

Guild Update

This week's update from the Guild Codeine

THE upcoming changes to the scheduling of analgesic products containing codeine has begun to attract attention from general media, with articles appearing in a variety of news publications.

This increased exposure is expected to lead to customer enquiries in community pharmacies, as members of the public seek information and advice on how the changes might affect them.

This means it is very important that all pharmacists and pharmacy staff fully understand the changes.

As of 1 May 2010 analgesic products containing codeine:

- will **not** be available under Schedule 2 (*Pharmacy Medicine*)
 - which contain up to five days treatment with a maximum dosage unit of 12mg codeine will be available under Schedule 3 (*Pharmacist Only Medicine*)
 - in larger pack sizes (i.e. greater than five days' treatment) and/or higher strengths of codeine (i.e. greater than 12mg codeine) will only be available by prescription.
- Information about the changes and how to prepare your pharmacy is available at www.guild.org.au by clicking the "Codeine schedule changes" buttons near the bottom of the page.

The Guild also advises pharmacy owners and managers to remain aware of the following key issues:

- **Ordering** – Larger packs (greater than five days' supply) will be *Prescription Only* from 1 May 2010; review your ordering procedures so that you are not caught out with stock that can't be moved.
 - **Supply** – Prior to 1 May 2010, ensure staff members are aware of their professional responsibilities with regard to supply of analgesics. Discourage stockpiling by patients and consider developing an in-pharmacy policy for dealing with requests for multiple packs.
- For further information about the quality use of codeine containing analgesics, go to:
www.managepain.com.au or
www.nps.org.au.



The Pharmacy Guild of Australia

Board looks into prescribing

THE new National Pharmacy Board of Australia will meet with representatives of other groups including nurses, optometrists and podiatrists "to discuss membership and terms of reference for an advisory group to consider non-medical prescribing".

The move was revealed in the minutes of the Board's last meeting about a month ago which were published yesterday.

As previously advised, the Board has decided not to proceed with endorsement of registration of pharmacists to prescribe prior to the commencement of the national scheme, "but will further consider this issue in due course".

FDA Rotarix warning

THE US Food and Drug Administration is recommending healthcare providers suspend the use of the Rotarix rotavirus immunisation vaccine for infants, pending the results of its investigation into reports regarding components of an extraneous virus detected in the vaccine.

According to the agency a research team using a novel approach found DNA from the porcine circovirus 1 (PCV1) in Rotarix, a finding which has now been confirmed by the FDA and GlaxoSmithKline.

This strain is not known to cause illness in either animals or humans, and according to new findings by GSK has been present in the vaccine from its earliest stages of development and right through clinical testing.

"There is no evidence at this time that there is a safety concern," said FDA spokesperson Dr. Margaret A. Hamburg.

"[The] FDA is recommending that clinicians temporarily suspend use of Rotarix until we can learn more about the situation.

"We will keep the public and the clinical community updated on our findings," she added.

The oral vaccine is typically given to infants to prevent the rotavirus which causes diarrhea and dehydration and kills around 500,000 babies per annum.

Healthcare providers are being advised that there is an alternate oral rotavirus vaccine, RotaTech, which has no traces of PCV1.

At the meeting the Board also considered the move to national registration, and has agreed to work with existing State and Territory boards to make the transition to the new national scheme as simple as possible.

Pharmacists with registration renewal due around 01 Jul - when the new program comes into effect - are being encouraged to renew early, with detailed information on transition to be sent out to every registrant across the country towards the end of next month.

The Board also noted that "given the wider definition of practice [under the national legislation] some pharmacists currently holding non-practising registration may need to transfer to general registration".

Registration fees for 2010-11 will be determined at the Board's next meeting this month and advised to the profession in April.

GPs push e-Health

THE Royal Australian College of General Practitioners has today urged politicians to make e-health and the implementation of the national Healthcare Identifiers scheme a top priority.

