

NEW MEDICINES

Xyrem

COMPOSITION: Sodium oxybate.
PRESENTATION: 500mg/ml oral solution.
CLASS: Central nervous system depressant.
INDICATIONS: Treatment of cataplexy in adult patients with narcolepsy.
DOSAGE: The recommended starting dose is 2.25g (4.5ml) twice a day. One dose should be taken orally on getting into bed and the second dose taken between 2.5 and 4 hours later. The dose should be titrated up to a maximum of 4.5g (9ml) twice a day, by adjusting up or down in increments of 0.75g (1.5ml) per dose. A minimum of two weeks is recommended between dosage increments. Each dose of Xyrem must be diluted before ingestion with 60 ml of water using the dosing cup provided. Food significantly reduces the bioavailability of sodium oxybate. Patients should eat at least two to three hours before taking the medicine and observe the same timing of dosing in relation to meals. If the patient stops medication for more than 14 consecutive days, titration should be restarted from the lowest dose.
PRECAUTIONS: Patients should be evaluated for a history of drug abuse and such patients should be closely monitored. Use should be avoided in patients with porphyria. Patients should be questioned and monitored for signs of central nervous system or respiratory depression, and alcohol, benzodiazepines and other CNS depressant drugs should not be used concomitantly. Mental alertness and motor co-ordination can be affected and patients should not drive within at least six hours of the dose. Patients should be thoroughly evaluated and monitored if neuropsychological effects occur (see side effects). Reduced sodium intake should be carefully considered in patients with heart failure, hypertension or renal impairment. The starting dose should be halved in patients with hepatic impairment due to reduced clearance of the drug. Seizures have been observed in patients, and therefore use in patients with epilepsy is not recommended. See SPC.
SIDE EFFECTS: Very common (>1/10) sleep disorder, dizziness, headache, nausea (more common in women). Common (>1/100 to <1/10) hypersensitivity, anorexia, abnormal dreams, abnormal thinking, confusion,

disorientation, nightmares, sleepwalking, depression, hallucination, agitation, sleep paralysis, somnolence, tremor, amnesia, blurred vision, vomiting, upper abdominal pain, diarrhoea, sweating, rash, muscle cramps, nocturnal enuresis, asthenia, fatigue, feeling drunk, blood pressure increase.
LEGAL CATEGORY: CD (Benz) POM.
NET PRICE: 180ml £360.
CONTACT DETAILS: UCB Pharma, 208 Bath Road, Slough, SL1 3WE. Telephone 01753 534655.

SPC CHANGES

Aprovel

The summary of product characteristics for Aprovel (irbesartan; Bristol-Myers Squibb) now has a precaution that the medicine should not be taken by people with rare hereditary problems of galactose intolerance, the Lapp lactase deficiency or glucose-galactose malabsorption. The following very rare undesirable effects have been added: arthralgia, myalgia, muscle cramps and leukocytoclastic vasculitis. See SPC.

Neoclarityn

The summaries of product characteristics for Neoclarityn (desloratadine; Schering-Plough) tablets and syrup have been updated to include psychomotor hyperactivity and seizures as undesirable effects. See SPC.

Nebilet

Nebilet (nebibolol; A Menarini) is now indicated in the treatment of stable mild and moderate chronic heart failure in addition to standard therapies in elderly patients aged 70 years or over. The summary of product characteristics states that initiation of therapy for this indication should be supervised by the physician for at least two hours and initial up-titration should be undertaken until the optimal individualised dose is reached. Patients should be started on 1.25mg once daily, increasing at one- to two-weekly intervals to 2.5mg once daily, then 5mg once daily, up to a maximum of 10mg once daily if tolerated. Initiation and titration should be regularly monitored. Treatment is usually long-term and should not be stopped abruptly. Because doses are titrated to the individual, dosage adjustment is not required in elderly patients or individuals with renal insufficiency. The list of

contraindications has been updated and now lists acute heart failure, cardiogenic shock and episodes of heart failure decompensation requiring intravenous inotropic therapy. The drug interactions section has been updated and expanded and a new section containing data on adverse reactions in CHF has been added. Further data for the CHF indication have been added to the pharmacodynamic properties section. See SPC.

