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Alcohol labelling plan

A NEW alcohol labelling initiative launched yesterday will make it easier for packaging to reflect warnings for pregnant women.

Members of the Winemakers' Federation of Australia will register their labels with DrinkWise Australia, which then in turn sends warnings related to alcohol consumption while pregnant directly to the winemakers packaging firm for easier labelling.

The government has given the alcoholic beverage industry two years to adopt voluntary regulation on labels before making the changes mandatory.

Dutch pharmacy deal

A US-BASED private equity firm has announced a US\$1 billion bid for Netherlands pharmacy chain Mediq NV which owns 226 pharmacies across the country.

Mediq, which was founded in 1899, also distributes drugs and medical devices in 15 countries including Germany, Sweden, Poland and the USA.

Irritable bowel move

THE European Medicines Agency has recommended authorisation of the EU's first medicine specifically for the symptomatic treatment of irritable bowel syndrome.

Constella (linaclotide) is indicated for adults with moderate to severe IBS with constipation.

It's a new synthetic 14-amino-acid peptide which works by increasing the secretion of fluid in the intestine and accelerating the movement of material in the gut.

Priceline now 350 stores

AUSTRALIAN Pharmaceutical Industries yesterday announced the expansion of its Priceline network to 350 stores across the country, with ceo Stephen Roche saying it's a "significant vote of confidence by Australian pharmacists in the Priceline Pharmacy proposition".

Of the 350-strong total, around 200 are Priceline Pharmacy franchisees (PD 18 Sep), with the rest being company-owned stores which do not dispense medicines.

He said that API was also in "advanced discussions" with a further 20 potential Priceline franchisees.

"We are experiencing a marked increase in interest from pharmacists in joining Priceline Pharmacy," Roche added.

"This is due to our proven ability to deliver sustainable profit results

for our franchisees in the non-dispensary area of the store and our commitment to strengthening the community pharmacy role".

Roche highlighted Priceline's strong focus on the health and beauty needs of women as well as the Sister Club loyalty program, which now has more than 3.9 million members.

He said this made Priceline Pharmacy a compelling proposition in the face of increasing competition from supermarkets and discounters, and the accelerating decline in PBS revenue.

"Given that the environment will only get tougher in the next two to three years, we fully expect pharmacists' interest in joining the Priceline Pharmacy network to continue to be strong," he added.

Digital pill dispenser

BAYER'S Yaz Flex can now be prescribed in Australia, providing women with an approved oral contraceptive with a flexible extended regimen that can be used continuously for up to 120 days.

Yaz Flex thus gives women the option to delay their period for up to four months, and comes with a "Clyk" digital tablet dispenser which provides reminders and advises actions to be taken should one or more pills be missed.

Yaz Flex is a low-dose combined oral contraceptive containing drospirone 3mg and ethinyl estradiol 20ug.

The Clyk dispenser stores up to 30 Yaz Flex pills, and is available from today either in a starter kit from prescribers or direct from Bayer.

There's also an associated website at www.myperiods.com.au.

Arthritis recording

PHARMACISTS and patients who were unable to attend the recent Arthritis NSW online "webinar" can purchase access to the recording of the session.

The shoulder pain and arthritis webinar was presented by Dr Judy Chen, a physiotherapist who specialises in shoulders.

It looked at the anatomy of the shoulder joint and how it is affected by arthritis, as well as how to manage pain.

The recording is available via the internet until 24 Oct, and costs \$15 for Arthritis Australia members and \$20 for non-members.

See www.arthritisnsw.org.au.

WANT TO LOOK GOOD NAKED?

Everyday this week PD is giving one lucky reader the chance to win a TanTowel pack, courtesy of **Lightning Brokers**

- a national pharmaceutical brokerage that builds your business.

Look good naked with TanTowel! The pack, valued at \$131, includes the

full sunless tan range - the Half Body Classic (for medium to lighter skin tones), the Half Body Plus (for darker skin tones), the On the Glow (for your handbag), the On the Glow Moisturiser and the X-Foliator Towelettes.

For your chance to win, be the first person to send through the correct answer to the question below.

When was TanTowel started?

Email your answer to: comp@pharmacydaily.com.au
Hint! Visit www.tantowel.com.au

Congratulations to yesterday's winner **Desiree Elkhoury**, from **Flinders Medical Centre!**



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Guild Update

Assistance wanted on assistants

THE Guild is proud of its record in providing training to thousands of pharmacy assistants, over many years.

