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Shkreli mocks Aussie teens

Pharmaceutical chief insults students who recreated HIV drug

SYDNEY: “Bad boy” pharmaceutical chief Martin Shkreli (*pic*), who raised the cost of a HIV drug by 5,000%, has mocked a group of Sydney school students who cheaply recreated the life-saving medicine.



The teenagers said they were spurred to try and recreate the drug after Shkreli became a global figure of hate by buying the rights to Daraprim and hiking the price in the United States from US\$13.50 (RM60.75) a tablet to US\$750 (RM3,375).

In response, Shkreli tweeted sarcastic remarks about the students’ recreation of pyrimethamine, the active ingredient for Daraprim, an anti-parasitic used to treat people with low immune systems such as those with HIV.

“Labour and equipment costs? Didn’t know you could get physical chemists to work for free?” Shkreli tweeted.

“And why buy my equipment

when I can use the lab’s for free?! And those teachers who told them what to do, they’ll work for free, right.”

Student James Wood said this week he and his friends, with the help of University of Sydney chemists, had started off with just

US\$20 (RM90) of the drug, and in one reaction had produced thousands of dollars’ worth.

Turing Pharmaceuticals, which Shkreli used to head, continue to sell the only FDA-approved form of the drug in the United States, but reportedly cut the price in half for hospitals after an outcry.

Several hours after being blasted on Twitter for his comments, Shkreli was more gracious in a short YouTube clip yesterday.

“These Australian students are proof that the 21st century economy will solve problems of human suffering through science and technology,” he said. — AFP