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NZ OTC pill repeats

COMMUNITY pharmacists in New Zealand will be able to provide repeat supplies of selected oral contraceptives, under a new recommendation by the NZ Ministry of Health's Medicines Classification Committee.

The move is set to come into effect on 09 Feb, with the medicines reclassified as "restricted" meaning pharmacists can dispense repeats to women who have had them prescribed within the previous three years.

NZ Guild ceo Lee Hohaia said "pharmacists are already providing a number of health services to their local communities cost effectively, efficiently and conveniently and we strongly support the move towards making medicine such as oral contraceptives more conveniently accessible to women".

Hohaia said access would be improved over weekends and public holidays due to the longer hours of operation of pharmacies.

The Medicines Classification Committee (MCC) also recommended a change to flu vaccinations, making them available from a trained pharmacist to people from the age of 13 years instead of 18 and over.

"Community pharmacy is ideally placed and qualified to be providing these extended services to their patients and we are extremely pleased to see MCC support community pharmacy in playing a greater role in primary health care," Hohaia added.

Pharmacy key for Saxenda



PHARMACIES across Australia are being invited to take part in a comprehensive patient weight loss support program launched on Fri by Novo Nordisk.

The program is based around Saxenda (liraglutide) which is a once-daily glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) analogue self-injection used for appetite regulation (PD Fri).

Participating pharmacies will be promoted as "Saxenda Network Pharmacies," complementing initiatives to highlight the new obesity option to prescribers.

Saxenda comes in a prefilled pen, and patients in the program will be provided needles for the system at no charge when redeemed at Saxenda Network Pharmacies.

Available on private prescription, doctors will identify suitable patients and advise them of the private prescription cost of the item which is about \$387 per month.

The first month's supply from the GP is free, and participating pharmacies may also be able to

claim a professional service fee of \$22.36 by agreeing to deliver additional care to the patient.

The Saxenda Pharmacy Program is a free information and support service for patients who have been prescribed the medication by their doctor and enrolled in the scheme.

It aims to ensure better compliance to the medicine, along with timely access to information and additional value in the form of the free needles.

Several banner groups have already signed up for the program including Terry White Chemists and Blooms The Chemist.

The program has been developed with the assistance of Kos Sclavos from Sinapse, who said it would "help pharmacists better engage with patients on their weight management journey."

Pharmacies wanting to register for the program can call 1800 668 626.

Pictured at the launch on Fri are, from left: Eden Simon, Ventura Health; Maxine Hogan, Novo Nordisk; Andrew Biady, Blooms The Chemist; Andrew Rolls, Novo Nordisk; & Kos Sclavos, Sinapse.

Flu vaccines update

THE TGA has published an update on influenza vaccines and following adverse events including anaphylactic reaction, angioedema, asthma/bronchospasm, urticaria and hypersensitivity.

Go to www.tga.gov.au for more.

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Weekly Comment

Welcome to *PD's* weekly comment feature. This week's contributor is **Aine Heaney, Pharmacist and Client Relations Manager, Medicines, NPS MedicineWise.**



Beyond antidepressants

MOST patients I speak to want to know if there are non-drug options to manage their conditions.

Psychological treatments such as cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) and interpersonal psychotherapy (IPT) are more effective than antidepressants in mild depression and equally effective in moderate depression. Supportive approaches (e.g. online CBT, behavioural activation, relaxation techniques) can also be effective and can form part of a broader management plan.

As pharmacists we should support non-drug options for managing depression by discussing these strategies with patients and reinforcing their importance in treatment. Most patients with depression could also benefit from healthy lifestyle changes. Pharmacists are well placed to promote lifestyle approaches to all patients, including physical exercise, a healthy diet, limiting alcohol intake, and involvement in social activities and events.

Pharmacists can help support adherence to therapies, pharmacological and non-pharmacological, by encouraging patients to be actively involved in their treatment decisions and working together with GPs and other healthcare professionals to reduce information barriers and reinforce management plans with patients.

For more information, see the February 2016 NPS Medicinewise News at nps.org.au/news-depression-2016 or direct patients to evidence-based websites such as beyondblue.org.au and blackdoginstitute.org.au, for consumer-friendly information, resources and support services.

Pharmacy vaccination push

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia says it will continue to advocate nationally for pharmacist-administered vaccination programs this year, following three state-approved changes to legislation.

Since 2015, trained and approved pharmacists in NSW, SA and WA have been administering the influenza vaccine to healthy adults, the Guild said.

Northern Territory and Queensland pharmacies have also been administering influenza, measles and whooping cough vaccines to eligible adults when part of the official trial program.

On 05 Dec 2013 the Pharmacy Board of Australia announced that vaccination was within the current scope of practice of pharmacists following work undertaken on its behalf by the then Advanced Pharmacy Practice Framework Steering Committee and with consultation with the Guild.

The Guild said it is hopeful that legislation in ACT and Tasmania will be amended in time to enable pharmacist-administered influenza vaccines this season and Victoria in time for the 2017 influenza season.

New cancer therapies

BRISTOL-MYERS Squibb has announced that the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has approved Opdivo (nivolumab) for management of difficult-to-treat malignancies: advanced lung cancer and advanced melanoma under specific circumstances.

MEANWHILE Novartis has announced the PBS funding of the first JAK inhibitor approved by the TGA for rare blood cancer myelofibrosis, with specific restrictions applying.

Jakavi (ruxolitinib) is available from today, the company said.

Stroke Foundation ceo

THE National Stroke Foundation has appointed Sharon McGowan as its new chief executive officer.

McGowan, previously executive director of communications at Melbourne Health, replaces Erin Lalor who's been ceo of the Foundation since 2002.

Biosimilar framework

THE Health Department has released an updated implementation framework for Biosimilar Awareness, based on feedback provided during a consultation last Oct - to view see www.pbs.gov.au.

DISPENSARY CORNER



HOW would you like to be remembered at your funeral?

Most opt for some sort of review of their life, and these days technology enables a big screen historical record of life highlights including pictures of relatives and events.

Cardiff Council funeral parlour is licking its wounds after a major gaffe when its smart television screen showed some hard core pornography instead of playing the planned life record.

Various media reports claimed the video was playing for up to four minutes as the new device streamed the action - perhaps via bluetooth or Wi-Fi.

Reverend Lionel Fanthorpe officiating, told the *Independent* he was looking at the congregation not the TV screen, "but when I heard this noise and members of the congregation moving towards the screen, I realised something was wrong".

DON'T sweat the small stuff.

Your perspiration can reveal a lot about your state of health according to researchers at the University of California Berkeley in a study published this month in the *Nature* journal.

They have developed a new wearable sensor that monitors a person's bodily secretions, providing detailed real-time information about an individual's metabolites, including glucose and electrolytes such as potassium and sodium - all useful information for disease diagnosis, drug detection and performance optimisation.

The skin-conforming, plastic-based sensors - which they're humorously describing as a "SweatBit" - contain silicon-based circuits and can be worn on the arms or forehead.

Win with Efamol

This week *Pharmacy Daily* and Efamol are giving away a bottle of Efamol Efalex Original Brain Formula 240 capsules each day.

Efamol Efalex with omega nutrients from fish oil and evening primrose oil may assist cognitive process such as learning and concentration. Always read the label. Use only as directed. CHC70544-04/15. To find out more visit www.planethealth.com.au



To win, be the first person from **NSW** or **ACT** to send the correct answer to comp@pharmacydaily.com.au

What is the Efamol Brain formula made from?

Check here tomorrow for today's winner.

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