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### GSK NZ Voltaren controversy

**GLAXOSMITHKLINE** is facing accusations in NZ of taking advantage of vulnerable patients by charging more for differently marketed products despite them having identical ingredients.

The controversy centres on the contrast between Voltaren Emulgel and Voltaren Osteo Gel.

Voltaren Osteo Gel is marketed as pain relief for people with osteoarthritis and costs more than the identically composed Voltaren Emulgel which is promoted as helping with muscle inflammation for sports injuries.

Voltaren Osteo Gel costs about 20% more than Emulgel, but GSK says while the products are the same, Osteo Gel has a special cap which makes it easier to open.

"We believe this provides an additional benefit for osteoarthritis sufferers who can experience difficulty and pain opening products," a spokesperson said, adding "the difference in the cap impacts the price of the product".

The issue appears similar to that faced by Reckitt Benckiser which has been slammed by the ACCC for its higher-priced 'pain specific' Nurofen range (**PD** 14 Dec 2015).

### CM maker "urgent sale"

**COMPLEMENTARY** medicines supplier Australian NaturalCare Products (ANC) has been put on the market, after its parent company Direct Wellbeing Pty Ltd was placed under external administration earlier this week.

The Administrators, Todd Gammel and Barry Taylor of accountancy firm HLB Mann Judd, have today advertised for "urgent expressions of interest for the purchase of shares" in ANC which is described as a leading direct marketer of vitamins and supplements in Australia.

ANC brands include Australian NaturalCare and Pure Vitamins, with the company offering more than 90 TGA-listed vitamins and supplements along with "500 products designed to assist the elimination of chemicals from the home environment" such as skincare and cleaning supplies.

The company also has TGA approvals and licenses for goods manufactured in accordance with pharmaceutical Good Manufacturing Practice, with a "stable and loyal customer base of over 70,000" and an annual turnover of \$17 million.

Direct Wellbeing was founded in 2011 and is based in North Ryde, Sydney, with the company's sole director being Peter Jamieson of Oyster Bay, NSW.

It's unclear why the company was placed into administration, but the administrators say the business could provide a potential acquirer with an ideal way to grow and diversify as well as offering potential from new products and expansion into Asian markets.

Expressions of interest are required by close of business on Fri 15 Apr 2016 - more information on 02 9020 4121.

### Pharmacy rosacea Rx

**PHARMACISTS** can have a key role in advising patients with papulopustular rosacea (PPR) on the use of a new anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial prescription therapy known as Soolantra Cream (ivermectin 1%), according to Sydney dermatologist Dr John Sullivan, who said the medication has been shown to provide "sustained efficacy and effectiveness in delaying relapse rates".

"Pharmacists are well placed to identify the signs and subtypes of rosacea and advise on the need to see a doctor," he said.

Soolantra has shown superior skin clearance rates to topical metronidazole, Sullivan added.

The topical product is applied on a daily basis for up to four months before assessing whether a repeat course of therapy is required.

This product is not PBS listed.

### Heart Foundation tick

**NEW** Australian Heart Foundation supported research has demonstrated that the combination of an antihypertensive and a cholesterol lowering drug (in this case the standard of care, a statin) can reduce cardiovascular disease (CVD) events by 30% with a 40% benefit in those with hypertension, suggesting that patients with hypertension should not only lower their BP but also consider taking a statin.

See [www.nejm.org](http://www.nejm.org) for details.

### Biotech buys intellect

**BIOTECH** Capital Limited has released an ASX announcement that it has acquired 100% of the current share capital in Biointellect Pty Ltd as part of the company's strategy of making active investments in life science businesses that have strong growth potential and will benefit from greater access to development capital.

Biointellect, established in 2011 by Jennifer Herz, is a Sydney-based advisory firm providing a range of development and commercialisation services for local and international companies in the biotechnology, medical device and pharmaceutical industry.

Services provided by Biointellect include clinical, regulatory, market evaluation, reimbursement strategies and partnering advice, the announcement said.

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\*When taken as a dose of 2 x 25 mg tablets Trust Difenac 25 provides pain relief for up to 8 hours. Always read the label. Use only as directed. Incorrect use may be harmful. If symptoms persist, see your healthcare professional.



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## Research advisors

**HEALTH** Minister Sussan Ley has unveiled a new advisory board, chaired by eminent scientist Ian Frazer, to advise the government on investing proceeds from the \$20 billion Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF).

The new Australian Medical Research Advisory Board will comprise leading experts in medical research and innovation, health policy and commercialisation, including experience and knowledge in philanthropy, consumer issues and translating research into frontline health care services.

