

PRESCRIPTION PRODUCTS

Co-cyprindiol

Neolab has launched co-cyprindiol 2000/35 tablets (cyproterone acetate 2mg and ethinylestradiol 35µg); net price, 3x21 £11.10.

FemTab

Merck Pharmaceuticals has launched a new range of once-daily hormone replacement therapy tablets: FemTab (estradiol valerate 1mg and 2mg), net price, 3x28 £7.72; FemTab Sequi (estradiol valerate 2mg, estradiol valerate 2mg/levonorgestrel 75µg), net price, 3x28 £15.15; FemTab Continuous (estradiol hemihydrate 2mg/norethisterone acetate 1mg), net price 3x28 £18.02. The FemTab products are indicated for the treatment of the climacteric syndrome and the protection of the skeleton against post-menopausal bone loss in menopausal women with or without a uterus. See SPCs for further details.



DISCONTINUED PRODUCTS

Aramine injection

Aramine (metaraminol tartrate) injection is being discontinued (Merck Sharp & Dohme). Supplies should remain available for the next few months and arrangements are being made for alternative supplies. For more information contact MSD medical information (tel 01992 467272).

SPC CHANGES

Valcyte new indication

The licensed indications for Valcyte (valganciclovir hydrochloride) tablets have been extended (Roche). Valcyte is now additionally indicated for the prevention of cytomegalovirus disease in CMV-negative patients who have received a solid organ transplant from a CMV-positive donor. The recommended dose is 900mg once daily, starting within 10 days of transplantation and continuing until 100 days post-transplantation. The tablets should be taken with food whenever possible. See SPC for further details.

Lariam tablets

The summary of product characteristics for Lariam (mefloquine) tablets has been updated (Roche). The special warnings and precautions for use section now states that Lariam should be discontinued if psychiatric disturbances occur during prophylactic use and an alternative prophylactic agent should be recommended. The undesirable effects section notes that adverse reactions to Lariam may occur or persist for more than several weeks after the last dose because of the long half-life of mefloquine. It is noted that there have been rare reports of suicidal ideation and suicide but no relationship to drug administration has been established. See SPC.

Amias tablets

The summary of product characteristics for Amias (candesartan cilexetil) has been revised (AstraZeneca, Takeda). The section on posology and method of administration now recommends an initial starting dose of 8mg once daily, with no initial dosage adjustment necessary in elderly patients. An initial dose of 4mg may be considered in patients with intravascular volume depletion and in patients with renal impairment, including patients on haemodialysis. The section on special warnings and precautions for use has been updated to include a section on haemodialysis. The undesirable effects section has been amended and the overdose section now notes that candesartan is not removed by haemodialysis. The pharmacodynamic properties section has been expanded to include more trial data. See SPC.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Genticin and Gentisone HC

Genticin (gentamicin sulphate) ear/eye drops and Gentisone HC (hydrocortisone acetate and gentamicin) ear drops (Roche) will be supplied in new shaped bottles once current stocks are exhausted. The new bottles will deliver the same size droplets (0.03ml) as the original bottles.

FUTURE EVENTS

Good manufacturing practice

Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency seminar on "What's new in GMP annexes". Marriott Hotel, Marble Arch, London, 24 September. Cost £586.33. Details from Melanie Taylor on 020 7273 0393 (e-mail conferences@mhra.gsi.gov.uk).

DRUG ALERT

EpiPen

There is a potential discrepancy of expiry dates on EpiPen Auto-injectors (adrenaline 1 in 1000) (ALK-Abelló). The outer pack and the syringe label carry identical and correct expiry dates. The syringe label can be peeled back to reveal the list of ingredients and a different expiry date may be found printed directly on to the syringe barrel. The correct expiry date is that on the pack and syringe label. This does not affect the quality or safety of the product, and the product is not being recalled. For further information contact ALK-Abelló (tel 01488 686016).

Marketing authorisations

Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency seminar on "Variations to marketing authorisations". Marriott Hotel, Marble Arch, London, 26 September. Cost £586.33. Details from Melanie Taylor on 020 7273 0393 (e-mail conferences@mhra.gsi.gov.uk).

Medicines regulation

Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency advanced training course on "Medicines regulation in practice". Marriott Hotel, County Hall, London, 13-15 October and 24-26 November. Cost £2,350. Details from Melanie Taylor on 0207273 0393 (e-mail conferences@mhra.gsi.gov.uk).

AWARDS

Information technology

Applications are being sought for the First DataBank/Guild of Healthcare Pharmacists information technology award. Initiatives are sought where IT has made a positive difference to the provision of pharmaceutical services. The prize is £2,500 and the deadline for entries is 31 October. Those interested in applying should contact the GHP IT interest group (e-mail awards@ghp.org.uk). Details from Jo Goulding (email jo.goulding@nhsia.nhs.uk)

REUNIONS

Cardiff 1973

A 30-year reunion lunch for students who graduated from the Welsh school of pharmacy in 1973 is being held at the New House Country Hotel, Thornhill, Cardiff, on 14 September. Details from Janice Fuller (tel 01223 863318).

ABOUT PEOPLE

Antihypertensive adherence

Michael Fahey, MRPharmS, has been awarded a doctorate of philosophy by Trinity College, Dublin, for his thesis on adherence to antihypertensive medication in the United Arab Emirates. Dr Fahey currently lives in Abu Dhabi where he is the pharmacy adviser at the UAE Ministry of Health.

RESOURCES

Dermatology website

The Primary Care Dermatology Society has launched its new website providing health care professionals and patients with information on all aspects of dermatology including treatment guidelines and product information. The site can be accessed at www.pcds.org.uk.

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