

Joint collaboration to launch Bi-National Burns Register

Pharmacies are to be part of a national strategy in raising awareness of burns injuries, which has been launched by the Australian and New Zealand Burns Association (ANZBA) in partnership with the Julian Burton Burns Trust, a not-for-profit organisation set up by Ball bombing survivor Julian Burton, and corporate sponsor, Burnaid.

A national register for burns injury patients has been developed as part of the campaign which aims to reduce the number of preventable burn injuries and identify at-risk areas in communities across Australia.

The register will provide quantitative data which will support research into the treatment of burns injury patients in both Australia and NZ, as well as fund projects for the prevention of burns.

Figures show that up to 200,000 people suffer a burn injury annually in Australia alone, and presentation levels of burns injuries are rising across all categories, particularly among children under five, Generation Y males, the elderly and the indigenous population. It is estimated that burn injuries currently cost Australia a minimum of \$300 million per year.

While the register focuses on people with severe burns, many who suffer superficial to moderate burns go to their local pharmacy as a first point of call. Given the potential risk of burns developing to more serious complications, it is important pharmacy staff are trained in how to identify when a burns patient needs to be referred to a GP and how different burns should be treated.

According to John Price, Managing Director of Rye Pharmaceuticals and the developer of Burnaid, pharmacy assistants are integral to helping educate with correct first aid treatment. "Burnaid allows pharmacy assistants to help consumers with first response pain relief and cooling purposes for burn injuries. As the first touch point with consumers, pharmacy assistants will be an important part of the general awareness of the community to prevent and

manage burn injuries. They will be able to offer advice on the correct first aid for burns, and now provide a solution that offers both immediate pain relief, cooling and helps prevent infection. However for more serious burns involving airway, hands, face and the lower body and when burns are deeper than superficial burn levels, or where severity is uncertain, pharmacists will encourage consumers to seek medical attention."

GPs will be able to use the Bi-National Burns Register to log data on all burn injuries sustained in Australia and NZ to enable the accurate planning of the provision of healthcare for burn injury patients. A prevention and education program for medical staff and research teams will also assist in providing better first aid and long-term treatment choices.

Julian Burton, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of the Julian Burton Burns Trust, says that the Bi-National Burns Register is a priority community project. "The goal for this initiative is to support burns professionals throughout both countries and provide them with the statistics to better understand the incidence of burn injuries and treatment methodologies," Mr Burton said. "The Bi-National Burns Register will then assist the Burns Trust to strategically deliver preventative education programs for the community."

A publicity campaign has also been announced for the Burnaid range by Rye Pharmaceuticals, which will target Australia's leading beauty, home, health and lifestyle publications over a six-month period. **Rp**



NOVEMBER 2008 WWW.ERETAILPHARMACY.COM.AU