"Through their expert and independent advice to the Government, the Advisory Board will play a key role in delivering on the MRFF's agenda to support our world-class researchers and reinforce our nation's great research reputation," Ley said.

She said the MRFF is the single largest investment in medical research ever made in Australia, with appointees including Professor Peter Høj from The University of Queensland, Professor Doug Hilton of the AAMRI and University of Melbourne, Professor Karen Reynolds from Flinders University, Dr Deborah Rathjen md of Biomedics Corporation in SA, Mr Yasser El-Ansary of the Australian Private Equity and Venture Capital Association, Ms Jennifer Williams formerly of the Australian Red Cross Blood Service and Professor Anne Kelso, ceo of the NHMRC.

## Reforms for asthma urged

"**RADICAL** steps" are required to address a culture of over-reliance on asthma relievers and under-treatment of underlying airway inflammation in many asthma patients, according to an article in the *Medical Journal of Australia* published earlier this week.

Clinicians from Melbourne's The Alfred Hospital have suggested making preventer medications available over the counter, but also restricting OTC dispensing of relievers without preventers.

They also urged an increase in the Medicare rebate for asthma reviews in general practice, to reflect realistic consultation times so doctors can have an "empathetic conversation" with patients.

### New lipids therapy

**EVOLUCUMAB**, marketed as Repatha in Australia, has been hailed as a major advance in the battle to manage a genetic type of high cholesterol, called familial hypercholesterolaemia, according to a presentation at the American College of Cardiology conference, the Heart Foundation national ceo Professor Garry Jennings has said.

"In Australia 80% of the 77,000 people predicted to have familial hypercholesterolaemia are undiagnosed," he said, and this new drug will work alongside statins which still confer reduced risk of heart attack for people with high cholesterol.

The proposals are a response to a recent *MJA* survey which raised concerns at the extent of uncontrolled asthma in the general population, suggesting up to one million Australians are affected.

Key issues include convincing patients to take preventer medications even when they are asymptomatic, to reduce their risk of serious asthma flare-ups.

"It doesn't seem like a good solution to them, when the reliever is cheaper and fast-acting and they can access it without going to the doctor," said Associate Professor Helen Reddel of the Woolcock Institute of Medical Research.

She said making a combined reliever-preventer inhaler available for as-needed use was a promising suggestion which is currently being investigated in four studies.

"Just getting a tiny dose of preventer on most days can reduce the risk of asthma-related death by half," Reddel said.

## AMA urges real-time script monitoring

**TONY** Bartone, the Vic president of the Australian Medical Association, has renewed calls for a real-time prescription monitoring system after a Coroner's Court report showed prescription drugs contributed to 330 of the state's 420 overdose deaths last year.

According to the report benzodiazepines such as diazepam were the drugs most frequently contributing to overdose; whilst opiate-based medications such as codeine and methadone were involved in 183 deaths last year.

The report found heroin was the most deadliest illicit drug last year, killing 168 Victorians in 2015.

The AMA has long urged the introduction of a real-time monitoring system, having first advocated for the technology in a Drug and Alcohol Strategy submission as early as 2011 to stop "doctor shopping," misuse and overdoses from prescription drugs.

## TGA Medicines Safety update

**THE** Therapeutic Goods Administration has provided its latest Medicines Safety Update with a summary of changes to date around medicine naming policies.

A number of medicine ingredient names are being changed to align with names used internationally as part of an international harmonisation program announced last year (**PD** 25 Nov 15).

The four year transition period for the changes will run from now until Apr 2020, with some changes minor such as changing a 'y' to an 'i' and will not affect pronunciation.

More significant changes include the treatment of adrenaline and noradrenaline which will remain as approved names in Australia, with the international name (epinephrine and norepinephrine respectively) in brackets after the name.

New ingredient names will start to appear on medicine labels, in product information and consumer medicine information leaflets as well as in dispensing software from this month.

Pharmacists are asked to reassure patients that only the name of the ingredient has been changed, with no alteration to the medicine's formulation, quality, safety or efficacy.

The full list of affected ingredients is online at [www.tga.gov.au](http://www.tga.gov.au).

**MEANWHILE** other items covered in the safety update include Xgeva (denosumab) which is now contradicted in patients with unhealed lesions from dental or oral surgery due to increased risk of osteonecrosis of the jaw, with the TGA saying it will work with the sponsor to add this contradiction to the Australian PI.

Erlotinib has a change in indication restricting its use for maintenance therapy to patients with EGFR mutations only.

The PI for ibrutinib, which is marketed in Australia as Imbruvica, a selective and covalent inhibitor of Bruton's tyrosine kinase, has new restrictions related to the product's tendency to hepatotoxicity, with recommendations for intervention.

