

PRESCRIPTION PRODUCTS

**Simvastatin tablets**

Simvastatin tablets have been launched by CP Pharmaceuticals; net price 10mg 28 £17.13, 20mg 28 £28.21, 40mg 28 £28.21.

SPC CHANGES

**Actilyse**

Actilyse (alteplase, recombinant human tissue-type plasminogen activator, rt-PA) has been licensed for use in acute ischaemic stroke in addition to its use in acute myocardial infarction and pulmonary embolism. The recommended dose is 0.9mg/kg body weight infused intravenously over 60 minutes, with 10 per cent of the total dose administered as an initial IV bolus. The maximum dose is 90mg and treatment must be started within three hours of the onset of symptoms. Boehringer Ingelheim says that Actilyse will only be used in specialist stroke units registered with SITS-MOST (Safe Implementation of Thrombolysis in Stroke Monitoring System). See SPC.

**Multiparin**

CP Pharmaceuticals has replaced the preservative chlorocresol with benzyl alcohol and methyl parahydroxybenzoate in Multiparin (heparin sodium) vials 1,000 IU/ml, 5,000 IU/ml and 25,000 IU/ml. Benzyl alcohol can increase the risk of jaundice in neonates and can cause toxic reactions in infants and children up to three years old. Methyl parahydroxybenzoate can also cause allergic reactions, possibly delayed. The shelf-life of the reformulated product has been cut from 36 months to 18 months. See SPC.

**Antepsin**

Chugai Pharma is transferring the production of Antepsin suspension (sucralfate) from Wyeth to E. Merck and repackaging the product in 250ml glass bottles in order to harmonise production with Germany, France and Spain. The distributor from 1 May is Distriphar (tel 0870 513 3347, fax 0870 513 3329). The minimum order is 2 x 250ml, price £8.75.

**Taxol**

Taxol (paclitaxel) has been licensed for the initial treatment of advanced or metastatic breast cancer in combination with trastuzumab in patients who overexpress HER-2 at a 3+ level as determined by immunohistochemistry and for whom an anthracycline is not suitable. As a result changes have been made to the following sections of the Taxol SPC: posology and

method of administration, special warnings and special precautions for use, undesirable effects, and pharmacodynamic properties. See SPC

**Lipostat**

The SPC for Lipostat (pravastatin) has been amended following re-evaluation of all HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors after the worldwide withdrawal of cerivastatin. It now includes more information on the muscle effects of statins, with a reduced upper limit of creatinine kinase for treatment. Additional undesirable effects include myopathy and rhabdomyolysis with renal dysfunction secondary to myoglobinuria. Parasthesiae and polyneuropathy are also included as being reported rarely in patients treated with statins. Additional information on interactions and pharmacokinetics has been included. See SPC.

**Questran**

A new special warning has been added to the SPC for Questran (cholestyramine). Patients with diabetes should now be warned that each Questran sachet contains 3.79g sucrose. See SPC.

COUNTER MEDICINES

**New look for Oilatum**

Oilatum has been repackaged. Packs now feature a new Oilatum blue motif on a white background.

DISCONTINUED PRODUCTS

**Wyeth products**

The following products have been discontinued (Wyeth Pharmaceuticals):

- Lederspan injection (triamcinolone hexacetonide) 5mg/ml
- Loxapac 10mg capsules (loxapine succinate). The 25mg, pack size 56, and 50mg, pack size 28, capsules are still available.

**Isopto Carbachol eye-drops**

Isopto Carbachol eye-drops (carbachol) have been discontinued in the UK (Alcon Laboratories UK).

**Isopto Frin eye-drops**

Isopto Frin eye-drops (phenylephrine hydrochloride) are being discontinued. Stocks are expected to be exhausted by the end of May (Alcon Laboratories UK).

APPOINTMENTS

**UniChem**

Mike Smith, MRPharmS, has been appointed non-executive chairman

of the UniChem wholesale board. He succeeds Neil Chapman, who stepped down as chairman but remains on the board as non-executive director. Mr Smith is currently responsible for the pharmacy consultative boards and was the inaugural president of the European Pharmacists Forum. He is also superintendent of two pharmacies.

**ABPI Wales**

Rick Greville has been appointed director of the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry in Wales. Dr Greville has worked in the pharmaceutical industry for 15 years with Solvay Healthcare, most recently managing a divisional team of National Health Service liaison representatives.

ABOUT PEOPLE

**Genetics appointment**

Professor Trevor Jones, FRPharmS, director general of the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry, has been appointed chairman of the UK Advisory Group for Genetics Research. The group advises the Department of Health on matters relating to genetics research, including providing strategic oversight for genetic research funded by the Department.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Mucodyne transfer**

Responsibility for Mucodyne (carbocisteine) 375mg capsules has been transferred to Beacon Pharmaceuticals. Orders should be placed with Distriphar (tel 0870 513 3347, fax 0870 513 3329). Medical information queries should be made to Beacon on 01892 506958.

Mucodyne syrup is still being sold by Aventis.

**Industrial placement**

Controlled Therapeutics is able to offer one paid position for a pharmacy student to work at its East Kilbride facility near Glasgow this summer. The student must have a genuine interest in a career in the pharmaceutical industry and will be responsible for arranging his or her own accommodation. Details from Dr Janet Halliday on 01355 239166.

REUNIONS

**Heriot-Watt University**

Heriot-Watt University is holding a 35-year reunion for the class of 1964-68 on 21 June at the Apex City Hotel, Grassmarket, Edinburgh. Details are available from Sheila Watt (tel 0131 332 2388) or Sunita Crawford (tel 0131 449 3821).

**Strathclyde University**

Strathclyde University is holding a special reunion event on Saturday 13 September to mark the centenary of the foundation stone of the Royal College building being laid. Further details from Alumni Affairs, University of Strathclyde, 16 Richmond Street, Glasgow G1 1XQ, e-mail alumni@strath.ac.uk, tel 0141 548 2773, website www.alumni.strath.ac.uk.

CORRECTIONS

**Eccoxolac capsules**

Due to an administrative error the information about Eccoxolac (etodolac) capsules appeared prematurely (*PJ*, 3 May, p613). The product is expected to be launched by Viatrix Pharmaceuticals in mid-June.

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