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Pharmacies selling fake Viagra

Nick O'Donoghue

PHARMACISTS are being warned of the penalties they could face for supplying counterfeit products after a batch of fake erectile dysfunction drug Viagra was discovered in pharmacies.

Boxes containing the counterfeit medication have been found at a number of pharmacies across NSW, the ACT and Victoria since Viagra distributor Pfizer Australia first contacted the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) on 11 June.

A statement from Pfizer said the counterfeit packets of four Viagra 100mg tablets were not sourced from the company.

A TGA spokeswoman told *Pharmacy eNews* pharmacists who intentionally supplied the counterfeit drugs could face severe penalties.

"TGA is actively pursuing the



VIAGRA: Counterfeit drugs found in pharmacies.

matter. The Therapeutic Goods Act 1989 has severe penalties for supply of counterfeit products, including jail terms of up to five years," she said.

Pfizer has written to pharmacists to warn them of the counterfeit batch of Viagra, urging them to monitor their supplies and quarantine any packets with the batch number 314 833 021 and an expiry date of 04/2012.

The counterfeit batch was discovered after complaints were

made over the efficacy of the drugs rather than adverse events.

"There is no evidence to date to indicate this counterfeit product is harmful.

"Complaints received by Pfizer have so far only indicated a lack of overall efficacy of the product," the spokeswoman said.

A TGA investigation has been set up in an attempt to identify the source of the fake supply.

"The TGA is urgently investigating the source of the counterfeit Viagra.

"The TGA has analysed a number of the counterfeit tablets and has found that sildenafil is present but not in the correct dose," the TGA said.

A spokesman for the Pharmacy Guild of Australia told *Pharmacy eNews* it was concerned about the case, but described it as an "isolated occurrence".

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Asthma patients set for long and tough winter

EARLY WARNING signs point to a tough cold and flu season ahead for Australians with asthma, according to leading respiratory experts.

Figures released today by the National Asthma Council Australia (NACA) revealed 58 per cent of adults with the condition have already suffered asthma attacks since the start of the winter.

The findings showed many adults with asthma were complacent about their condition, with less than half being vaccinated against the flu and only 40 per cent having an up-to-date written asthma action plan, NACA director, Associate Professor Peter Wark said.

"This new review of asthma sufferers (conducted this month) suggests they are being hit hard. It is imperative anyone with asthma visits their GP within the next seven to 10 days for a lung health check, including flu vaccination, before the depth of winter hits.

"Even though an unusual season occurred last year, it should never be assumed that an easier ride is ahead, as all flu seasons can be highly dangerous for those with respiratory conditions," he said.

Almost half of Australians with asthma surveyed reported they had already endured cold and flu symptoms and eight-in-ten have seen an increase in asthma

symptoms (wheezing, shortness of breath, tightness of chest and coughing) since the cold weather hit.

"It is critical for asthma sufferers to understand they are at risk of serious complications from influenza such as pneumonia which usually requires hospitalisation. As well influenza is responsible for causing acute asthma attacks.

"Recent published data shows one-third of influenza (H1N1) admissions into Australian Intensive Care Units (ICU) last flu season were those with chronic lung conditions – notably asthma," Associate Prof Wark said.

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FDA warns of fake Tamiflu sold online

Nick O'Donoghue

AMERICAN authorities are warning people not to buy medication claiming to be a generic version of Roche Pharmaceutical's Tamiflu.

Tests carried out by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) found a drug sold as "generic Tamiflu" through an online pharmacy was potentially harmful.

The FDA revealed the drug did not contain oseltamivir, the active ingredient in Tamiflu however it contained cloxacillin, which would be dangerous for people with allergies to penicillin.

The FDA reported the site where the administration purchased the counterfeit drugs has since been shut down, but warned the fake medication may still be sold through other online stores.

"The FDA bought the fraudulent "Generic Tamiflu" without a prescription from a website claiming to be an online drugstore that is no longer operational.

"The fraudulent version is likely to be found for sale on other websites, however," the FDA reported.

FDA commissioner Dr Margaret

Hamburg warned some "rogue" websites may look legitimate, but might not be and she urged consumers to be cautious when buying medications online.

The administration said the pack in which the counterfeit Tamiflu was delivered to the FDA was postmarked from India.

The FDA reported the medication came in two blister packs of 15 tan and yellow capsules, which contained white powder.

A spokesman for Roche Pharmaceuticals Australia said there was no generic version of Tamiflu available in Australia and it was only available with a prescription.

"Purchases outside of these provisions are not only illegal, but carry considerable risk as the medicine purchased may not be the genuine, approved medicine.

"Roche will continue to work make counterfeiting of Tamiflu more difficult and easier to recognise and liaise with regulatory agencies as necessary," the spokesman said

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COMMENTS

NEW GUIDELINES SPLIT PROFESSION [\(LINK\)](#)

Once again Mr Sclavos is attempting to perpetuate the myth that the majority of pharmacists actually leave the dispensary to counsel. As I have discussed with him in the past, I have found over the past five years in his home state of Queensland no such counselling occurs dispensary assistant available or not.

Rob Fennell

It is clear again – the Guild is working for profits for pharmacy owners, not for the good of the whole profession. Forgive the cynicism but of course they do not want it legislated or "guided" that more pharmacists are employed - they cost more to run than technicians - and when the bottom line is of most importance, why would you want to pay more professional staff?

Alison Broinowski

I disagree strongly that 200 be the cut off for a second pharmacist. I routinely do 220 scripts per day with a tech and manage comfortably without

compromising customer service. In summer, however, I would have a second pharmacist on as the dispensing is more involved than when you have just your regular customers and there are more demands from front-of-shop. The Board needs to set the limit higher - perhaps over 250.

Also, what happens when a pharmacist is ill?

Linda Beovich

This doesn't seem clear. If the pharmacy does over 200 Rx in a day, you need a second pharmacist. Does that mean you need two pharmacists on duty throughout the whole day or could you have one pharmacist on for half the day and the second pharmacist on for the second half of the day?

Oliver

WHISTLEBLOWING [\(LINK\)](#)

It should include reporting unethical, fraudulent & criminal behavior.

I was visited at home by Commonwealth Police after working for a certain pharmacist.

Anon

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