

NEW MEDICINES

Grazax

COMPOSITION: Standardised grass pollen allergen extract from timothy (*Phleum pratense*).

PRESENTATION: Oral lyophilisate, 75,000 standardised quality units tablet (SQ-T).

CLASS: Allergen extract.

INDICATIONS: Grass-pollen-induced rhinitis and conjunctivitis in adult patients with clinically relevant symptoms and diagnosed with a positive skin prick test and/or specific IgE test to grass pollen.

DOSAGE: One sublingual tablet daily.

CONTRAINDICATIONS: Malignancy or systemic diseases affecting the immune system; inflammatory conditions in the oral cavity with severe symptoms such as oral lichen planus with ulcerations or severe oral mycosis; uncontrolled or severe asthma.

PRECAUTIONS: Food and beverage should not be taken for five minutes following the dose. Grazax should only be initiated by physicians with experience in treating allergic diseases and the first dose should be taken under medical supervision. No efficacy data on treatment with Grazax beyond one grass pollen season are available yet. Patients should stop taking Grazax for seven days to allow healing following oral surgery, including dental extractions. Local allergic reactions (primarily mild or moderate) can be expected; treatment (eg, with antihistamines) should be considered if the patient experiences significant local adverse reactions. If severe systemic reactions, angioedema, difficulty swallowing, difficulty breathing, changes in voice or feeling of fullness in the throat occur a physician should be contacted immediately and Grazax should be discontinued permanently or until otherwise advised by the physician. If patients with asthma experience deterioration, treatment should be discontinued and evaluated. Physicians should be aware that Grazax contains fish-derived gelatine when initiating treatment for patients with severe fish allergy.

SIDE EFFECTS: Very common (>1/10) ear pruritus, throat irritation, sneezing, mouth oedema, oral pruritus. Common (>1/100, <1/10) headache, oral paraesthesia, eye pruritus, conjunctivitis, cough, asthma, pharyngitis, rhinorrhoea, nasal congestion, nasal passage irritation, rhinitis, throat tightness, oropharyngeal swelling, dyspepsia and nausea, oral hypoesthesia or discomfort, oral mucosal blistering,

swollen tongue or glossodynia, pruritus, fatigue.

LEGAL CATEGORY: POM.

NET PRICE: 30, £67.50.

CONTACT DETAILS: ALK-Abelló (UK) Ltd, 1 Tealgate, Hungerford, Berkshire RG17 0YT (tel 01488 686016).

SPC CHANGES

Advate

The summaries of product characteristics for Advate (octocog alfa, recombinant human coagulation factor VIII; Baxter) now state that Advate can be stored at room temperature for up to two months within the approved 24-month shelf life at 2–8°C. See SPCs.

Atarax

The summary of product characteristics for Atarax (hydroxyzine hydrochloride; Alliance) has been updated to include information about reformulation of the tablets. The tablets are now described as film-coated, green and coded with "AX" on one side. The list of excipients has also been changed. See SPC.

Sutent

The summary of product characteristics for Sutent (sunitinib; Pfizer) has been updated to include a new indication for the treatment of advanced and/or metastatic renal cell carcinoma (MRCC). The special warnings section now includes information about QT interval prolongation and pancreatic function. The undesirable effects section now states that hepatitis and hepatic failure occurred in <1 per cent of patients and prolonged QT interval in <0.1 per cent." See SPC.

PRESCRIPTION PRODUCTS

Copegus

Copegus (ribavirin; Roche) film-coated tablets are now available in 400mg strength. Net price: 56, £308.31. Legal category: POM.

Formoterol

Formoterol Easyhaler 12µg/actuation dry powder inhaler 120 dose is now available from Ranbaxy. Net price: 1, £24.80. Legal category: POM.

DISCONTINUED PRODUCTS

Burinex K

Burinex K (bumetanide 0.5mg/potassium chloride 573mg) tablets

have been discontinued by LEO Pharma and supplies are no longer available. Medical information on 01844 276214.

SUPPLY ISSUES

Atarax

Normal supplies of Atarax (hydroxyzine hydrochloride; Alliance) tablets 25mg have resumed. Atarax tablets 10mg remain out of stock, although normal supplies are expected to resume within the next few weeks.

Velosulin

Novo Nordisk has previously announced that Velosulin (insulin human rDNA) 100IU/ml vials will no longer be available from the end of December 2007. However, due to exhaustion of stocks, Velosulin will now be unavailable after 15 June 2007.

PRODUCTS MISCELLANY

Complan Shake

Complan Shake is now available from Complan Foods in vanilla, strawberry and chocolate flavours. Advisory Committee on Borderline Substances approved. Net price: 4 x 57g, £3.26.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

EIPG website

The European Industrial Pharmacists Group (EIPG) website is now located at www.eipg.eu.

Pharmacovigilance

A pharmacovigilance discussion group has been formed, sponsored by *Pharmaco Vigilance Review*, to facilitate exchange of information relating to pharmacovigilance. Further information at www.pharmweb.net/pv.html.

