

NEW MEDICINES

Januvia

COMPOSITION: Sitagliptin.
PRESENTATION: Film-coated tablet.
CLASS: dipeptidyl peptidase 4 (DPP-4) inhibitor.
INDICATIONS: Improvement of glycaemic control for patients with type 2 diabetes mellitus, in combination with metformin when diet and exercise, plus metformin, do not provide adequate glycaemic control. For patients with type 2 diabetes mellitus in whom use of a thiazolidinedione is appropriate, Januvia is indicated in combination with the thiazolidinedione when diet and exercise plus the thiazolidinedione alone do not provide adequate glycaemic control.
DOSAGE: 100mg once daily.
PRECAUTIONS: Januvia is not recommended for use in patients below 18 years of age. Januvia should not be used for patients

with type 1 diabetes or for the treatment of diabetic ketoacidosis. Patients with moderate to severe renal insufficiency should not be treated with Januvia.
SIDE EFFECTS: In combination with metformin: common (>1/100, <1/10) nausea. In combination with thiazolidinediones: common (>1/100, <1/10) hypoglycaemia, flatulence, peripheral oedema.
LEGAL CATEGORY: POM.
NET PRICE: 28 x 100mg, £33.36.
CONTACT DETAILS: Merck Sharp & Dohme, Hertford Road, Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire EN11 9BU (tel 01992 467272).

SPC CHANGES

Bondronat

The summary of product characteristics for Bondronat (ibandronic acid; Roche) has been updated. It now states that the dose should be infused over at least 15 minutes and that a shorter (ie, 15 minute) infusion time should only be used for patients with normal renal function or mild renal impairment. See SPC.

Xalatan and Xalacom

The summaries of product characteristics for Xalatan (latanoprost; Pharmacia) and Xalacom (latanoprost, timolol; Pharmacia) now include the following additional adverse events: arthralgia, blurred vision, conjunctivitis, darkening of palpebral skin of eyelids, dizziness,

dry eye, headache, keratitis, localised skin reaction on eyelids, myalgia, palpitations. See SPCs.

Calcichew

The summaries of product characteristics for Calcichew and Calcichew Forte tablets (calcium carbonate; Shire) and Calcichew-D3 and Calcichew-D3 Forte (calcium carbonate, colecalciferol; Shire) now include updated advice on the treatment of hypercalcaemia. See SPCs.

PRESCRIPTION PRODUCTS

Efexor

Efexor XL (venlafaxine; Wyeth) capsules are now available in 14 x 75mg packs and 14 x 150mg packs. Net price: 14 x 75mg, £11.71; 14 x 150mg, £19.52. Legal category: POM. Efexor (venlafaxine; Wyeth) tablets are now available in 28 x 37.5mg packs and 28 x 75mg packs. Net price: 28 x 37.5mg, £11.71; 28 x 75mg, £19.51. Legal category: POM.

Premarin 0.3mg

Premarin (conjugated oestrogens) tablets 0.3mg are now available from Wyeth. Net price: 84, £9.72. Legal category: POM.

VAQTA Paediatric

VAQTA Paediatric (hepatitis A vaccine, inactivated; Sanofi Pasteur MSD) is now available as a pre-filled syringe. Net price: 1, £15.65. Legal category: POM.

ABOUT PEOPLE

Keele prescribing courses

The following pharmacists have recently completed Keele University's independent prescribing conversion course: Beverley Coleman, Rosemary Clarke, Emma Graham-Clarke, Clair Huckerby, Mohammed Ibrahim, Natasha Jacques, Sharon Maxted, Anil Patel, Bharat Patel, Karen Ratcliffe, David Rovardi, Lorna Smalley, Christopher Smith, Elizabeth Walker and Helen Williamson. In addition, the following students have successfully completed the university's supplementary prescribing course: Cynthia Agbenyegah, Zahid Chisti, Gulamraza Dato, Elaine Davies, Kiran Dhaliwal, Anne Goodey, Sarah Hughes, Murtaza Master, Anne Noott, Claire Parker, Kevin Ratcliffe, Sukbinder Salh and Kuldip Singh.

AWARDS

Polymer work

Kevin Shakesheff, professor of tissue engineering at the University of Nottingham School of Pharmacy and director of the university's Centre for Biomolecular Sciences, has received the Pharmaceutical Sciences World Congress research achievement award for his work on the application of injectable polymers in regenerative medicine.

Journal Oversight Board meeting

An open meeting of the Journal Oversight Board for PJ Publications will be held on Thursday 3 May from 11am in the Society's Council Chamber. Those wishing to attend should contact Emma Kerby-Evans (e-mail: emma.kerby-evans@pharmj.org.uk or telephone 020 7572 2414) by Monday 30 April.

Journal Oversight Board

The Journal Oversight Board (JOB) is an independent body set up to adjudicate in the case of complaints about the editorial content of *The Pharmaceutical Journal* and related publications or the handling of such complaints by its editorial staff. It has investigated the following case.

