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QCPP pain refresher

PHARMACY assistants are being invited to complete a new online QCPP Refresher Training course which aims to help them give advice on pharmacy medicines to relieve pain.

The course emphasises the ASK, ASSESS, ADVISE protocol as well as appropriate pharmacist referral.

It's available online free via the Guild Academy's myLEARNING online site - **CLICK HERE** for details.

Shire, Baxalta deal?

SHIRE Pharmaceuticals has confirmed a proposal which would see it merge with Baxalta, in an all-share deal worth about \$30 billion.

If it proceeds Baxalta shareholders would end up owning 37% of the combined Shire group.

Baxalta, which was recently spun off from Baxter (**PD** 14 May) has "declined to engage in discussions regarding the transaction" with its board saying it believes the offer significantly undervalues the company.

Guild urges national ERRCD

THE Pharmacy Guild has joined with other peak bodies to urge doctors and pharmacists across Australia to "unite in demanding a national system for the Electronic Recording and Reporting of Controlled Drugs" (ERRCD).

Guild executive director David Quilty said that governments have "dawdled and blame shifted" for too long, despite calls by coroners in virtually every jurisdiction for a coordinated solution (**PD** 30 Jul).

In the last 15 years the supply of Schedule 8 medicines has increased markedly, with oxycodone and fentanyl supply increasing 22-fold and 46-fold respectively, he said.

"Oxycodone is now the seventh leading medicine prescribed in general practice, with nearly 2.5 million PBS prescriptions in 2013 for oxycodone alone," Quilty added.

Drug overdose fatalities regularly exceed those due to motor accidents in Australia, and "legal prescription medicines - rather than illicit substances" comprise the

overwhelming majority, he said.

"Australia, like other western nations, is in the grip of a prescription drug epidemic and it is totally unacceptable that doctors and pharmacists work every day at the coalface of this problem with one hand tied behind their backs".

As well as the Guild, other organisations including the PSA, RACP, RACGP and the Australian Medical Association have joined the campaign, saying "it is time for governments around the country to do the right thing".

MedicineWise week

NPS MedicineWise yesterday announced that the fifth annual Be MedicineWise Week would take place 12-18 Oct 2015.

This year it will focus on "all ages and life stages," with daily themes of 'pregnancy/breastfeeding', 'children', 'teenagers/young adults', 'when medicines are part of your life', and 'as you're getting older'.

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today has two pages of news, plus a full page reminding pharmacies to order their **API Calendars**.

Qld eHealth move

A NEW dedicated electronic health agency has been established by the Queensland government, bringing together the responsibilities of the existing Health Services Information Agency and the office of the chief health information officer, reports *Pulse IT*.

Dubbed eHealth Queensland, the combined operation aims to more quickly achieve a "fully integrated health system," according to Qld health minister Cameron Dick.

He said investments in electronic health in Queensland would include network foundations, a secure environment to share information and images and a "statewide electronic medical record system" which will provide clinicians with faster access to current patient information in one place.

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FDA Gilenya warning

THE US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has issued a warning that a case of definite progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy (PML) and a case of probable PML have been reported in patients taking Gilenya (fingolimod) for multiple sclerosis.

These are the first such cases associated with Gilenya and the information about these cases will be added to the drug label, the FDA said - **CLICK HERE** for more.

Travel Specials

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Put a Spring in your Step with Cebu Pacific

THE Philippines' largest airline, Cebu Pacific Air, has launched a seat sale to the Philippines until 09 Aug (or while seats last), giving travellers the chance to embrace a supreme spring vacation.

For the all-inclusive price of AU\$199, take return flights from Sydney to Manila between 01 Oct 2015 and 30 Nov 2015 with country taxes and fees included, but exclusive of travel products such as meals or baggage allowance.

Go to www.cebupacificair.com.

Adherium \$35m ASX IPO

NZ-BASED Digital health company Adherium, which had entered into a long-term partnership with AstraZeneca (AZ) to combine digital health with inhaler medications (*PD* 24 Jul), is seeking to raise up to \$35m in a public float on the ASX.

The Company's first product range, Smartinhaler, has been shown to "significantly improve patient adherence to preventative inhaled therapies that are used in the management of chronic respiratory diseases and to significantly improve health outcomes in people with asthma," the company said.

The Smartinhaler platform comprises a range of approved medical devices that attach to

prescription inhalers and record usage data which is automatically transmitted to a smartphone App, home monitoring hub, or PC, and then to the company's cloud-based servers, where it can be accessed by the patient's health care professional and care giver.

In Australia the estimations are that only 43% of people with asthma take their medication as prescribed and only 11% use their prescribed preventative medication on a daily basis.

The system is now cleared for marketing by the FDA, TGA and New Zealand's MedSafe.

Pharmacists improve dabigatran adherence

AMONG nonvalvular atrial fibrillation patients treated with dabigatran, specific pharmacist-based activities were associated with greater patient adherence, according to a US Veterans Health Administration (VHA) study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

47 pharmacists participated in the study at total of 67 VHA sites which were sampled between 2010 and 2012 (4863 total patients).

CLICK HERE for the abstract.

3D printed drug tick

FOR the first time in the history of medicine, the US Food and Drug Administration has approved a drug manufactured by 3D printing technology, paving the way for potential customisation of drugs to suit patients' needs, *Reuters* reports.

The drug called Spritam, reportedly from Aprexia Pharmaceuticals, was approved for oral use as a prescription adjunctive therapy in the treatment of epilepsy, the company said on Monday.

Aprexia's "ZipDose" technology creates premeasured doses which disintegrate in the mouth with a sip of liquid, the report said.



DISPENSARY CORNER

PLENTY of not-so-minor ailments arose at a prison in the Ohio, US town of Mansfield last month after a drone drug drop-off in the yard sparked a fight.

The remotely-piloted aircraft dropped a package of illicit drugs at the Mansfield Correctional Institution about 65 miles from Cleveland, with items on board including heroin and marijuana as well as tobacco.

According to the state Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, this was the latest incident in a series of events where drones have breached security.

In this instance the inmates started fighting when one of them threw the package over a fence into a separate recreation yard, where other prisoners immediately attempted to grab it.

CRACK out the chilli!

Researchers at Harvard University have found that eating spicy food at least three times per week may be good for you.

The study of nearly 500,000 people in China over seven years found those who ate hot food such as curry or chilli stir-fry at least three times a week cut their risk of dying by 14% compared to people who ate milder meals.

The most commonly used spices were fresh and dried chilli peppers, with a more detailed analysis finding those who ate fresh chilli had a lower risk of death from cancer, diabetes and ischaemic heart disease.

The study was published in the *British Medical Journal*, with some doctors urging caution about drawing immediate conclusions.

Those in the study who ate lots of spicy food were also much more likely to live in rural areas, so other factors may also be contributing to their longevity.

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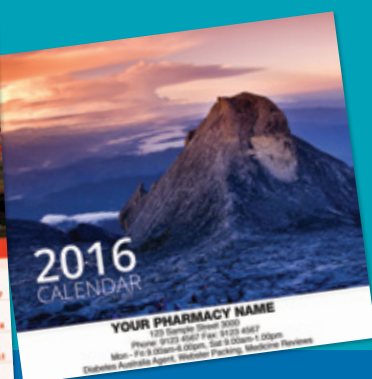
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