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De Alwis admits lying

FORMER Sigma Pharmaceuticals ceo Elmo de Alwis yesterday pleaded guilty to falsifying the firm's accounts, in a case brought after a long ASIC investigation.

Sigma's former chief financial officer, Mark Smith, also pleaded guilty to the charges, one of which related to the overstatement of Sigma's revenue, inventories, pre-payments and after-tax profit in the full year accounts to 31 Jan 2010.

Both of the defendants also indicated they would plead guilty to other pending charges relating to providing false statements to the company's board and auditors.

De Alwis, whose LinkedIn profile now lists him as gm of Generic Health (PD 20 Feb 2012) left Sigma in 2010 after the company revealed a \$424 million writedown, months after a \$300m capital raising.

Phcy at mining sites

RESEARCHERS from WA's Curtin University have begun research into the potential roles of pharmacists in medication supply and management for WA's mining sector, the Pharmacy Guild of Australia has announced.

Fly-in Fly-out (FIFO) and Drive-in Drive-out workers in Western Australia's remote mine sites are frequently unable to access medication or advice from pharmacists for weeks at a time, said the Guild, creating potentially dangerous situations.

Researchers will be canvassing ideas and opinions from pharmacists who have had contact with FIFO workers.

Workforce summit plans

THE Pharmacist Workforce Summit (PD 10 Jun) held last week at Monash University has highlighted a number of key issues relating to "enhanced utilisation of the pharmacist workforce".

The summit aimed to seek consensus on major areas affecting "pharmacists having sustainable and rewarding professional roles which contribute to the health of the Australian population".

It also sought to determine the

data that needs to be gathered and maintained to enable pharmacist workforce issues to be monitored and addressed for the future.

Restraints and barriers to demand for pharmacists in health care identified included uncertainty regarding the future, levels of remuneration, limited career development prospects and a "lack of acknowledgment of expertise as part of the healthcare team".

The summit also cited the issue of sustaining the quality of graduates with a balanced and sustainable supply of pharmacists training for future evolving roles.

The main elements of a pharmacist workforce data set were identified - tracking early career employment pathways as well as the number and distribution of vacancies - and it became apparent during the summit that much of the relevant data is already available from AIHW, AHPRA and the Department of Health.

"The next step is for the profession to work together, along with government agencies, to ensure that such data are available, collated and analysed in a timely manner," the Summit resolved.

The Pharmaceutical Society of Australia said in a statement that the Summit underscores need for a longer-term blueprint for the role of pharmacists into the future.

Antibiotic overload

RESEARCHERS from the University of Queensland (UQ) are undertaking a pilot study aiming to reduce antibiotic resistance in Australia by decreasing the quantity of antibiotics prescribed by doctors.

Most antibiotics are prescribed in a general practice setting and therefore GPs are the best way to address the problem.

"Prescribers are well-placed to convey to patients that they are twice as likely to carry resistant bacteria after a course of antibiotics as someone who has not taken them," said study co-author Professor Charles Gilks from UQ.

Resistant bacteria can persist for up to 12 months after antibiotic use, he said, but "with no further exposure to antibiotics they will disappear over time.

"In order to preserve one of medicine's most precious and long-standing resources, GPs must reduce antibiotic use and only prescribe it where appropriate," he commented.

Marty to retire

STEPHEN Marty, long-time registrar of the Victorian Pharmacy Authority (VPA), has advised that he plans to retire from the role after more than 17 years.

He will step down effective 31 Jul, with the VPA congratulating him on his achievements in administering the Pharmacy Board of Victoria, which originally employed him in 1989 as the first Education Pharmacist, a role in which he introduced the competency based assessment process at the registration examination.

"He has earned the trust and respect of governments, pharmacy organisations and the community through his broad activities," the VPA said.

Aaron Bawden, currently VPA's deputy registrar, has been appointed as Registrar with effect from 01 Aug 2015.

SHPA fact sheet

THE Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) has released a new fact sheet on risk factors for medication-related problems.

SHPA says the fact sheet could assist individual pharmacists and organisations to identify patients at greatest risk of medication-related problems, in order to target and maximise the effectiveness of a clinical pharmacy service.

See www.shpa.org.au.



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- **Pharmacist Manager** - Mid North Coast, NSW (Job# 2011430)
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- **Pharmacist in Charge** - Southern Rural QLD (Job# 2011449)
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Events Calendar

WELCOME to *Pharmacy Daily's* events calendar, opportunities to earn CPE and CPD points.

If you have an upcoming event you'd like us to feature, email info@pharmacydaily.com.au.