The complaint The complainant (Mr X) submitted a letter to *The Pharmaceutical Journal* criticising what he saw as the "pro-evolution" stance of a column "Evolution in the balance" (*PJ*, 3 March 2007, p254) by "Onlooker". The managing editor of *The Journal* decided not to publish the letter on the grounds that he believed it would take *The Journal's* correspondence columns "in a direction that would be completely inappropriate for a professional pharmaceutical journal". He offered instead to forward the letter to the author

of the column. Mr X has described this decision as "intolerable censorship and bigotry" and has argued that it amounts to a curtailment of free speech. He also commented adversely on the accompanying cartoon.

The findings Is Mr X entitled to demand that his letter be published? Decisions about the right of publication in any journal usually lie solely in the hands of the editor of the publication, who must decide what is appropriate and what will interest his or her readership. Correspondents have no right to have their views published, although it is regarded as good practice to publish challenges and corrections, where these are legitimate, and to foster appropriate debate around previous content in the publication.

Was Mr X treated fairly in this instance? It is evident that he profoundly

disagreed with what he regarded as the anti-creationist stance in the "Onlooker" column and that he now feels he has been denied the opportunity to respond. That is a charge any editor must take seriously. However, the managing editor of *The Journal* has argued that he does not want to fill the correspondence columns with a debate over creationism, which he believes would be an inappropriate subject for a professional pharmacy journal.

The question here is whether by publishing the original article, in effect *The Journal* did initiate that debate itself. Having read the "Onlooker" column in question, we find it hard to see how any reader could conclude that this was starting such a debate. The column is a largely factual account of a row in the United States and it concludes by observing a possible link between political conservatism and creationism.

The article does not enter into a debate about the merits or otherwise of creationism and the cartoon does not, in our view, do this either.

The decision On the basis of the above, the JOB has not upheld Mr X's request to have his letter published. Given the convention in this area that it is the editor who decides what is and is not published, we would have to be satisfied that a reader had been wronged in some way and was being denied a legitimate right of reply for us to make any other recommendation. Even if a reader could argue that a legitimate debate was being suppressed by a refusal to publish a letter, we would be loath to do any more than suggest the editor reconsider his decision, but in this instance we are not convinced that it reaches that threshold.

Journal Oversight Board
3 April 2007

APPOINTMENTS

Hampshire PCT

Hampshire Primary Care Trust has appointed three new heads of medicines: Diana Dunford, MRPharmS, for its north and east area, Sue Mills, MRPharmS, for its south east area and Neil Hardy, MRPharmS, for its west area.

REUNIONS

Bath 1996

University of Bath class of 1996 pharmacy reunion weekend, 6 and 7 July. Further information from Glen Chapman on 07990 530257 (e-mail chapman_glen@hotmail.com).

RESOURCES

Type 2 diabetes tool

Keele University's department of medicines management has developed a computerised prescribing decision support tool to provide health care professionals with patient-specific, evidence-based support in the management of type 2 diabetes. Health care professionals who would like to receive a free-of-charge copy of

the decision tool can contact Simon Thomas on 01782 715458 (e-mail s.thomas@mema.keele.ac.uk).

Carers

STR Training has produced a distance learning course to support pharmacists who train carers. "A carer's guide to handling medicines" has been accredited by the College of Pharmacy Practice. Further information is available from Ian Strachan on 0151 423 0857 (e-mail ianstrachan@fsmail.net).

FUTURE EVENTS

Smoking cessation

Pharmacy Management seminar entitled "Smoking cessation — the opportunity for pharmacy", Birmingham, 3 May. Free of charge (refundable deposit of £25 payable). Further information on 0118 984 4977 (e-mail bookings@pharman.co.uk). Website www.pharman.co.uk.

Hazardous drugs

British Oncology Pharmacy Association and UK Oncology Nursing Society meeting,

SAFETY INFORMATION

Desmopressin nasal sprays

The indication for the treatment of primary nocturnal enuresis (PNE) has been removed from all desmopressin nasal spray products, including Desmospray (Ferring Pharmaceuticals Ltd), Presinex Nasal Spray (Pliva Pharma Ltd), Nocutil Desmopressin Nasal Spray (Norgine Ltd) and Desmopressin Spray (PH&T SpA), at the request of the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency. Compared with oral formulations of desmopressin, nasal forms have been associated with most of the serious adverse drug reactions reported in patients with PNE.

Patients may complete their current course of treatment. At the next routine review, patients who need ongoing treatment should be prescribed only an oral form of desmopressin. All patients who start treatment with oral desmopressin should start at the lowest recommended dose.

"Hazardous drugs — managing the risks", London, 14 June. Free of charge (members); £30 (non-members). Further information from Yvonne Blake on 01494 549100 (e-mail yvonne@succintcomm.com).

Preregistration training

Training for preregistration trainees on calculations, BNF topics, Drug Tariff, medicines ethics and practice, minor ailments, first aid and examination preparation. Further information on 07800 736299 (e-mail pre-

reg@communitypharmacy.co.uk). Website www.communitypharmacy.co.uk.

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. Information can be e-mailed to notice-board@pharmj.org.uk

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