer anticoagulants, NPS said.

If a patient started bleeding while taking a newer anticoagulant, there was currently no way to reverse it quickly, NPS said.

NPS design and development manager Aine Heaney said while patients would not need to have INR blood tests if they had switched from warfarin to a newer anticoagulant, it was just as important to have regular checks with a doctor to monitor health.

She said while there were risks with every medication, it was crucial patients did not stop taking their oral anticoagulants without medical advice, as this could risk blood clots that could cause stroke.

NPS said the newer anticoagulants were like any new drugs where the longer term side effects were still being understood.

Boehringer Ingelheim (BI) said compared with warfarin, both doses of Pradaxa had been shown to significantly reduce intracranial bleeding and risk of major bleeding was reduced by 20% with Pradaxa 110mg bd.

"While there is currently no specific antidote available for any of the novel oral anticoagulants, they all have much shorter half-lives than warfarin and there are established measures and protocols to reverse the anticoagulant effect of Pradaxa and to manage bleeding during an emergency situation."

BI said it was working on an antidote.

## PPA supports interns

**PROFESSIONAL** Pharmacists Australia (PPA) has identified a recent case of a pharmacist intern short-pay to highlight the need for interns to know their rights and responsibilities in the workplace.

In the case concerned, the intern was owed both wages and superannuation by his employer who, it was alleged, had failed to pay appropriately for weekend work, working through rest breaks and for maintaining a uniform.

## PBA quarterly stats

**THE** Pharmacy Board of Australia has published its quarterly statistics (**PD** 01 Aug) which show there are now 28,282 pharmacists in Australia.

The majority are aged 25 to 29 at 22.11% of registered practitioners, followed by those aged 30 to 34 at 18.86% and those aged 40 to 44 at 8.86%.

Most are female at 60.16% of practitioners.

To view the stats, [CLICK HERE](#).

## MIMS Updates

### NEW PRODUCTS

**Mabthera SC (rituximab (rch))** is a genetically engineered chimeric murine/human monoclonal antibody directed against the CD20 antigen found on the surface of normal and malignant B lymphocytes. Mabthera SC is indicated for treatment of patients with: CD20 positive, previously untreated, Stage III/IV follicular, B-cell non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, CD20 positive, relapsed or refractory low grade or follicular, B-cell non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and CD20 positive, diffuse large B-cell non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, in combination with chemotherapy. It is available as a single use vial containing a solution for subcutaneous injection (1400 mg/11.7 mL) in packs of 1's.

### SAFETY RELATED CHANGES

It is recommended that **Kytril (granisetron)** film coated tablets are not taken by patients with rare hereditary problems of galactose intolerance, lactase deficiency or glucose-galactose malabsorption.

In the use of **Ventolin sugar free syrup and injection (salbutamol sulphate)**, nonintravenous formulations of salbutamol must not be used to arrest uncomplicated premature labour or threatened abortion.

The use of **Avapro (irbesartan)** with an ACE inhibitor is now contraindicated in patients with diabetic nephropathy.

**Elonva (corifollitropin alfa (rch))** is now contraindicated in polycystic ovarian syndrome.

**Teveten Plus (eprosartan mesylate and hydrochlorothiazide)** is now contraindicated in severe hepatic impairment, cholestasis and biliary obstructive disorders, therapy resistant hypokalaemia or hypercalcaemia, refractory hyponatraemia and in symptomatic hyperuricaemia/gout.

**Ventolin obstetric injection (salbutamol)** is now also contraindicated in the following conditions: at a gestational age less than 24 weeks; intrauterine foetal death, known lethal congenital or lethal chromosomal malformation; any condition of the mother or foetus in which prolongation of the pregnancy is hazardous (e.g. maternal cardiac disease, uncontrolled hypertension, severe pre-eclampsia, active uterine

bleeding, premature rupture of the membranes with associated chorioamnionitis, compression of the umbilical cord, foetal acidosis (pH 7.2) or hypoxia (PaO<sub>2</sub> 18 mm Hg), foetal distress); in patients with pulmonary hypertension, pre-existing ischaemic heart disease or those patients with significant risk factors for ischaemic heart disease; bronchial asthma; diabetes; uncompensated potassium depletion, hypercalcaemia; maternal hyperthyroidism; ileus; unconsciousness; renal insufficiency; glaucoma and paroxysmal tachycardia.

**Zumenon (oestradiol hemihydrate)** is now contraindicated in untreated endometrial hyperplasia and known thrombophilic disorders (e.g. protein C, protein S or anti-thrombin deficiency).

### NEW INDICATIONS

**Kytril (granisetron)** is now also indicated in the treatment of nausea and vomiting induced by cytotoxic chemotherapy in adults.

*This list is a summary of only some of the changes that have occurred over the last month. Before prescribing, always refer to the full product information.*

August 2014



- Cost Effective
- Targeted
- Easy

## Vanco dosing tool

**VANCOMYCIN** and aminoglycosides dosing in the hospital setting can get extremely complex as any hospital pharmacist will advise; a pharmacist has created an app to support the dosing of vancomycin using established algorithms.

Deanna Wung from UNC School of Pharmacy, North Carolina told *Drug Topics* that as a student, she had put her vancomycin dosing equations into a spreadsheet.

