

## PRESCRIPTION PRODUCTS

### Co-Diovan

Co-Diovan (valsartan/hydrochlorothiazide) is now available in a new strength containing 80mg valsartan and 12.5mg hydrochlorothiazide. It is licensed for the treatment of essential hypertension in patients whose blood pressure is not adequately controlled on valsartan monotherapy; net price, 28 £16.44. Legal category: POM.

### Singulair Granules

Merck, Sharp & Dohme has launched Singulair (montelukast) Paediatric 4mg Granules (Singulair Granules), a once-daily, add-on asthma treatment for children as young as six months; net price £25.67. Legal category: POM.

## SPC CHANGES

### Plavix

The summary of product characteristics for Plavix (clopidogrel) has been amended. Section 4.4 now describes thrombotic thrombocytopenic purpura as a "potentially fatal condition requiring prompt treatment". In Section 4.8, Stevens-Johnson Syndrome has been added to the "Undesirable effects" list (under "Skin and subcutaneous tissue disorder"). Section 4.9 has also been amended and now reads: "Overdose following clopidogrel administration may lead to prolonged bleeding time and subsequent bleeding complications. Appropriate therapy should be considered if bleedings are observed."

### Ikorel

The summary of product characteristics for Ikorel (nicorandil) now includes a new indication for a reduction in the risk of acute coronary syndromes in patients with chronic stable angina and at least one of the following risk factors: previous myocardial infarction; previous coronary artery bypass graft; or coronary heart disease on angiography or a positive exercise test, together with one of the following: left ventricular hypertrophy on electrocardiogram, left ventricular dysfunction, age >65 years, diabetes mellitus (type 1 or 2 excluding those on sulphonylureas), hypertension or documented vascular disease. The summary now also includes some details of the results of the

## WITHDRAWAL AND RECALL

### Vioxx and VioxxAcute

Merck Sharp & Dohme Ltd has ceased to distribute all strengths and formulations of Vioxx and VioxxAcute to wholesalers on a worldwide basis. For further information see [www.mhra.gov.uk](http://www.mhra.gov.uk). This Class 2 alert requires recall from wholesaler level. Individual customers of wholesalers should contact their wholesaler directly to arrange return. Parallel importers should cease distribution to wholesalers and contact their suppliers for instructions. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency/Committee on Safety of Medicines advice to patients is: "Patients taking Vioxx should contact their doctor by phone or at the next convenient appointment to arrange an alternative prescription."

IONA (impact of nicorandil in angina) study in the list of pharmacodynamic properties.

## DISCONTINUED PRODUCTS

### Terra-Cortril

Terra-Cortril (oxytetracycline and hydrocortisone) Topical Ointment 15g is being discontinued (Pfizer).

## PRODUCTS MISCELLANY

### Mirapexin marketing

On 16 October Pfizer UK will transfer responsibility for the marketing and distribution of Mirapexin (pramipexole) back to Boehringer Ingelheim UK. Pack designs will change as remaining Pfizer stock is used up.

### New Oilatum packaging

Stiefel is introducing new packaging for Oilatum Fragrance Free Bath Emollient. The word "Junior" has been added and the colours on the pack's graphic have been revised.

## AWARDS

### NPPG prize

The Neonatal and Paediatric Pharmacists Group has announced that Sara Arenas-Lopez and Shane M. Tibby have been awarded the Mandeville Medicines prize for 2004.

## WANTS

### Compliance aids study

Karen Rosenbloom and Ruth Goldstein are investigating issues associated with compliance aids (of any sort). If you have any examples of assessments (in any setting) used to identify people who need help taking their medicines, please e-mail them to Dr Rosenbloom at [rosenbloom@rosenb.demon.co.uk](mailto:rosenbloom@rosenb.demon.co.uk).

## RESOURCES

### New NPC guide

A new web-based package, "Using evidence to guide practice", is available from the National Prescribing Centre. Cost £35 per user. Further information and a registration form are available at [www.npc.co.uk](http://www.npc.co.uk).

### SOP guide

Vantage Pharmacy has launched a CD-ROM-based dispensary standard operating procedures guide. The guide is distributed free to all Vantage pharmacies. It is also available to other AAH customers for £15, although the first 500 will be free. Further information is available on 024 7643 2000.

## CPD ANSWERS

### Dosage regimen design

The answers to the practice point questions from the Continuing Professional Development article on examples of dosage regimen design (*PJ*, 7 August, p190) are now available on *PJ Online* ([www.pjonline.com/links/pj](http://www.pjonline.com/links/pj)).

## FUTURE EVENTS

### Preoperative conference

First national conference of the Preoperative Association, 18-19 October, East Midlands Conference Centre, Nottingham. All pharmacists in the field are invited to attend. Further details at [www.pre-op.org](http://www.pre-op.org).

### IPMI autumn seminar

Institute of Pharmacy Management International autumn seminar, 7 November, Moat House, Stratford Upon Avon. Cost £65 for members, £120 for non-members. Details area available from Howard McNulty on 0141 570 1320 (e-mail [howard.mcnulty@ntlworld.com](mailto:howard.mcnulty@ntlworld.com)).

## Clarification and apology

On 31 July 2004 our front cover picture and the illustration to our news feature contained images of Love Hearts with words relevant to the launch of over-the-counter simvastatin. We wish to make it clear that there is no connection whatsoever between Love Hearts and over-the-counter simvastatin. We apologise to Swizzels Matlow Ltd if anything in our publication has, or may have, misled readers into thinking that any such connection exists.

## Psychiatric pharmacy

Psychiatric Pharmacy Network Psychiatric Classroom, 4th floor, Thomas Guy House, Guy's Hospital, London, 11 October, 2pm. Further details from Steve Bleakley on 020 7188 5019 (e-mail [steven.bleakley@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:steven.bleakley@gstt.nhs.uk)).

## CORRECTIONS

### Nicola Gray

Nicola Gray works at the School of Pharmacy at the University of Nottingham, not the department of pharmacy at the University of Manchester, as stated (*PJ*, 2 October, p491).

## CPD therapeutic drug monitoring article

In our CPD article "Why do therapeutic drug monitoring?" (*PJ*, 31 July, p153), three values should have been expressed in micromoles and not millimoles. The following should have read: "until concentrations are below 0.05µmol/L" (p155, column 2, section on anticancer drugs), "the normal target range of 10-20mg/L (55-110µmol/L)" (p155, column 3, section on theophylline) and "reducing the target range to 5-15mg/L (28-80µmol/L)" (p155, column 3, section on theophylline).

## Council report

In last week's report of Royal Pharmaceutical Society Council business, the word "eight" in the fifth bullet-pointed paragraph in the panel on p498 should have read "nine".

## Insomnia reference

The reference for last week's news story about cognitive behaviour therapy in chronic sleep onset insomnia is *Archives of Internal Medicine* (2004;164:1888), and not as stated (p456).