

## NEW MEDICINES

### Avastin

COMPOSITION: Bevacizumab 25mg/ml.

PRESENTATION: Concentrate for solution for infusion.

CLASS: Monoclonal antibody.

INDICATIONS: First-line treatment of patients with metastatic carcinoma of the colon or rectum in combination with intravenous 5-fluorouracil and folinic acid, or 5-fluorouracil, folinic acid and irinotecan.

DOSAGE: 5mg/kg body weight given once every 14 days as an intravenous infusion. The initial dose should be delivered over 90 minutes. If well tolerated the second infusion may be administered over 60 minutes and subsequent infusions over 30 minutes. Do not administer as an intravenous push or bolus. Avastin should not be administered or mixed with glucose solutions. See SPC.

MAJOR CAUTIONS: Caution should be exercised in patients at increased risk of developing gastrointestinal perforations, patients with uncontrolled hypertension, patients with an increased risk of developing thromboembolic events, and patients with risk factors for the development of congestive heart failure. Avastin should not be used in patients at risk of CNS haemorrhage or be initiated for at least 28 days following major surgery. See SPC.

CONTRAINDICATIONS:

Hypersensitivity to Chinese hamster ovary cell products or other recombinant human or humanised antibodies. Pregnancy. Patients with untreated CNS metastases.

SIDE EFFECTS: The most serious adverse events in clinical trials were gastrointestinal perforations, haemorrhage and arterial thromboembolism. The most frequently observed events were asthenia, diarrhoea, nausea and pain.

LEGAL CATEGORY: POM.

NET PRICE: 100mg/4ml £242.66, 400mg/16ml £924.40.

CONTACT DETAILS: Roche, 40 Broadwater Road, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire AL7 3AY. Telephone 01707 390378.

## PRESCRIPTION PRODUCTS

### Alendronic acid

Alendronic acid tablets are now available from Teva

Pharmaceuticals. Net price, 4 £22.79. Legal category: POM.

### Atenolol tablets

Atenolol tablets are now available from Almus Pharmaceuticals. Net price, 28, 25mg £0.61, 50mg £0.72, 100mg £0.91. Legal category: POM.

### Selenase

Selenase (selenium) solution for injection and oral solution 50µg per ml is now available from Oxford Nutrition. Net price, solution for injection, 500µg (10x10ml) £37.50, 100µg (10x2ml) £9.30. Legal category: POM. Oral solution, 500µg (10x10ml) £30.75, 100µg (20x2ml) £10.50. Legal category: P. The marketing authorisation holder is Biosyn Arzneimittel GmbH.

### Truvada tablets

Truvada (emtricitabine 200mg and tenofovir disoproxil 245mg) tablets have been launched by Gilead. Net price, 30, £418.50. Legal category: POM.

## DISCONTINUED PRODUCTS

### Tranxene capsules

Tranxene (clorazepate dipotassium; Boehringer Ingelheim) capsules 15mg will be discontinued when current stocks are exhausted. The company expects this to be by the end of March. Tranxene capsules 7.5mg will remain available until February 2006. Further details from medical information on 01344 424600, extension 1590.

## COUNTER PRODUCTS

### Numark allergy products

The following products are now available to Numark members. Numark Loratadine Liquid (loratadine 5mg/5ml), recommended retail price 100ml £4.29, Numark Allergy Eye Drops (sodium cromoglicate 2 per cent), recommended retail price 10ml £3.99, Numark Antihistamine Oral Solution (chlorphenamine 2mg/5ml), recommended retail price 150ml £3.29. Legal categories: all P.

## SUPPLY ISSUES

### Cardura XL

Cardura XL (doxazosin; Pfizer) tablets 4mg and 8mg are currently out of stock. The company says intermittent stock problems may continue in the short term.

### Hypurin insulin

Hypurin Bovine Lente (insulin

## Glasgow pharmacist wins local NHS award



Elizabeth Roddick, FRPharmS, a community pharmacist from Glasgow, has been awarded a Greater Glasgow Health Council NHS award. The awards recognise the contribution an individual or a department has made to providing outstanding service within the NHS to the local people. She is pictured (centre) with Bailie John Gray, Glasgow City Council and Pat Bryson, convener, Glasgow Health Council. Mrs Roddick is the first pharmacist to have received the award.

zinc suspension; CP Pharmaceuticals) 10ml vials are now back in stock. Limited stocks of Hypurin Porcine Neutral (soluble insulin) 3ml cartridges are now available, with further batches expected in early April. Hypurin Porcine Isophane (isophane insulin) 3ml cartridges and Hypurin Porcine 30/70 Mix (biphasic isophane insulin) 3ml cartridges are expected to be available at the end of March. Further details from CP Pharmaceuticals customer services on 01978 661261.

## DRUG TARIFF UPDATES

### Rifampicin capsules

The Department of Health and the National Assembly for Wales have agreed to allow "No cheaper stock obtainable" (NCSO) endorsements for rifampicin capsules 300mg for March prescriptions.

## ABOUT PEOPLE

### Faculty of Homeopathy

Lee Kayne, MRPharmS, a community pharmacist from Glasgow, has been admitted to the Faculty of Homeopathy. He is the first pharmacist to be awarded full membership. Dr Kayne is currently pharmacy dean of the faculty.

## AWARDS

### Integrated health

Health care practitioners in Wales are invited to apply for the Prince of Wales's Foundation for

Integrated Health awards. A sum of £2,500, funded by the Welsh Assembly Government, will be awarded to the best example of a health care project in Wales that provides both complementary and conventional medicine for patients. Application packs from Lucy Blunden on 020 7619 6154 (e-mail lucy@fihealth.org.uk). Closing date 3 May.

## EASTER CLOSURES

### Eldon Laboratories

Eldon Laboratories will be closed from 25–28 March. There will be timed deliveries until 12 noon on 26 March only. Orders dispatched on 24 March will be delivered by 12 noon on 26 March at the standard next day courier charge unless otherwise requested. Further details on 0800 616132.

## FUTURE EVENTS

### GHP IT interest group

Guild of Healthcare Pharmacists IT interest group seminar entitled "Progress and problems", the Westley Hotel, Acocks Green, Birmingham, 27 April. Cost members £90, NHS employees £110, others £140. Details from Jean Fairhurst on 01727 750191 (e-mail jean.fairhurst@ntlworld.com).

## CLARIFICATION

### Equasym

Equasym XL (methylphenidate hydrochloride) is a Schedule 2 Controlled Drug (PJ, 26 February, p231).

## Clarification

The telephone number for information about Avastin is 0800 328 1629, and not as stated.