

NEW MEDICINES

Protelos

COMPOSITION: Strontium ranelate.
PRESENTATION: Yellow granules for oral suspension.

CLASS: Bone disease treatment.

INDICATIONS: Treatment of postmenopausal osteoporosis to reduce the risk of vertebral and hip fractures.

DOSAGE: Recommended dose is one 2g sachet once daily by oral administration. Intended for long-term use. See SPC.

MAJOR CAUTIONS:

Hypersensitivity to the active substance or to any of the excipients. Contains a source of phenylalanine, which may be harmful for people with phenylketonuria. Use with caution in patients at increased risk of venous thromboembolism, including patients with a past history of VTE.

CONTRAINDICATIONS: Not recommended in patients with a creatinine clearance below 30ml/min. Periodic assessment of renal function is recommended in patients with chronic renal impairment.

SIDE EFFECTS: common (>1/100): headache, nausea, diarrhoea, loose stools, dermatitis, eczema.

LEGAL CATEGORY: POM

NET PRICE: 28 sachets £25.60

Contact details: Servier Laboratories, Gallions, Wexham Springs, Framewood Road, Wrexham, Slough SL3 6RL. Tel 01753 662744.



Inspra

COMPOSITION: Eplerenone.
PRESENTATION: Film-coated tablets.

CLASS: Aldosterone antagonist.

INDICATIONS: In addition to standard therapy including beta-blockers, to reduce the risk of cardiovascular mortality and morbidity in stable patients with left ventricular dysfunction and clinical evidence of heart failure after recent myocardial infarction.

DOSAGE: Recommended dosage 50mg once daily. Treatment should be initiated at 25mg once daily and titrated to 50mg once daily preferably within four weeks, taking into account serum

potassium levels (see SPC).

PRECAUTIONS: Serum potassium should be measured before initiation of therapy, within the first week and at one month after the start of treatment or dose adjustment. Potassium levels should be assessed periodically, thereafter, depending on patient risk (eg elderly patients, patients with renal insufficiency or diabetes). Eplerenone should not be administered in patients with rare hereditary problems of galactose intolerance, the Lapp lactase deficiency or glucose-galactose malabsorption. Lithium, ciclosporin and tacrolimus should be avoided during treatment with eplerenone.

CONTRAINDICATIONS: Patients with serum potassium level >5.0mmol/L at initiation, moderate to severe renal insufficiency, severe hepatic insufficiency, receiving potassium-sparing diuretics, potassium supplements or strong inhibitors of CYP3A4.

SIDE EFFECTS: Common (>1/100) hyperkalaemia, dizziness, hypotension, diarrhoea, nausea, abnormal renal function.

LEGAL CATEGORY: POM.

NET PRICE: 25mg or 50mg, 28 £42.72.

CONTACT DETAILS: Pfizer Ltd, Walton Oaks, Dorking Road, Tadworth, Surrey KT20 7NS. Tel 01304 616161.

PRESCRIPTION PRODUCTS

Qvar Easi-Breathe

Qvar Easi-Breathe (beclometasone dipropionate) is now available in 50µg and 100µg per dose presentations (Ivax); net price, 50µg £8.24, 100µg £18.02. Legal category: POM.

Zomig Rapimelt

Zomig Rapimelt (zolmitriptan) tablets 5mg are now available (AstraZeneca); net price, 6 £26.16. Legal category: POM.

Diovan tablets

Diovan (valsartan) tablets 40mg are now available (Novartis). Net price, 7 £3.69. Legal category: POM.

SPC CHANGES

Nexium

Nexium (esomeprazole) is now also indicated for the treatment of gastric ulcers and prevention of peptic ulcers in patients requiring continuous non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug therapy

RECALLED PRODUCTS

Bricanyl and Pulmicort inhalers

AstraZeneca has recalled the following batch of Bricanyl (terbutaline) 0.25mg/dose inhalers and a number of batches of Pulmicort (budesonide) 50µg/dose (LS) and 200µg/dose inhalers. The recall follows an investigation indicating that some inhalers may fail to deliver accurate doses. Distribution of affected batches started in August 2004.

Bricanyl batch number	Expiry date	Pack size
CF493	1/06/2007	400 dose

Details of the Pulmicort batches being recalled are available from www.mhra.gov.uk. Recipients of these batches should quarantine any remaining stock and return it via their supplier. Further information from AstraZeneca's medical information department on 01582 836836.

(AstraZeneca); the SPC now includes clinical data supporting these indications. See SPC.

NeisVac-C

NeisVac-C (suspension of polysaccharide antigen of *Neisseria meningitidis* group C, conjugated to tetanus toxoid protein, adsorbed onto aluminium hydroxide) is now approved as a two-dose regimen (Baxter). See SPC.

Diovan

Diovan (valsartan) is now licensed for the treatment of post myocardial infarction patients (Novartis); the SPC now includes clinical data supporting this indication. Therapy may be initiated 12 hours after myocardial infarction. After an initial dose of 20mg twice daily, valsartan therapy should be titrated to 40mg, 80mg, and 160mg twice daily over the next few weeks. See SPC.

DISCONTINUED PRODUCTS

Decadron

Decadron (dexamethasone) tablets 0.5mg have been discontinued (Merck Sharp & Dohme).

