

Paracetamol guidelines

Safe use of paracetamol is the aim of a new Federal Government information campaign. The campaign will educate consumers and health professionals about the possible harmful effects of inappropriate paracetamol use. Visit: www.health.gov.au/tga/docs/html/analgupd.htm.

Aboriginal men's health

A new plan aims to reduce illness and mortality rates suffered by Aboriginal men in NSW. *The Aboriginal Men's Health Implementation Plan*, released on 23 May, will focus on prevention and early intervention and aims to make health services more accessible and appropriate to Aboriginal men.

- AAP

Aged care survey

A major survey of the aged care workforce will help identify the aged care sector's workforce profile to assist in planning future directions and needs until 2010. Announcing the survey, Federal Minister for Ageing Kevin Andrews said: 'The sector's focus on providing care means it is uniquely dependent on its main resource - nursing and other care staff.'

Cheaper postage

From 1 July, people living in remote areas of Australia will get special cheaper postal rates for health and educational material. To be eligible, parcels must contain medical prescription items, non-prescription pharmacy medicines or other medicines specified by a registered medical practitioner. Parcels may also contain printed, written or electronic media specifically related to a recognised course. For details visit: www.dcita.gov.au.

Going places in NSW

Concord Hospital's nurses will soon be able to broaden their education with the announcement of a new \$100,000 three-year scholarship. *The Going Places Nursing Scholarship* will assist Concord nurses to continue their postgraduate and post enrolment education and will support nursing exchanges between the hospital and leading international facilities. Nurses from rural NSW hospitals can apply for short-term exchanges with Concord Hospital.

Tax time again

Did you know you can claim the cost of journals and magazines that have content connected to your employment as a nurse as work related expenses? The Australian Taxation Office's (ATO's) *Occupational Ruling Summary - Nurses* explains claims nurses can and cannot make. Call 1300 720 092 to obtain your copy or visit: www.ato.gov.au.

SA Preparing for disaster

The Royal Adelaide Hospital went on full alert on 25 May, to respond to the country's largest mock bio-terrorism attack. *Operation Supreme Truth* tested the preparedness of South Australia's emergency services and its hospital system. Over 160 people were potentially exposed to the 'agents' and simulated a range of serious injuries during the exercise. The *Adelaide Advertiser* described chaotic scenes as 'contaminated patients' - nursing students - tried to force their way into the emergency department, prompting a complete shutdown.



'Contaminated patients' try to force their way into Royal Adelaide Hospital's emergency department during *Operation Supreme Truth* - Australia's largest mock casualty event.

FED National dementia action needed now

The prevalence of dementia is growing rapidly in Australia and the condition will take over from depression as the largest cause of disability burden in the country by 2016.

This is one of the startling findings of *The dementia epidemic: Economic impact and positive solutions for Australia*, released by Access Economics on 27 May.

The report estimates that 500,000 people will have dementia by 2040.

In response, the National Aged Care Alliance urged all Australian governments to commit to a nationally coordinated strategy to respond to the dementia epidemic.

Alliance spokesperson Glenn Rees said if action was not taken now, the future and quality of life would be very bleak for many thousands of people with dementia and their carers between now and the middle of the century.

'Dementia issues touch on every aspect of the health and

care system - GPs, hospitals, community services, residential care services, psychiatric and specialist services and pharmaceuticals,' Mr Rees said.

'Because of this a whole of government approach is needed if dementia issues are not to fall between bureaucratic divides.'

The Alliance is calling for increased investment in dementia research, saying the current \$2.5 million funding is inadequate for the future.

The Alliance also proposes a strategy directed at improving dementia care services - through early diagnosis; better access to medications; improved access to flexible respite care for people with dementia; training based on person-centred approaches to care; and, recurrent/capital incentives to improve quality dementia care in residential settings.

FED Common cold sense

The National Prescribing Service (NPS) has launched its third annual consumer campaign to help stop the spread of winter ills and reduce the inappropriate use of antibiotics.

The NPS says it hopes Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) serves as a reminder about costly and potentially deadly viruses already in the community.

'SARS is a signpost and provides a reminder that even when there is no treatment for an infection common sense strategies can help stop the spread,' NPS Chairman Dr Stephen Phillips said.

'NPS is trying to make people aware that we are all susceptible to viral infections and can help reduce the risk of spreading colds and flu by taking some simple precautions such as regular hand washing and avoiding touching our nose and eyes.'

Visit the NPS website: www.gottacold.com.