Tamiflu

The summary of product characteristics for Tamiflu (oseltamivir; Roche) has been updated to include an indication for post exposure prevention in adults and children one year of age or older following contact with a clinically diagnosed influenza case when influenza virus is circulating in the community. New prophylactic dosage information is included for children aged one to 12. The prophylactic course is taken once daily for 10 days at the following doses: children 15kg or under, 30mg; 15kg to 23kg, 45mg; 23kg to 40kg, 60mg; over 40kg or adult, one 75mg capsule (or 75mg of suspension if unable to swallow capsules). See SPC.

Subutex

The summary of product characteristics for Subutex (buprenorphine hydrochloride; Schering-Plough) now contains a warning for clinicians about the risk of intravenous abuse and misuse, particularly at the beginning of treatment. A warning is now included about severe acute hepatic injury in the context of misuse, especially by the intravenous route. See SPC.

Sustiva

The summary of product characteristics for Sustiva (efavirenz; Bristol-Myers Squibb) has been updated and the special warnings and precautions section now contains information about seizures. Convulsions have been observed rarely in patients, generally in those with known history of seizures. Drug interaction information has been included for carbamazepine, phenytoin, phenobarbital and other anticonvulsants. Co-administration with carbamazepine has been shown to elicit a two-way interaction resulting in reduced blood levels of both drugs. Co-administration with atorvastatin, pravastatin or simvastatin has been shown to reduce statin levels, and cholesterol

levels should be periodically monitored with dosage adjustment of the statins if required. The undesirable effects paragraph on lipids has been amended. See SPC.

Zaditen

The summary of product characteristics for Zaditen (ketotifen hydrogen fumarate; Novartis) now states that Zaditen is only indicated for symptomatic treatment of allergic conditions including rhinitis and conjunctivitis, and for children from three years of age, rather than two years. There is now a warning that Zaditen may lower seizure threshold. Convulsions have been reported very rarely and the SPC recommends using Zaditen with caution in patients with a history of epilepsy. The SPC now lists very rare increase in liver enzymes and hepatitis as undesirable effects. New advice on the management of overdose is also included. See SPC.

Zometa

The summary of product characteristics for Zometa (zoledronic acid; Novartis) now includes a special warning about infrequent reports of severe and sometimes incapacitating bone, joint or muscle pain in patients taking bisphosphonates. Hypotension has been added to the list of uncommon cardiovascular disorders. In very rare cases hypotension has led to syncope or circulatory collapse, primarily in patients with underlying risk factors. See SPC.

COUNTER PRODUCTS

Lamisil Once

Lamisil Once (terbinafine) 1 per cent solution is now available from Novartis. Recommended retail price, 4g £9.99. Legal category: P.



DISCONTINUED PRODUCTS

Bricanyl MDI

Bricanyl (terbutaline; AstraZeneca) 0.25mg 100 and 400 dose metered dose inhalers have been discontinued. Other Bricanyl formulations remain available. Medical information on 01582 836836.

DRUG TARIFF UPDATES

NCSOs

The Department of Health and the National Assembly for Wales have agreed to allow "no cheaper stock obtainable" (NCSO) endorsements for diamorphine 500mg injection ampoules and ketoprofen 100mg capsules for February 2006 prescriptions.

PRODUCT MISCELLANY

Almus livery change

Almus Pharmaceuticals is introducing a patient-friendly packaging design for its range of generics, with colour and actual-size pill identification on the front and back of the pack. Further information on 0800 9177983.



CoaguChek XS

CoaguChek XS international normalised ratio testing device has been launched by Roche Diagnostics. The device is designed for patient use. Net price, £469. Legal category: medical devices. Further information for health professionals of 01273 484567.

WANTS

Earliest Orridge advert

Orridge would like to hear from anybody who has an original or copy of the earliest Orridge advertisement published in *The Journal* before 16 October 1875. Nick Holland-Brown at Orridge can be e-mailed at nick@orridgesales.co.uk

AWARDS

Epilepsy care

Nominations are invited for the BEST health award for epilepsy.

Any individual or team working in epilepsy care can be nominated at www.jointepilepsycouncil.org.uk or by contacting Sharon Harvey on 01943 871852. Both individual and team categories will be awarded a trophy and £500. Closing date 31 March.

ABOUT PEOPLE

Pharmacist obtains MBA

Robbie McGregor, MRPharmS, member of the standing committee of the Scottish Pharmaceutical General Council and a director of Lindsay and Gilmour pharmacy, has graduated with a master of business administration from Edinburgh's Napier University.