Xylotox

Xylotox 2 per cent E80 Dental (lidocaine hydrochloride 2 per cent with adrenaline 1:80,000) is being discontinued when stocks are exhausted (Dentsply). The company expects this to occur at the end of the year.

Euglucon

Euglucon (glibenclamide) tablets 2.5mg have been discontinued (Aventis). All outstanding orders have been cancelled.

Agenerase

Agenerase (amprenavir) capsules 150 mg will be discontinued on 24 December (GlaxoSmithKline). Agenerase capsules 50mg and oral solution 15mg/ml will continue to be available.

PRODUCTS MISCELLANY

Camppto responsibility

Responsibility for Camppto (irinotecan hydrochloride), formerly with Aventis Pharma, has been transferred to Pfizer.

SUPPLY ISSUES

Alu-Cap capsules

3M Health Care has announced that the manufacture and supply of Alu-Cap capsules (aluminium hydroxide) is being maintained. Details on 01509 613265.

RESOURCES

Mental health

The Royal College of Psychiatrists and The Princess Royal Trust for Carers have produced a booklet entitled "Carers and confidentiality in mental health" designed to help health professionals, patients and carers understand information sharing issues in mental health. Free copies of the booklet can be ordered on 020 7235 23541.

Clinical trials

The UK Medical Research Council and Department of Health have developed a clinical trials toolkit to help users meet the requirements of the UK Medicines for Human Use regulations, which implement the EU Clinical Trials Directive in the UK. The website is designed for use in all publicly funded academic trials. The toolkit can be accessed at www.ct-toolkit.ac.uk.

Blood pressure pack

The Blood Pressure Association has produced a free pack for pharmacists which contains the "Medicines for high blood pressure" booklet and wallet-sized patient record cards. The packs can be ordered on 020 8772 4989.

Opioids

OPEN Minds (Opioids and Pain European Network of Minds) has launched a website to provide health care professionals throughout Europe with information about the role of opioids in managing persistent pain. It covers aspects including patient evaluation, legal and regulatory factors and opioid abuse. It can be accessed at www.openmindsonline.com.

ABOUT PEOPLE**Positive change award**

Balraj Minhas, MRPharmS, medicines management pharmacist for Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley Primary Care Trust, has been awarded a "positive change" award from the PCT for his co-ordination of a hay fever project which runs in several community pharmacies in the area, providing hay fever treatment via patient group directions.

Young investigator award

Samantha Little, a postgraduate student at the University of Bradford School of Pharmacy, has been awarded a Young

Investigators Award at the International Society for the Study of Fatty Acids and Lipids 2004 for her research into the effect of fish oil on the ageing brain. Ms Little was awarded £120.

NPA/GHP award

The 2004–2005 National Pharmaceutical Association and Guild of Healthcare Pharmacists award of a £5,000 grant has been given to a joint research project between Northumbria Healthcare NHS Trust and community pharmacists in Berwick-upon-Tweed which will evaluate whether copying discharge summaries to practice pharmacists will help implement treatment plans.

APPOINTMENTS**PMETB**

Paul Streets has been appointed substantive chief executive of the Postgraduate Medical Education and Training Board. Mr Streets, currently chief executive of the Health Development Agency and deputy chairman of the Healthcare Commission, will take up this new post in the New Year.

PAGB

Trisha Gouldon-Oliver has been appointed self-care manager at the Proprietary Association of Great Britain, and will be responsible for co-ordinating the "Joining up self-care in a primary care trust" study. Ms Gouldon-Oliver has over 20 years' experience in the NHS, having worked as a midwife and a nurse and was a project manager for the Modernisation Agency.

WANTS**US licence applicants**

Sara Barrow would like to hear from any UK pharmacists who have applied to the US Foreign Pharmacy Graduate Equivalency Committee to obtain a state pharmacist licence. Tel +1 360 249 5123 (e-mail sarajane.barrow@earthlink.net).

Christmas volunteers

The homelessness charity Crisis would like to hear from pharmacists interested in helping at their Crisis Open Christmas shelters in London over the Christmas holiday. Details on 020 7426 3872 (email coc@crisis.org.uk).

FUTURE EVENTS**Pharmaceutical isolators**

University of Leeds and the Pharmaceutical Isolator User Group conference, University of Warwick Conference Centre, 6–8 December. Cost £570. Details available from Sophie Harker on 0113 343 3241.

Preregistration training

The University of Leeds nine-day programme for supervisors of pharmacy training, University of Leeds, 30 November, 1–2 December, 25–27 January and 22–24 February. Further details available from Helen Bradbury on 0113 343 1269.

CLARIFICATION**Contract**

In last week's **News feature** (p638), we said that 100 pharmacies will fall into the category of dispensing between 1,100 and 2,000 items under the new contract next year. The Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee has clarified that this number relates solely to independent pharmacies; it does not include multiples.

Advertisement

Corrections

Mental health booklet

The telephone number for ordering copies of the “Carers and confidentiality in mental health health” booklet is 020 7235 2351 and not as stated (p676).

Opioids website

The OPEN Minds (Opioids and Pain European Network of Minds) website can be accessed at www.openmindsonline.org, not as stated (p677).