**CLICK HERE** for details.

## WIN WITH PLUNKETTS

This week Pharmacy Daily and Plunketts are giving away a John Plunkett Dark Spot Eraser and Facial Cleanser everyday.

New John Plunkett Dark Spot Eraser is a concentrated serum with Eventone Complex™ – a blend of multiple actives to visibly lighten pigmentation and boost your skin's health and radiance, plus it's easy to incorporate into your daily skincare routine with guaranteed results. RRP \$39.95. Visit: [www.JohnPlunkett.com.au](http://www.JohnPlunkett.com.au)

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

In which country is John Plunkett Dark Spot Eraser made?

Congratulations to yesterday's winner, Gayle Mennilli from Greenslopes Private Hospital.





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## Health, Beauty and New Products

Welcome to our weekly promoted feature with all the latest health, beauty and new products for pharmacy.

Suppliers wanting to promote products in this feature should email [newproducts@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:newproducts@pharmacydaily.com.au)

### Blistop by Dermal Therapy for blister prevention

Dermal Therapy **Blistop** is a blister prevention spray that creates an invisible, water-resistant layer of film designed to protect the skin on feet and hands where blisters can occur as a result of friction. Convenient and easy to use, this product stays in place and won't rub off easily or leave residue on your socks and shoes. It acts like a second skin and dries on totally transparent so that you are able to wear the shoes of your choice and feel confident and pain free all day long.

**Stockist:** major pharmaceutical wholesalers

**RRP:** \$9.95

**Website:** [www.dermalththerapy.com.au](http://www.dermalththerapy.com.au)



### New Wartie Advanced - a new level of freezing power

Stubborn mature warts found on the hands and feet can be difficult and frustrating to remove as they often lie beneath a layer of calloused skin and require deeper freezing. **Wartie Advanced** is a precise, easy to use cryotherapy product which introduces a new level of freezing performance specifically for treating these stubborn mature and plantar warts. The precision tip enables accurate treatment without damage to surrounding skin. Foam plasters are included to reduce pressure and alleviate the discomfort of treating a plantar wart. Suitable for ages 12+.

**Stockist:** 02 8113 6245

**RRP:** \$32.95

**Website:** [www.wartie.com.au](http://www.wartie.com.au)

### 100% Color by Garnier

This permanent hair colour contains pure pigments and micro minerals to achieve deep, long-lasting colour. Formulated into a cream-gel, the colourant in Garnier's **100% Color** penetrates the hair fibre to achieve rich hair colour. Shades available: Intense Golden Brown, Intense Brown, Intense Dark Brown, Intense Deep Brown, Intense Mahogany Brown, Intense Red Auburn, Intense Deep Red, Intense Deep Burgundy, Intense Black, Intense Blue Black and Frosted Deep Brown.

**Stockist:** 1300 659 259

**RRP:** \$14.95

**Website:** [www.garnier.com.au](http://www.garnier.com.au)



### Clean & Clear Advantage Blackhead Clearing Scrub

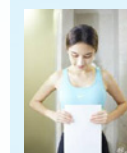
Clean & Clear **Advantage Blackhead Clearing Scrub** works more on the areas that need it most without over-drying the skin. The unique blend of beads break down trapped dirt, oil and dead skin cells that can cause blackheads. The cleansing ingredients deposit into the skin, working deep down to clear pores to help fight blackheads, the company says.

**Stockist:** major pharmaceutical wholesalers

**RRP:** \$6.99

**Website:** [www.ulta.com](http://www.ulta.com)

## DISPENSARY CORNER



**A BIZARRE 'fitness' craze** is sweeping through China, prompting women to compete online to achieve a "paper-thin" physique.

Dubbed **#A4Waist**, the latest challenge to hit Chinese micro-blogging website, Weibo, prompts women to hold vertically an A4 sheet of paper in front of their waists to see if they can fit within the dimensions.

Government organisations have also jumped on board, with verified police force accounts jumping on board by posting photos of attractive employees holding up A4 sheets of paper.

Instagram and Twitter users (blocked in China) took to mocking the trend, taking similar photos holding university degrees hash-tagged **#doesthisdegreemakemelookfat?**

Others held the paper horizontally, jokingly asking "am I doing this right?"

**UK gym, Fit4less**, has been slammed for fat shaming after erecting a giant billboard saying that when aliens come to earth, fat people will be the first to be abducted.

The 6 metre high poster has attracted wide-spread criticism, with British parliamentary adviser, Natalie Harvey, saying "I couldn't believe it when I saw it, it's 2016 - this sort of fat shaming humour is offensive".

Fit4less have defended their campaign, with its chief executive officer refusing to take the billboard down.

