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V-Max herbals alert

YET another sildenafil-containing 'herbal' product is being promoted online in Australia, the TGA advises. The product, illegal to sell in Australia, is named V-Max Herbal tablets, and has not been assessed for quality, safety or efficacy.

Top SHPA awards named

THE Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) has announced its main pharmacist awards at its 41st SHPA National Conference held in Melbourne on the weekend.

Fellow and Past-President of

SHPA, Sue Kirsas (pictured left) has been named as recipient of the Fred J Boyd Award for 2015 during the



opening plenary session.

Named in honour of SHPA's founding president, the Fred J Boyd Award is SHPA's highest award; it is awarded to recognise significant contributions to hospital pharmacy.

As well as delivering a noteworthy oration, Sue said, "It is both humbling and a very great honour to receive this award. To have it conferred in my home city, Melbourne is very special indeed."

The Australian Clinical Pharmacy Award for 2015 has been awarded to Dr Christine Carrington (pictured top right).

The Australian Clinical Pharmacy Award is one of SHPA's highest honours and is bestowed to recognise outstanding contributions to clinical pharmacy practice.

Carrington has many years of experience as a clinical pharmacist in cancer services and is currently the assistant director of pharmacy and senior consultant pharmacist, Cancer Services at the Princess

Alexandra Hospital in Brisbane.

The third major award presented at the event went to Amber Roberts (pictured below) who was named for the SHPA Medal of Merit for 2015, awarded by SHPA's Federal Council



to recognise outstanding recent contributions and exemplary effort relating to hospital pharmacy practice.

Roberts has represented

pharmacy in a range of national settings at the highest levels and made major contributions in the Tasmanian clinical pharmacy scene.

RGH on Vitamin K2

THIS week's Repatriation and General Hospital Pharmacy E-Bulletin looks at the role of vitamin K2 in osteoporosis.

The bulletin points out that the evidence for vitamin K impact on bone health is "conflicting" with a "lack of good quality randomised controlled trials in sufficiently large numbers of patients".

All vitamin K preparations also antagonise the effects of warfarin.

CLICK HERE for access.

New pharmacy conference for 2016

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia has announced the details of 'Pharmacy Connect,' a new national conference which will kick off in Sydney in Sep next year.

Pharmacy Connect will feature "future-focused business and clinical education sessions," as well as a trade exhibition with sixty-plus exhibitors, a welcome reception and a gala dinner.

Pharmacy Connect will be managed by the team that produces the annual APP conference on the Gold Coast, and will replace the Pharmacy Business Network in Melbourne as well as the former National Convention & Exhibition (NCE) in Sydney.



Conference convenor, Kos Sclavos, said Pharmacy Connect meets a need identified by pharmacy owners, managers and manufacturers for an industry conference in the second half of the calendar year that includes a strong focus on the practical aspects of pharmacy, particularly business.

"The conference will also serve as a platform to launch initiatives from the Sixth Community Pharmacy Agreement, both from the Pharmacy Guild of Australia and private companies," Sclavos said.

A range of sponsorship and exhibitor opportunities are now open - for more information on Pharmacy Connect see the website at www.pharmacy-connect.com.au.

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Resistance summary

ANTIMICROBIAL resistance development continues to dominate the medical literature and the Royal Australasian College of Physicians has issued what has been described by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare as "a cogent summary of the issue of antibiotic resistance".

Under the title *Antibiotic resistance: are we all doomed?* the paper sets out a series of specific steps that need to be taken to manage the complex and critical problem.

CLICK HERE to access the paper.

TGA pilots IMDRF

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) is participating in a pilot of the International Medical Device Regulators Forum (IMDRF), a forum to discuss future directions in medical device regulatory harmonisation between various jurisdictions across the globe.

Participating regulatory authorities are Australia (TGA), Brazil (ANVISA), Canada (Health Canada), China (China Food and Drug Administration), the European Union (Notified Bodies) and the United States of America (US FDA).

See tga.gov.au for more details.

API core strategy focus

AUSTRALIAN Pharmaceutical Industries expects to sustain its significant improvements in earnings performance (**PD** 23 Oct) through the implementation of its core strategies and supporting initiatives, the company said in its annual report on Fri.

The positive outlook is subject to a stable economic climate and level of consumer demand as well as a stable regulatory environment including the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS), the directors' report states.

The company intends to capitalise on its strengths in the health and beauty retail market especially via the Priceline Pharmacy Franchise, transitioning from company owned Priceline stores to Franchise owned Priceline Pharmacies.

Priceline Sister Club loyalty program growth is planned with increased customer engagement through the website and social media channels, the company said.

The other main strategy the company said it will pursue is the optimisation of its national community pharmacy wholesale distribution business, building on the current merchandising strategy and maintaining earnings margins.

Part of this strategy focuses on investment in supply chain an



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Phcy BP kiosk pilot

A MINNESOTA pilot program involving pharmacist interventions and pharmacy-based blood pressure kiosks has demonstrated the potential of community pharmacists in improving hypertension in the wider community, according to a report in US trade magazine *Pharmacy Times*.

Some 270 patients with hypertension participated in the six-month program, with kiosk manufacturer PharmaSmart providing the measuring devices used during the pilot.

Patients used a 'Smart Card' that allows them to track their blood pressure through the PharmaSmart kiosks, which also communicated the results to pharmacy staff who were then able to offer interventions.

Blood pressure was improved in around one third of participants.

information technology platforms to drive efficient and cost-effective operating cost structures.

The report identified potential challenges to future success as ongoing government reforms to the PBS in the pharmacy sector and macro-economic factors that may contribute to volatile retail sales and increasing cost pressures in key areas such as labour.

