

## PRESCRIPTION PRODUCTS

### MicardisPlus tablets

MicardisPlus (telmisartan with hydrochlorothiazide) 40/12.5mg and 80/12.5mg tablets are being launched (Boehringer Ingelheim);

net price, 40/12.5mg 28 £12.60, 80/12.5mg 28 £15.75.

### Loratadine tablets

Alpharma has launched loratadine 10mg tablets; net price, 7 £2.20, 30 £7.57.

Erythromycin oral suspension  
Erythromycin oral suspension 125mg/5ml, pack size 100ml, is now available with a child resistant cap (Alpharma).

## SPC CHANGES

### Clozaril tablets

The summary of product characteristics for Clozaril (clozapine) tablets has been updated (Novartis Pharmaceuticals). Clozaril is now additionally licensed for the treatment of psychotic disorders occurring during the course of Parkinson's disease, in cases where standard treatment has failed. Clozaril is contraindicated in the following instances: patients unable to undergo regular blood tests; history of toxic or idiosyncratic granulocytopenia/agranulocytosis; paralytic ileus. Clozaril treatment must not be started concurrently with drugs known to have substantial potential for causing agranulocytosis. Additional information regarding cardiac warnings have been added to the special warning and precautions for use and undesirable effects sections. The pharmacodynamics section notes that improvement in some aspects of cognitive function has been described. It also states that compared with classic antipsychotics, Clozaril produces fewer major extrapyramidal reactions and in contrast to classic antipsychotics, it produces little or no prolactin elevation. See SPC.

### Enbrel injection

The summary of product characteristics for Enbrel (etanercept) has been updated (Wyeth Pharmaceuticals). The special warnings and precautions for use section says that allergic reactions associated with administration have been reported commonly and in post marketing experience have included angioedema and urticaria. Caution should be exercised when using etanercept is patients who have congestive heart failure (CHF). Information regarding CHF has been added. The undesirable effects section has been rewritten. See SPC.

### Nalorex tablets

The summary of product characteristics for Nalorex (naltrexone hydrochloride) tablets has been updated (Bristol-Myers Squibb

Pharmaceuticals). It notes changes in the markings on the tablets as now having R11 on one side and 50 on the other instead of 11 on one side and Dupont on the other. In addition the excipients of pale yellow opadry have been included. The marketing authorisation holder has been changed from DuPont Pharmaceuticals to Bristol-Myers Squibb Pharmaceuticals. See SPC.

### ReFacto injection

The summary of product characteristics for ReFacto (recombinant coagulation factor VIII ) injection has been updated (Wyeth Pharmaceuticals). The special warning and precaution for use section states that in post-marketing experience, high and low titre neutralising antibodies (inhibitors) have been observed in previously treated patients. The following paragraph has also been added: "Reports of lack of effect, mainly in prophylaxis patients, have been received in the clinical trials and in the postmarketing setting. The reported lack of effect has been described as bleeding into target joints, bleeding into new joints or a subjective feeling by the patient of new onset bleeding. When switching to ReFacto it is important to individually titrate and monitor each patient's dose in order to ensure an adequate therapeutic response." It is recommended that, wherever possible, every time that ReFacto is administered, the name and batch number of the product is recorded. See SPC.

### Solian tablets and solution

The summary of product characteristics for Solian (amisulpride) tablets and solution has been updated (Sanofi-Synthelabo). Solian is now contraindicated in combination with the following medicines which could induce torsades de pointes: Class Ia antiarrhythmic agents such as quinidine, disopyramide, procainamide; class III antiarrhythmic agents such as amiodarone and sotalol; other medicines such as bepridil, cisapride, sultopride, thioridazine, intravenous erythromycin, intravenous vincamine, halofantrine, pentamidine and sparflaxacin. Information regarding amisulpride inducing a dose-dependent prolongation of the QT interval has been added to the special warnings and precautions for use section. The following medicines which enhance the risk of torsades de pointes have been added to the interactions section: bradycardia-inducing medicines such as beta-blockers, bradycardia-inducing calcium channel blockers (such as diltiazem and verapamil, clonidine, guanfacine) and digitalis; medicines which induce hypokalaemia such as

hypokalaemic diuretics, stimulant laxatives, intravenous amphotericin B, glucocorticoids, tetracosactides; neuroleptics such as pimozide, haloperidol, lithium and imipramine and other antidepressants. The undesirable effects section now states that cases of QT interval prolongation and very rare cases of torsades de pointes have been reported. See SPC.

### Betaferon injection

The summary of product characteristics for Betaferon (interferon beta-1b) have been amended (Schering Health Care). The special precautions for storage section now states: "The user may store unconstituted Betaferon outside the refrigerator for up to three months, but not above 25°C and not exceeding the expiry date." See SPC.

## DISCONTINUED PRODUCTS

### Terramycin tablets

Terramycin (oxytetracycline) 250mg tablets will be discontinued from 25 February because of ongoing manufacturing difficulties (Pfizer). Information can be obtained from the company's medical information department (tel 01737 331111).

### Pavulon injection

Pavulon (pancuronium bromide) injection will be discontinued when current stocks are exhausted (Organon Laboratories).

## SUPPLY PROBLEMS

### Temazepam tablets

Temazepam 10mg tablets, pack size 500, and temazepam 20mg tablets, pack size 250, are back in stock from Alpharma.

### Mackenzies Smelling Salts

Mackenzies Smelling Salts, 17ml, will be out of stock until March (Alpharma).