"Without improvements in e-health and medical information management systems, we will continue to expose patients to unnecessary risks, including adverse events and medication errors," said RACGP President, Chris Mitchell.

"Major cost saving can be achieved from a reduced number of tests and better management of chronic diseases supported by evidence-based guidelines," he said.

The College is setting up an 'E-Health Futures' display at its offices in South Melbourne as a "hands-on experience of how e-health systems will work in general practice".

Good fat is good

A STUDY published by the Harvard Medical School in the US has shown that replacing saturated fats with polyunsaturated can cut the risk of heart disease by 20%.

The meta-analysis looked at the findings of eight earlier studies covering more than 13,000 people, finding significant benefits from healthier fish or vegetable oils.

Sigma forced to defend itself to ASX

SIGMA Pharmaceuticals has formally responded to a request from the Australian Stock Exchange over the ongoing delay in the delivery of its full year accounts and the suspension of its shares.

The ASX wrote to Sigma yesterday after the company announced that rather than delivering its full year figures today, they would only be finalised before the end of the month.

Sigma said the additional time is required because of a number of factors, including "various unresolved issues arising in the course of the audit of the company's financial statements."

The company also confirmed continuing negotiations with lenders which have become necessary as a result of worse than expected financial results, a reduction in expected cash flows particularly in the generics business, and "the resultant material reduction in the carrying amount of goodwill recognised in the Company's balance sheet".

Sigma said that the ongoing suspension of its shares, "while regrettable," is necessary to ensure that trading in the shares only occurs in the context of a fully informed market.

"The company recognises that its shareholders want clarification as soon as possible and it is working with auditors as expeditiously as possible to provide final earnings guidance," Sigma said.

Diversion charges

AUTHORITIES in the USA have indicted three men on charges of diversion of prescription drugs, in a scheme which aimed to defraud health insurance companies.

The FDA Office of Criminal Investigations said the fraud involved purchasing prescription drugs on the street, with beneficiaries of a public or private health insurance plan obtaining scripts for drugs they don't need.

The "patient" then sells the drugs to pharmacies or wholesale distributors, who then on-sell the drugs to individuals.

The US Attorney is alleging that the defendants grossed more than US\$13 million as the result of the scam, and says they face maximum sentences of 20 years in prison.

Accounting
Legal
Financing
Investments

Stay across it all with advice that matters.



10,000 iTherapeutics

ONLINE training provider iTherapeutics has reached a milestone, enlisting its 10,000th member since its Sep 08 launch.

Current members hail from over 3105 pharmacies nationwide, and have completed around 76,500 training modules spanning 37 products across 16 participating companies.

Free online training modules feature presentations with full multimedia capability including voiceovers, video clips, animation and interactive quizzes.

Upon module completion members receive a certificate, sample products and in some cases prizes.

Phil Lane, marketing and sales mgr at MG Nutritionals, said the effectiveness and efficiency of iTherapeutics in accessing and educating pharmacy assistants and staff on his company's products meant the training module system was "now entrenched as a vital element of our brand positioning and recognition."

To sign up for iTherapeutics go to www.itherapeutics.com.au.

US health reform impacts

THE new US healthcare reform legislation that was passed yesterday is a "double edged sword" for the branded pharmaceutical industry, according to data analysis firm, Datamonitor.

A new report from Datamonitor has praised the passage of the reforms saying that overall the industry will benefit, but that there are also potential short and long term dangers of the deal.

Of the short term dangers, Datamonitor suggests that the imposition of new pharmaceutical discounts and rebates coupled with a hike in industry fees will lead to a market dip.

"This couldn't come at a worse time for an industry facing patent expiries in 2011 that are set to wipe tens of billions of dollars off annual revenue," a statement from the company said.

Datamonitor has forecast that this decline will abate by 2015 when the rise in the number of insured Americans increases, and more citizens buy and take their

prescribed medications.

