

19 September 2008

## MEDIA STATEMENT

### **Parents reassured: No causal effect with paracetamol in new asthma research**

A new study published in the Lancet this week<sup>1</sup> which investigates precursors to childhood asthma does not establish a causal link between the use of paracetamol in infancy and asthma arising in later years.

The Australian Self Medication Industry has today moved to reassure parents about the study and to emphasise the positive safety profile of paracetamol.

“Paracetamol has a very long history of safe use in children,” said Dr Deon Schoombie, Scientific Director at ASMI. “The authors themselves say that a causal link between paracetamol and asthma could not be established. They found that there is insufficient evidence to change the advice given to parents and healthcare workers and suggested that more research is needed to develop evidence based guidelines for use of paracetamol.”

Pharmacy academic Professor Peter Carroll, who was previously the Chairperson of the Asthma Card Working Party, says it is important for parents to keep the results of the study in context.

“There is no suggestion that treatment guidelines should change because of this study.”

“I think you might find a correlation between paracetamol use and many things in childhood because its use is just so widespread. It’s very difficult to be definitive about links to conditions like asthma,” said Professor Carroll. “For example, if there is a causative factor it may well be the underlying condition that the paracetamol was used to treat, rather than the paracetamol itself”

Paracetamol has been available for more than 50 years in Australia and the vast majority of children using it as directed experience no undesirable effects. Paracetamol remains an effective and safe option for the treatment of pain and fever in children.

1. Beasley et al. The Lancet. Vol 372. 20/9/08.

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About ASMI: The Australian Self-Medication Industry (ASMI) is the peak industry body for the Australian self care industry representing consumer healthcare products including over-the-counter medicines and complementary medicines. ASMI’s mission is to promote better health through responsible self-care. This means ensuring that safe and effective self-care products are readily available to all Australians at a reasonable cost. ASMI works to encourage responsible use by consumers and an increasing role for cost-effective self-medication products as part of the broad national health strategy. [www.asmi.com.au](http://www.asmi.com.au)

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**Media contact: Bob Bowden, Foresight Communications (02) 9241 2811, 0412 753 298**