MEANWHILE the report also details the salary packages of the company's top executives, with managing director and ceo Stephen Roche receiving a total package of \$1.9 million for the year to 31 Aug.

That was a huge jump on the \$1.074 million for the previous twelve months, with Roche receiving a cash short term incentive of almost \$500,000 in 2014/15 plus another \$400,000 in share-based payments.

Group gm business development and operations, Richard Vincent took home \$845,181 while chief financial officer Peter Mendo, who was appointed in Jan 2015, received \$364,890 during the year.

Novo Nordisk on PHI

NOVO Nordisk has made a submission to the government's Private Health Insurance (PHI) committee, urging the retention of the 30% rebate on extras in order to keep supporting patients on private prescription medication.

The submission warns that removing the 30% rebate from extra cover could lead to "perverse incentives" which would see the patient undergo more expensive hospital care.

Novo Nordisk also urges the adoption of a standard "overall extras package" within private health insurance offerings which could include a set of core services such as general dental, optical, physiotherapy, psychology, podiatry, speech therapy, occupational therapy, health aids & appliances and pharmacy.

Pharmacy extras cover should include a set of key criteria including a standard co-payment and TGA approval, the submission adds.

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Weekly Comment

Welcome to *PD's* weekly comment feature. This week's contributor is

Debbie Capuano,
Recruitment
Consultant at
Raven's Recruitment.



Give your people a chance to shine!

ONE of the biggest challenges for pharmacy owners is staffing and getting it right.

If you have gone to all the effort of securing a new staff member for your business, you want to make sure that you are not just getting the best from them, but also that they are being fulfilled in their role and that expectations are being met on both sides of the equation.

The most responsible tool for pharmacy owners to use for this is a Performance Review.

A Performance Review should be all of the following:

- Conducted as a priority (at the end of the probation period and then annually at a minimum)
- Clear and concise - questions from both parties pertaining to expectations
- Action Points to be addressed and followed up on

By allowing a person the opportunity to lift their performance, you will potentially retain a loyal employee for many years to come.

The reality is they might be oblivious to their shortfalls and will appreciate the constructive feedback provided.

It works the other way also, they may provide you, as the employer, with feedback to help improve your business and to help make you an Employer of Choice within the industry.

Give your people a chance to shine, and the results could be outstanding!

NOACs under-prescribed

AUSTRALIAN doctors appear to be hesitant to prescribe the recommended dosages of the various novel anticoagulants (NOACs), according to the long-running GARFIELD study which is following 57,000 patients across the globe.

GARFIELD (Global Anticoagulant Registry in the Field) is initially looking at patients with newly diagnosed atrial fibrillation (AF), and there are 20 Australian clinicians actively involved in the study.

One of those is cardiologist Harry Gibbs who presented at a luncheon convened by Bayer last week in Sydney, and is a strong advocate of the use of the NOACs for stroke prevention in connection with AF.

Gibbs said the figures, as expected, show a significant spike in the use of the NOACs following their PBS approval, but interestingly some clinicians appear to be hedging their bets by prescribing lower doses - perhaps because of the impression that there is "no antidote" for them.

However in fact the short half-life of the NOACs means in the event that emergency surgery is required this generally is not an issue, and moreover in many cases bleeding events are gastrointestinal which can be easily treated.

Some doctors prescribe Clexane as a "safer" alternative to warfarin and again there's no reversal agent.

"There are plenty of approaches to the management of bleeding.

"If I had the choice between a blood transfusion and having a stroke I'd take the blood transfusion every time," he said.

"We need to do something to improve the use of anticoagulants in AF because strokes are really terrible," he said.

UGPA urges non-dispensing pharmacy

UNITED General Practice Australia, the umbrella organisation for a range of groups including the AMA, RACGP and the Rural Doctors Association, has recommended a trial of non-dispensing pharmacists integrated into GP-led teams.

A statement issued on Fri cited international evidence that such a move could lead to improved patient outcomes and better coordination of care.

As a first step the GP groups "recommend the concept be trialled and robustly evaluated in the Australian context to get the model right and maximise the potential benefits for patients"

DISPENSARY CORNER

A BRITISH bus driver put himself into a colourful predicament last week when he accidentally grabbed his wife's expensive shampoo in the shower instead of his own cheap stuff.

32-year-old Simon Ford didn't realise that "Wild Cerise" was actually semi-permanent pink hair dye and he ended up with brightly glowing locks.

"To be honest, at first I suspected Louise had left it there on purpose to teach me a lesson," he said, with his wife apparently constantly telling him off for using her hair products.

Ford arrived at the bus depot after the early morning incident and suddenly became aware of his mistake because "everyone was laughing at me.

"Driving the bus was a nightmare and very embarrassing," he said.

THIS is certain to become a major television event.

A top Hollywood producer has apparently created a new show based on the life of a pharmacist.

Don Colcord is a graduate of the University of Colorado School of Pharmacy, and attracted the attention of producer Katie Jacobs after he was profiled in the *New Yorker* magazine some years ago.

Jacobs, who was also the producer of TV medical drama *House*, has called the new pharmacist-focused show *Dr Del*, with the plot outline detailing how fictional pharmacist Del Canyon "reluctantly returns to his small hometown to run his family's apothecary, the only source for medical attention for hundreds of miles".

The series will follow his emergence as the "town healer," saving the local citizens from a range of conditions while at the same time he grapples to distance himself from a painful past.

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This week Pharmacy Daily and Designer Brands are giving away a prize pack each day with all six limited edition shades of Designer Brands Longwear Infinite Nail Polish. This formula locks in colour and fade proof shine with just one coat. Two coats provides intense bold colour and even longer wear. These on-trend limited edition shades from the Designer Brands' Everlasting Longwear collection are perfect for the party season! Visit www.dbcosmetics.com.au

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