Generic drug manufacturers will also be stung in the short term, due to the 12 year exclusive branded biologics deal provided for in the legislation.

According to Datamonitor this deal will be offset by Obama's "pro-generics" political stance, which has resulted in the new deal set to create a rise in generics sales volumes for more insured patients as well as more stringent cost-containment pressures placed on the system by the government.

Datamonitor also added that the new bill which stipulates a ban on the refusal of insurance for citizens on the basis of pre-existing medical conditions, will hit health insurers hard, despite the predicted rise in insurance uptake created by the new bill.

Nappies go online

KIMBERLY-Clark has begun a shift in its Huggies consumer marketing, with the launch of a new online marketing campaign directed at pregnant women.

"There are a lot of places mums could go for information and we wanted to define what we could offer," said Kimberly-Clark head of marketing for baby and childcare, Alison Holland.

The move comes as a result of the baby boom forecasts, with Kimberly-Clark hoping to get a jump on the market by getting into the minds of prospective parents.

The company has said that it will also be tracking mother's website usage and would be "offering ourselves as a resource".

Med safety video

CHANGE Champions is offering the ability to download highlights of its third 'Improving Medication Safety Seminar' held in Sydney earlier this month in video presentation format.

The videos are fully edited and are available in two options - 'Watch Now' or 'Download'.

The cost for each of the presentations in the 'Watch Now' format varies between \$6.60 and \$13.20 and the cost for each of the 'Download' presentations varies between \$11 and \$22.

For more information see www.changechampions.com.au.



DISPENSARY CORNER

THE birth place of Jazz.

A proud new mother has named her newly delivered baby boy Jazz after he was born safe and sound on the back seat of a Honda Jazz hatchback.

The mother-to-be, Sarah O'Connor, made it all the way to Hong Kong's Prince of Wales Hospital in her little Jazz.

However as she stumbled through the car-park hospital staffers rushed out to help her and quickly realized she was not going to make it.

They bundled her back into the vehicle and helped her deliver Liran Jazz into the world.

Recovering from the unusual ordeal in the hospital both mother and baby are doing well, with new father Paul telling media that "Honda show how you can get a surf board or a washing machine in the back of a Jazz - but I haven't seen any adverts saying you can give birth in one too."

DON'T disturb those sleeping teenagers if you want them to do well at school.

A high school in the UK has started ringing the bell for its first classes at 10am, in response to research showing letting students sleep in helped them to perform better in exams.

Lateness dropped by 8% and long-term absences were reduced by 27% at the school, with teenage body clocks appearing to run slower than those of adults.

A NATIONAL park in Ireland has formally banned horse drawn carts after months of arguments over owners refusal to fit their horse with nappies to deal with the copious amounts of dung left lying around.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service said that it had "taken action" against the carts because of a rise in the amount of park usage, due in part to tourism, and the subsequent rise in droppings.

Specialist 'equine sanitary devises' were suggested as a means to deal with the dung, however cart operators rejected their introduction saying that they would 'unbalance the cart'.

WIN A FOREVER MATTE GIFT



CONGRATULATIONS to Marnie Bateman of Sigma Pharmaceuticals who's won a Forever Matte product by correctly answering yesterday's competition as 'Provincial Browns and Platinum Privilege'.

Total Beauty Network has teamed up with *Pharmacy Daily* this week, giving readers the chance to win a

Forever Matte product.

Matte make up is the hottest trend - it doesn't mean that your make up becomes flat or boring, instead think of it as sheer or satiny.

It definitely tones down any dewiness or sparkle.

The Forever Matter collection includes Mineral Powder Foundation, Eyeshadow, Lipstick and both lip and eye pencils.

For your chance to win a Forever Matte product this week, simply send through the correct answer to the daily question below:

Finish this sentence "A true colour, long lasting....."

Send entry to: comp@pharmacydaily.com.au.

The first correct entry received each day will win.

Hint! Visit www.tbn.com.au.