RESOURCES

Community resources

National Pharmacy Association MUR resource pack (price £38), MUR and prescription intervention service record book (price £10.95) and "how to use" patient leaflets (price £18.50) are now available. Further information from sales@npa.co.uk

Tariff handbook

The National Pharmacy Association Drug Tariff handbook for 2006 is now available. Contact NPA on 01727 832161. Price £35.

FUTURE EVENTS

Electronic prescribing

Gloucestershire Local Pharmaceutical Committee is holding meetings for community pharmacists (locums in particular), with a presentation about electronic prescribing service local arrangements and an opportunity to register for the EPS smart card. 1 March, Forrest Hills Golf Club, Coleford; 2 March, Stratton House Hotel, Stratton, Cirencester; 8 March, The Bear, Rodborough, Stroud; 9 March, Holiday Inn, Gloucester. Events start at 7pm. Registration forms are available from Les Yeates on 0121 6873343 (e-mail Lesyeates@dsl.pipex.com).

SE regional conference

South East England Regional Committee annual regional conference, entitled "Shipshape after Shipman", 5 March, Felbridge Hotel, East Grinstead. Further information from Roy Daisley on 01273 642080 (e-mail r.w.daisley@brighton.ac.uk).

RECALLED PRODUCTS

Clexane injection

Sanofi-aventis is recalling the following batches of Clexane (enoxaparin sodium) 20mg and 40mg syringes due to a small percentage of syringes containing excessive active ingredient.

Batch number	Strength	Expiry date	First distributed
2715	20mg	01/08/2008	04/11/2005
2725	40mg	31/08/2008	28/11/2005
4715	40mg	01/04/2008	18/07/2005
4833	40mg	01/08/2008	10/11/2005
4848	40mg	01/09/2008	11/11/2005

Any remaining stock should be quarantined and returned to normal suppliers for credit or replacement. Medical information on 0800 281973. Customer services on 0800 854430.

Good manufacturing practice symposium

Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency one-day good manufacturing practice symposium, 7 March, Moat House Hotel, York. Cost £499. Registration available online at www.mhra.gov.uk.

Artificial intelligence

Institute of Pharmaceutical Innovation, University of Bradford, two-day course on the application of artificial intelligence software in the development and processing of new products, 7-8 March. Cost (AIIG non-members) £1,762.50. Further information from Riddhi Shukla on 01274 236196.

Public health

Pharmacy public health special interest group meeting, 13 March (evening), Telford International Conference Centre, and 5 April, De Montfort University. Further information from Jan Croxall (e-mail jcroxall@dmu.ac.uk). Website www.ukpha.org.uk.

Neurology

Neurology update conference for pharmacists and nurses organised by OEC Conferences, 23 March, 9.30am to 5pm, central London. Cost from £109 (depending on date of registration). Further details available via cco@onetel.com.

Primary Care Pharmacists Association

Primary Care Pharmacists Association annual conference and awards, entitled "Medicines management in long-term conditions", 20 March, National Liberal Club, London. Cost £90 before 20 February, £120 after (members), £140 (non-members), discounts available. Further information available is

via michelle@pharmacomm.co.uk.

Preregistration training

Study day for preregistration trainees on the Drug-Tariff, 21 April (change of date), Wembley, Middlesex. Further information is available on 07886 471559 (email pre-reg@communitypharmacy.co.uk)

AAH 2006 convention

AAH 2006 convention, themed around philosophy, politics and pharmacy, Athens, Greece, 2-7 June. Further information is available on 020 7420 1780.

Social pharmacy

International Social Pharmacy Workshop, 11-14 July, St Anne's College, Oxford. Cost £565 for full programme (before 1 April) £665 (after 1 April). Further information is available from Jane Doughty (e-mail jane.doughty@nottingham.ac.uk). Website www.nottingham.ac.uk/pharmacy/ispw.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

PSNC regional nominees

Since *The Journal* went to press last week (*PJ*, 11 February, p158), Muhamad Hanif Seedat has withdrawn from the North West Thames region PSNC representative election. Ashwin Tanna will not be standing for the South East Thames region.

CORRECTION

NRLS reports

The national reporting and learning system is receiving new reports at the rate of 70,000 per month and not 17,000 per month as stated in last week's issue (p156 and p180).

Correction

Contact details for the International Social Pharmacy Workshop on 11–14 July are Janeh.doughty@nottingham.ac.uk (website www.nottingham.ac.uk/pharmacy/ispw and not as stated (p201).