- 5 Jul:** Provide First Aid; Parramatta RSL Club; visit: www.psa.org.au
- 7 Jul:** Cardiovascular Update: Atrial Fibrillation and Anticoagulants; Central Coast; visit: www.guild.org.au
- 6-9 Jul:** Pharmacy Alliance Members' Forum; Honolulu USA; more details at: www.pharmacyalliance.com.au
- 10-12 Jul:** Clinical Pharmacy Practice Seminar (foundation); Mercure Hotel, Sydney; details at: www.cpd.shpa.org.au
- 14 Jul:** Making the most of your aged care services; St Leonards; details at: www.guild.org.au
- 17 Jul:** Effective Workplace Relationships workshop; AIM Brisbane; more info at: www.cpd.shpa.org.au
- 31 Jul-2 Aug:** PSA15; Sofitel Sydney Wentworth; visit: www.psa.org.au/psa15
- 7-8 Aug:** Critical Care Seminar (advanced); Rydges Sydney Central; further details at: www.cpd.shpa.org.au
- 15-16 Aug:** Medication Review Skills in Primary Care; Novotel Brisbane; more info at: www.cpd.shpa.org.au
- 20-21 Aug:** Pharmacy WA Forum; Pan Pacific Perth; details at: www.pharmacywa.com.au
- 4-5 Sep:** The Friendlies' Conference - 2015; Stamford Grand, Glenelg; more info at: www.pharmacyconference.com.au

AZ signs Adelaide Uni deal

UNIVERSITY of Adelaide researchers are being given access to fifty of global pharma giant AstraZeneca's (AZ) drug compounds to study new therapies in a groundbreaking new collaboration, the university has announced.

Adelaide Research and Innovation (ARI), the University of Adelaide's commercialisation arm, sealed the agreement which is a first for South Australia.

ARI Deputy Director Dr Jane Rathjen said the partnership will "allow for access to optimised compounds, technologies, multi-disciplinary science, services and know-how to speed up research outcomes, and most importantly the opportunity to see ideas develop into treatments for patients."

AstraZeneca and ARI will also fund successful research proposals that result from the partnership.

Therapy areas covered include cardiovascular, metabolic, respiratory, oncology, autoimmune & infection and neuroscience,

APP 2016 dates

THE Pharmacy Guild has released the dates for next year's Australian Pharmacy Professional (APP) conference, which will once again take place on the Gold Coast.

Set for 17-20 Mar 2016, the Guild has flagged "exciting changes to the conference layout, program and trade show" - follow the updates on appconference.com.

Pfizer stiffens ED competition

PFIZER is attempting to resurrect a competitive edge in the erectile dysfunction (ED) market by releasing a single-dose pack of its hallmark drug Viagra (sildenafil) in the US to augment its US\$1.3b hold on the market, IMS Health reports.

The pharma giant will also offer home delivery via CVS pharmacies.

with AZ to have first rights to commercialise any discovery made by the university researchers.

The collaboration is based on AstraZeneca's Open Innovation platform, which takes new and existing compounds out of the company's laboratories and into the hands of research centres.

"Furthering the boundaries of science is at the core of what AstraZeneca does, so we're absolutely delighted to be supporting University of Adelaide researchers who have the potential to find exciting new developments in medicine thanks to this collaboration," said AZ Australia president Paul Spittle.

Pregnancy update

THE TGA has advised of an update to the Prescribing Medicines in Pregnancy database which now includes macrogol (pregnancy category B1).

The database has also been amended with a recategorisation of influenza vaccines, with seasonal and pre-pandemic inactivated immunisations in pregnancy category B1 or B2 depending on the brand of the vaccine - for details see www.tga.gov.au.

Decoding NHMRC

REGISTRATIONS are now open for the 4th Annual NHMRC Symposium on Research Translation, which this year is being held in collaboration with the Centre for Informing Policy in Health with Evidence from Research (CIPHER) on 27-28 Oct.

Keynote speakers will be Professor Chris Ham, Chief Executive of the Kings Fund, expert in health policy and management and author of 20 books, as well as Professor John Lavis Canada Research Chair in Evidence-Informed Health Systems from McMaster University, Canada. **CLICK HERE** for more information.



DISPENSARY CORNER

OVERWEIGHT because of too much snacking? A computer game could be the answer.

A study conducted by the UK's University of Exeter found that playing the special game had some effect in helping people avoid unhealthy junk food.

Participants played the game for ten minutes four times in one week, with the object being to avoid pressing on pictures of certain images such as chocolates and biscuits.

The researchers postulated that the game was training their brains to cut out calories.

According to a report in the *Appetite* journal, the majority of the 41 overweight adults who played the game lost a small amount of weight and consumed less calories for up to six months afterwards.

AND while we're on the subject, a pair of Queen Victoria's "big pants" are expected to attract a blooming good price when they go up for auction shortly.

The cotton underwear (**pictured**) - which has a whopping 115cm waistline - goes under the hammer next week alongside a range of other intimate apparel including nightdresses and stockings worn by Her Majesty.

The items are being sold by the Yesterday' World museum in Sussex, and apparently the length of the waistband allows them to be accurately dated based on the many historic photos of Queen Victoria as she gained weight in her later years.