"I realised later, on rotations, that this would be useful to practicing pharmacists and would make an excellent mobile app."

Wung was also careful in development of the app to leave enough flexibility for the pharmacist's decision-making.

To see the tool **CLICK HERE**.

## Travel Specials

**WELCOME to Pharmacy Daily's travel feature. Each week we highlight a couple of great travel deals for the pharmacy industry.**

Topdeck is offering 15% off on selected dates for its North America trips, including its Vegas to Coast trip, which travels from Las Vegas to Los Angeles. You'll road trip through Yosemite National Park, San Francisco and the California Coast on the way to Los Angeles. The trip includes accommodation, an experienced trip leader and driver, breakfast daily, some extra meals and attraction entrance fees. Priced from \$1,526 per person, Topdeck says you'll save \$269. Trips depart from August to March 2016.

Call 1300 886 332 to book.

Chiva-Som has a special for travel by 30 Sep, where you'll stay for seven nights but pay for six, from \$3,248.

The offer includes complimentary return private car transfers from Bangkok Airport to Chiva-Som, as well as three spa cuisine meals a day, a choice of daily massage for 50 minutes, complimentary use of the Water Therapy Suites including steam, sauna and jacuzzi and daily fitness and leisure activities including yoga, pilates and holistic health lectures.

To book, call 1300 857 437.

## Letter to the Editor

**IN RESPONSE** to **PD's** article about a Pharmacy Board of Australia warning regarding dispensing errors (**PD** 01 Aug), **PDL** has written this response:

*A recent communiqué from the Pharmacy Board of Australia wrote about the danger and implications of not using scanners in the dispensing process.*

*From cases reported to PDL, it is estimated that 80-90% of dispensing errors result from a failure to scan and not adequately checking dispensed prescriptions.*

*Therefore, PDL fully endorses the comments made by The Board.*

*When a dispensing error is made, problems can occur not only to the recipient of the mistake but to the dispensing pharmacist as well.*

*Some pharmacists involved in errors, especially serious errors, can be traumatised or become highly stressed as a result of causing injury to a consumer.*

*The simple act of scanning can therefore protect the pharmacist as well as the consumer.*

*A recent trend in dispensing incidents has emerged where dispensed medication is given out to the wrong person.*

*This occurs when a consumer name is called and the wrong person comes forward to claim it.*

*Through lack of proper consumer checking and often a failure to adequately counsel, these errors are becoming prevalent. By asking 'open questions', this type of mistake can be completely eliminated.*

*Likewise, transposing the names of family members is happening too frequently, so Mr Jones may have a prescription labelled as Mrs Jones.*

*Another cause for alarm in the dispensing process involves the provision of Dose Administration Aids.*

*Increasingly, we are receiving reports of errors in the filling and the distribution of DAAs.*

*Incorrect filling of these aids often involves packs filled by dispensary assistants and the final checking of a pharmacist failing to detect an error.*

*The recent and well publicised death of a patient due to incorrectly packed methotrexate has been well documented but other serious errors have recently occurred.*

*Errors in warfarin dosing have led to consumers having a stroke on more than one occasion.*

*Mistakes in packing tranquilisers and sedatives have also had obvious deleterious results.*

*The lessons to be learnt from the above are simple and should not require intervention by the Pharmacy Board to bring to the attention of pharmacists.*

*Put plainly; always scan; counsel appropriately; double and triple check your work and analyse and think clearly about what you are doing!*

We welcome any comments. If you would like to weigh in on this or other subjects, email us at [info@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:info@pharmacydaily.com.au).

## WIN A THURSDAY PLANTATION PACK

This week **PD** is giving five readers the chance to win a **Thursday Plantation** pack.

Perfect your skin with the power of nature's oils.

Thursday Plantation Nurture Oil naturally decreases the visibility of scars and stretch marks.

Thursday Plantation Macadamia Oil restores the skin's lipid barrier and provides deep hydration to restore dry and ageing skin.

To win, be first to send in the answer to: [comp@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:comp@pharmacydaily.com.au)

Is Macadamia Oil suitable for sensitive skin?

Congratulations to yesterday's winner, **Andrea Cetkovic** from **Sigma Pharmaceuticals**.

## DISPENSARY CORNER

**A DIFFERENT** use for Narcan.

Here's an unusual, but wonderful, use of Narcan (naloxone) - a Pennsylvania veterinarian reportedly used the medication, an opioid antagonist used for drug overdoses, to revive a kitten that had been given heroin, the *Associated Press* reported.

The owner has been arrested and faces charges of drug possession and animal cruelty, the publication reported.

**SEA?** Work's not that bad.

Here's an option for your lunch room at your pharmacy - a Japanese company has turned its reception area, also used as the staff lounge and meeting space, into a tropical beach, complete with a carpet of sand, to convince staff and visitors that work ain't so bad, the *Telegraph* reported.

**AND** in everyone else.

Maybe in future you'll be stocking copies of Halo rather than antidepressants, with a recent study suggesting computer games could be as effective as drugs at treating executive dysfunction in geriatric depression.

Published in *Nature Communications*, it found that a neuroplasticity-based computerised cognitive remediation-geriatric depression treatment was equally effective at reducing depressive symptoms as escitalopram - **CLICK HERE**.

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