## FUTURE EVENTS

### Surgical care

United Kingdom Clinical Pharmacy Association surgery and theatres interest group study day on "Evidence based care of surgical patients", Norfolk Hotel, Birmingham, 5 February. Cost £95 for members, £150 for non-members. Details from Pat Kennedy on 0116 277 6999 (e-mail admin@ukcpa.com).

### Pharmacy services

Capita Business Services conference on "Modern community pharmacy

## RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS

Religious festivals and bank holidays in 2003

The following is a list of major religious festivals and bank holidays for 2003 to aid meeting organisation. It is not exhaustive.

### Christianity:

- Good Friday  
18 April
- Christmas Day  
25 December

### Hinduism

- Maha Shiva Ratri  
1 March
- Holi  
18 March
- Rama Navami  
11 April
- Raksba Bandhana  
12 August
- Janmashtami  
20 August
- Navaratri  
26 September
- Diwali  
25 October

### Islam:

- Eid Al Adha  
12 February
- New Year  
4 March
- Ashuraa  
13 March
- Prophet's (SAAW) Birthday  
14 May
- Ramadan  
starts 27 October
- Eid Al Fitr  
25 November

### Judaism:

- Passover  
16 April (evening)
- 17 April (evening)
- New Year  
26 September (evening)
- 27 September (evening and day)
- 28 September (day)
- Day of Atonement  
5 October (evening)
- 6 October (day)

### Bank holidays:

- 21 April
- 5 May
- 26 May
- 4 August (Scotland)
- 25 August
- 26 December

services in the new National Health Service”, London, 24 February 2003. Cost £411.25 for public sector, £528.75 for private sector. £50 discount for bookings received before 6 January. Details from Conferences and Training Customer Centre, Quadrant Court, 49 Calthorpe Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 1TH (tel 0870 400 1020).

Critical care

United Kingdom Clinical Pharmacy Association critical care interest group study day on “Caring for the critically ill patient”, Wallace Space, Covent Garden, London WC2, 27 February. Cost £95 for members, £150 for non-members. Details from Pat Kennedy on 0116 277 6999 (e-mail admin@ukepa.com).

DRUG TARIFF UPDATES

NCSO endorsements

The Department of Health and the National Assembly for Wales have agreed to allow “No cheaper stock obtainable” (NCSO) endorsements for the following items for December prescriptions: Co-triamterzide 50/25 tablets.

ABOUT PEOPLE

Business awards

Anthony Chong, MRPharmS, owner of People’s Pharmacy, Chelmsford, Essex, has been commended in the community champions category of the Essex Achievement Awards 2002 and has been given a dedication to the community award as part of the Essex Golden Jubilee Business Awards 2002.

Bedfordshire LPC

Leslie Robertson, MRPharmS, recently retired as secretary of Bedfordshire Local Pharmaceutical Committee after 33 years of service.

He initially joined the committee in 1968 as an employee representative. He became a contractor representative in 1976 and has served as either chairman or secretary since then. Mr Robertson has also given long service to the Royal Pharmaceutical Society’s local branch and Luton North Rotary Club, where he has co-ordinated all charitable activity relating to India for the Rotary Club in the United Kingdom and Ireland. On his retirement, Mr Robertson was presented with £1,500 of travel vouchers by the LPC and the local branch.

Welsh MREC

John Hampson, MRPharmS, has been appointed as pharmacist member of the Welsh multicentre research ethics committee. Mr Hampson is an associate director of the Welsh school of pharmacy and works at Wrexham Maelor Hospital.

Headway volunteer

Pamela Munro, MRPharmS, was shortlisted as volunteer of the year by Headway, the charity for people who have sustained a brain injury. Mrs Munro and her husband, Michael Munro, MRPharmS, established a Headway support group in Tunbridge Wells after their son sustained a brain injury in a car crash in 1984 (*PJ*, 22 April 1989, p467).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NDCHealth programs

NDCHealth is no longer supporting or producing data updates for its DOS-based systems PILLS, Alchemist and JRC-DOS.

Syntaris nasal spray

IVAX Pharmaceuticals has assumed responsibility for Syntaris (flunisolide) nasal spray. Orders can be placed with Customer Services Department, IVAX Pharmaceuticals, IVAX Quays, Albert Basin,

Royal Docks, London E16 2QJ (tel 0800 451 600).

APPOINTMENTS

Enigma Health

Simon Edwards has been appointed acting chief executive at Enigma Health following the departure of Michael Major, the company’s founding chief executive.

PAGB director

Gopa Mitra has been promoted to director of health policy and public affairs at the Proprietary Association of Great Britain. Ms Mitra joined the PAGB in 1980 and has worked on public relations, public affairs and primary care research during her career.

Numark retail

Numark has appointed Clive Stanley, MRPharmS, as retail controller. He will have responsibility for establishing its chain of jointly owned pharmacies. Mr Stanley was formerly with Boots where he was country general manager for Northern Ireland and the Republic

of Ireland and subsequently was responsible for store development in Japan, Holland, Thailand and Taiwan.

Nucare marketing

Nucare has promoted John Barklamb to general manager for sales and marketing. Barry Apostolou has been appointed marketing manager and Mike Shears services development manager.

THE JOURNAL

CPD pilot deadline extended

Due to demand, the deadline for sending in answers and reports to the College of Pharmacy Practice for *The Journal’s* second continuing professional development pilot has been extended to 27 January. Submission can be made to Dot Kettell at the College of Pharmacy Practice, University of Warwick Science Park, Barclays Venture Centre, Sir William Lyons Road, Coventry CV4 7EZ, or by e-mail to info@collpharm.org.uk. E-mails should contain the phrase “FAO: Mrs Dot Kettell” in the subject line.

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