Pharmacy assistants are very often the first point of contact for consumers who visit a pharmacy – and first impressions are always important.

It is most important that they are trained to the best standards, particularly in relation to understanding of the medicine schedules.

The Guild is currently undertaking an evaluation of its pharmacy assistant training program and invites community pharmacy owners to participate.

Telephone interviews with Guild members are being conducted to understand members' experiences, attitudes and perceptions toward Guild Training.

All information will be treated as strictly confidential.

The research is being conducted on behalf of the Guild by independent research firm Andrews Group.

If you are a Guild member who is interested in participating in the survey, please contact Jillian Harriott at Andrews Group by email on jillian@andrewsgroup.com.au or (03) 9654 4480.



The Pharmacy Guild of Australia

FDA focuses on antibiotics

THE US Food and Drug Administration has announced the formation of an "internal task force" to support the development of new antibacterial drugs.

The move is part of the Generating Antibiotic Incentives Now (GAIN) initiative under the new Food and Drug Administration Safety and Innovation Act.

The FDA said research and development for new antibacterial drugs had been in decline in recent decades, with the number of new FDA-approved antibiotics falling steadily since the 1980s.

"During this time the persistent and sometimes indiscriminate use of existing antibacterial drugs worldwide has resulted in a decrease in the effectiveness of these drugs," the FDA said.

Antibiotic resistance has become a "serious issue of global concern," with more than 70% of the bacteria which cause hospital-associated infections being resistant to at least one type of antibacterial drug.

The task force is a multidisciplinary

Conscience case in US

A COURT in the US state of Illinois has upheld a ruling that pharmacists cannot be forced to dispense emergency contraceptive drugs.

The long-running case was first initiated in 2005 when the then state governor issued a rule that mandated the availability of the morning after pill via pharmacies.

Last Fri an appeals court ruled that the two pharmacists and their pharmacies which were fighting the case fall under the protection of the Illinois Helath Care Right of Conscience Act.

The judge also concluded that emergency contraceptives do not constitute "emergency medical care".

group of 19 scientists and clinicians who will link with other experts in the field including from industry, academia, patient advocacy groups, professional societies and government agencies.

It has been asked to explore novel scientific approaches to facilitate antibacterial drug development, such as the broader use of clinical pharmacology data, statistical methods, innovative clinical trial designs, use of additional available data sources and the "advancement of alternative measures to evaluate clinical effectiveness of potential new therapies".

The group will also identify issues relating to unmet medical needs for antibacterial drugs, and why there is a lack of a robust pipeline for antibacterial drug development.

See www.fda.gov.

European clinical trials

THE UK Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency has launched a new 'Good Clinical Practice Guide' which covers the legislation, guidance and good practice relating to the conduct of clinical trials of medicinal products for human use in the UK.

The guide references European legislation and guidance as well as international standards, and covers a range of areas including sponsor oversight, applying for authorisations, and Ethics Committee opinions.

There are also extensive practical details of the conduct and management of clinical trials including documentation, management of data, safety reporting and quality systems.

It's available in paperback form from The Stationery Office for £45 - see www.tsoshop.co.uk.

DISPENSARY CORNER



A MAJOR public health alert in Zimbabwe has seen the community urged to join the so-called "big flush".

The residents of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe's second biggest city, have been asked to simultaneously flush their toilets at 7.30pm each Mon and Thu in order to help clear waste which has accumulated in sewers during several days of water shortages.

A spokesperson for the city, Nesisa Mpofu, said that residents were also allowed to flush at other times, countering confusion from some people who had mistakenly thought they were only allowed to flush twice a week.

Mpofu said the synchronised flushing would help the "old and overburdened" sanitation system to cope with increasing demands from the growing population.

Civic activists criticised the solution as "ridiculous".

THIS could be an extreme way to fight the effects of ageing.

A Korean scientist has discovered a strong correlation between longevity and castration, after studying records from the country's royal history.

Until the late 19th century Korean rules apparently employed eunuchs to serve in the royal court, with the genealogical records contained in the Yang-S-Guye-Bo document dating back to the 1600s.

Kyung-Jin Min and his colleagues from Inha University pored over the data and found that the eunuchs lived 14-19 years longer than their uncastrated contemporaries.

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