AWARDS

Bayer Schering Award

The College of Pharmacy Practice is seeking nominations for the 2006 Bayer Schering Award. Nominations for the award should

be made in writing to the chief executive of the College of Pharmacy Practice, 28 Warwick Row, Coventry CV1 1EY. Nominees should not know that their names are being put forward, but a full CV and a case for making the award should be submitted. The winner of the award will be designated an honorary fellow of the college and will receive an engraved glass goblet. Closing date 16 March.

Leaders for change

The Health Foundation is looking to support 14 health care professionals who are leading service improvement at a local level to attend a modular learning programme in change management at Lancaster University Management School. The "Leaders for change" scheme provides a £3,000 allowance for training and development. Further information via www.health.org.uk/ourawards/awards. Closing date 4 May.

ABOUT PEOPLE

Karen Acott

Karen Acott, MRPharmS, has been elected chairman of the board of the Faculty of Prescribing and Medicines Management, College of Pharmacy Practice. Mrs Acott has been a member of the FPMM board since 2004.

David Green

David Green, MRPharmS, has been elected chairman of the Primary & Community Care Pharmacy Network.

Alison Wilkinson

Alison Wilkinson, RegPharmTech, was awarded pharmacy technician student of the year at West Cheshire College last year. Mrs Wilkinson was the first student technician at the college to receive a distinction in every module of the two-year course.

Contact us

Notice-board welcomes information relevant to pharmacists. There is no charge for inclusion of an item but *The Journal* is unable to guarantee a particular publication date.

From March, items received before 1pm on Monday will be considered for publication in that week's *Journal*. Information can be e-mailed to notice-board@pharmj.org.uk

RESOURCES

BHF obesity awareness

The British Heart Foundation and Weight Concern have produced "Taking control of your weight", a booklet for patients and health professionals about the health risks of obesity. Available free of charge on 0870 600 6566.

Controlled Drugs

The National Prescribing Centre has launched a new edition of its guide on the management of Controlled Drugs in England. "A guide to good practice in the management of controlled drugs (England)" is available free-of-charge from the NPC website (www.npc.co.uk).

Gynaecological cancers

A booklet from WellBeing of Women, providing women with information about gynaecological cancers, is available free of charge by telephoning 020 7772 6400 (e-mail wellbeingofwomen@rcog.org.uk).

Mental health

The Royal College of Psychiatrists has released two new

self-help leaflets about obsessive compulsive disorder and support for people who self harm.

Available online via www.rcpsych.ac.uk (e-mail leaflets@rcpsych.ac.uk).

NACC patient pack

The National Association for Colitis and Crohn's Disease has launched a new information pack that can be offered to patients with inflammatory bowel disease. The pack is available free of charge by contacting 01727 830038 (e-mail nacc@nacc.org.uk).

REUNIONS

Heriot-Watt 1976

An informal reunion of 1976 pharmacy graduates from Heriot-Watt University is being planned to take place on 30 July in Edinburgh. Further information from Kathy Bishop (née Docherty) on 01480 413949 (e-mail kathy-bishop@tinyonline.co.uk).

Nottingham/Malaysia

An alumni event for all University of Nottingham pharmacy

graduates will take place at the University's Malaysia Campus, Semenyih, Selangor, Malaysia, 18 March. Further information from Puan Zabidah at Zabidah.Yusof@nottingham.edu.my.

FUTURE EVENTS

BPSA

British Pharmaceutical Students' Association "Science in practice" conference for pharmacy students and preregistration trainees, 4 March, Aston University, Birmingham. Cost £5. Further information from Sian Jackson (jacksons2@cardiff.ac.uk).

APTUK conference

Association of Pharmacy Technicians UK annual conference, "Celebrating diversity", 19–22 April, Birmingham. Costs and further information at www.aptuk.org/files/2007conferenceprogramme.pdf (e-mail aptukconference2007@googlemail.com).

Herbal medicine

Royal London Homoeopathic Hospital and College of

Practitioners of Phytotherapy joint seminar, "Enhancing patient outcome with herbal medicine", The Eden Project, Cornwall, 28 April. Cost £120. Further details at www.phytotherapists.org/events.htm (e-mail pamela.bull@btpopenworld.com).

ESF summer school

European Science Foundation summer school in nanomedicine, Hensol, Vale of Glamorgan, 10–15 June. Cost £900 (single occupancy), £750 (double occupancy). Further information at <http://nanoschool.cardiff.ac.uk> (e-mail nanoschool@cardiff.ac.uk).

Pharmacogenetics

North West Genetics Knowledge Park study day on pharmacogenetics, aimed at health care professionals with an interest in how genetic information can be used to direct prescribing to improve drug effectiveness and avoid adverse drug reactions, Manchester, 5 July. Cost £80 (before 1 March), £95. Further information from Katherine Payne (katherine.payne@manchester.ac.uk) or book online via www.nowgen.org.uk/events.

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