

SPC CHANGES

Fludara

Fludara (fludarabine phosphate) Oral is now additionally indicated for first-line treatment of B-cell chronic lymphocytic leukaemia in patients with insufficient bone marrow reserves (see SPC) (Schering Health Care). The summaries of product characteristics for Fludara and Fludara Oral now state that, in rare cases, the occurrence of myelodysplastic syndrome has been described in patients treated with Fludara and that the majority of these patients received prior, concomitant or subsequent treatment with alkylating agents or irradiation. See SPCs.

Gemzar

Gemzar (gemcitabine hydrochloride) 200mg and 1g powder for solution for infusion is now additionally indicated in combination with paclitaxel for the treatment of patients with metastatic breast cancer who have relapsed following adjuvant/neoadjuvant chemotherapy (Lilly). The dose for this indication is paclitaxel 175mg/m² administered on day one over three hours as an intravenous infusion, followed by gemcitabine 1,250mg/m² as a 30–60 minute intravenous infusion on days one and eight of each 21-day cycle. Dose reduction with each cycle or within a cycle may be applied based on the amount of toxicity experienced by the patient. See SPC.

Zometa

The summary of product characteristics for Zometa (zoledronic acid) concentrate for solution for infusion now states that osteonecrosis has been reported in patients with cancer receiving treatment regimens including bisphosphonates (Novartis). It also now states that a dental examination with appropriate preventive dentistry should be considered before treatment with bisphosphonates in patients with concomitant risk factors and that patients should avoid invasive dental procedures if possible during treatment. See SPC.

DISCONTINUED PRODUCTS

Provera

Provera (medroxyprogesterone acetate) tablets 200mg, packs of 100, have been discontinued (Pfizer). Packs of 30 tablets will continue to be available.

Sustac

Sustac (glyceryl trinitrate) prolonged release tablets 10mg have been discontinued (Forest Laboratories). Both other strengths remain available.

Multiload

Multiload intra-uterine devices Multiload Cu250 and Multiload Cu250 Short are being discontinued when current stocks are exhausted (Organon). Multiload Cu375 will continue to be available.

DRUG TARIFF UPDATES

Scottish shortages

The Scottish Pharmaceutical General Council has classified oxybutinin 2.5mg tablets and carbamazepine 200mg tablets as shortages from November 2004 until the end of January 2005.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Reading supplementary prescribing course

Applications are being accepted for the supplementary prescribing programme at the University of Reading School of Pharmacy which will start in January 2005. Further details from Angela Alexander on 01628 777451 (e-mail a.m.alexander@rdg.ac.uk). Forms for obtaining health authority funding are available from Julie Dandridge at Thames Valley Strategic Health Authority (e-mail julie.dandridge@tvha.nhs.uk)

CHRISTMAS CLOSURES

Aventis and Distriphar

The Aventis and Distriphar distribution centre will be closed from noon on 24 December until 4 January 2005. Customer services will be closed on 27 and 28 December and 3 January 2005.

Boehringer Ingelheim

Boehringer Ingelheim offices will be closed from 2pm on 24 December until 4 January 2005. Customer services will be open from 10am to 3pm on 29–31 December. Emergency cover for orders and urgent medical information will be available on 01344 424600.

Cegedim Rx

The Cegedim Rx help desk will not be available on bank holidays over the Christmas and New Year period. It will be available as normal on all other days.

AAPS Young Investigator Award



Abdul Basit, MRPharmS, lecturer in pharmaceuticals at the School of Pharmacy, University of London, has been awarded the 2004 Young Investigator Award in Pharmaceuticals and Pharmaceutical Technology from the American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists (AAPS). Dr Basit, left, is pictured receiving his award, a £25,000 cheque and a certificate from AAPS president, Mario Rocci, Jr, right, at this year's AAPS conference in Baltimore, Maryland.

Eldon Laboratories

Eldon Laboratories will be open from 8.30am to 1.30pm on 24 and 31 December and will only be dispatching timed deliveries, before noon, on those dates. It will be closed on 25–28 December and 1–3 January. Further information on 0800 616132.

Lundbeck

The offices of Lundbeck will be closed from 12.30pm on 24 December until 8.45am on 4 January 2005. A medical information service for urgent enquiries will be available on 29–31 December from 9am to 5pm on 01908 649966

Novartis

Novartis Pharmaceuticals main switchboard will be closed from 5.30pm on 24 December until 4 January 2005. Medical information will be available until 5pm on 24 December and from 10am until 4pm on 29–31 December. Customer care (for orders) will be available until noon on 24 December and between 10am and 3pm on 29–31 December. An emergency medical information service will be available outside these hours on 01276 698370.

Shire Pharmaceuticals

The medical information department of Shire Pharmaceuticals will be open 9am to 12.30pm on 24 December,

closed on 27 and 28 December, open from 9am to 5pm on 29 and 30 December, open from 9am to 3pm on 31 December and closed on 3 January 2005. The normal out of hours service will operate when the office is closed.

Specials Laboratory

The Specials Laboratory will be open from 8.30am to 4pm for a limited service on 24 and 31 December and open as normal on 29 and 30 December. Further information on 0800 0284925.

CORRECTIONS

Eleanor Woodford

Eleanor M. Woodford is a PhD student at Aston University, not at the London School of Pharmacy as stated in last week's *Journal* (PJ, 11 December, p858).

Levothyroxine solution

In a letter from James I. Wells published in last week's *Journal* (PJ, 11 December, p852), the target dose of thyroxine should have been 10µg/ml and the pore size of the filters should have been 0.47µm, and not as stated.

Next issue

The next issue of *The Journal*, dated 1/8 January 2005, will close for press on Tuesday 4 January and should be with members by 7 January.