

Sunday opening for BPC 2008

The British Pharmaceutical Conference 2008 will open on a Sunday. The conference takes place on 7–9 September and special rates are available for Royal Pharmaceutical Society members and students (£29.38). A £47 rate will be available on 7 September for non-members. Further information and booking available via www.BPC2008.org.

SPC CHANGES

Caelyx

Treatment of progressive multiple myeloma, in combination with bortezomib and for patients who have received at least one previous therapy and who have already undergone (or are unsuitable for) bone marrow transplant, has been added to the summary of product characteristics for Caelyx (liposomal doxorubicin).

Apidra

Information about dose proportionality with Apidra (insulin glulisine; Sanofi-Aventis) compared with regular human insulin has been added to the product's summary of product characteristics.

Avastin

First-line treatment of advanced or metastatic renal cell cancer, in combination with interferon alfa-2a, has been added as an indication in the summary of product characteristics for Avastin (bevacizumab; Roche).

Alimta

Information about uncommon reports from clinical trials of patients who are taking Alimta (pemetrexed; Lilly) and have

interstitial pneumonitis with respiratory insufficiency (which is sometimes fatal) and colitis has been added to the product's summary of product characteristics. Cases of radiation pneumonitis have also been reported in patients treated with radiation either before, during or after pemetrexed therapy.

Diovan

Information on doses up to 320mg for the treatment of essential hypertension has been added to the summary of product characteristics for Diovan (valsartan; Novartis).

Durogesic DTrans

Further detail about initial dose selection has been added to the summary of product characteristics for Durogesic DTrans (fentanyl; Janssen-Cilag) transdermal patch, including a recommendation that Durogesic DTrans should be used in patients who have demonstrated opioid tolerance as well as further advice for opioid-naïve patients and a statement that opioid withdrawal symptoms are possible after conversion or dose adjustment. In addition, a warning about opioid-naïve patients and respiratory depression and fatality has been added as well as information about interactions with CYP3A4 inhibitors.

Lustral

Lustral (sertraline; Pfizer) should not be used to treat children or adolescents under the age of 18 years, except those with obsessive compulsive disorder, the product's summary of product characteristics now states. Information from paediatric clinical trials has also been added to the SPC.

Mimpara

Additional information about hypotension and worsening heart failure has been added to the summary of product characteristics for Mimpara (cinacalcet; Amgen). The SPC also now states that Mimpara is not indicated for patients with chronic kidney disease who are not on dialysis. Studies have shown that such patients are at greater risk of hypocalcaemia when taking cinacalcet than those on dialysis.

Prescal

Information on dose adjustment during co-administration with cimetidine has been added to the summary of product characteristics for Prescal (isradipine; Novartis). In addition, information has been added about:

dose adjustment in elderly patients and patients with hepatic or renal dysfunction or chronic heart failure; use in patients with angina pectoris; discontinuation if hypersensitivity develops; and use while driving or using machinery. The SPC also now includes information about co-administration with rifampicin and other enzyme-inducing drugs, CYP450A inhibitors, oral baclofen, diclofenac and phenytoin.

Remicade

The indication for the treatment of ankylosing spondylitis has been extended in the summary of product characteristics for Remicade (infliximab; Schering-Plough). Remicade is now indicated for the treatment of severe, active ankylosing spondylitis in adult patients who have responded inadequately to conventional therapy. The requirements that patients have severe axial symptoms and elevated serological markers of inflammatory activity have been removed.

ViraferonPeg

The indication for use of ViraferonPeg (peginterferon alfa-2b; Schering-Plough) in combination with ribavirin has been expanded to include patients with chronic hepatitis C who have failed previous treatment with interferon alpha (pegylated or non-pegylated) and ribavirin combination therapy or interferon alpha monotherapy.

Zavedos

Information about administration in patients with severe mucositis has been added to the summary of product characteristics for Zavedos powder for solution for injection (idarubicin; Pfizer). Hypersensitivity, cardiac events, persistent myelosuppression and previous treatment with maximum cumulative doses have been added to the list of contraindications. Additional information has also been included in the warnings, interactions and adverse events sections. The SPC now recommends that men undergoing Zavedos treatment should use contraceptive measures.

PRESCRIPTION PRODUCTS

Ambirix

Ambirix (combined inactivated hepatitis A and hepatitis B recombinant adsorbed vaccine) pre-filled syringe is now available

from GlaxoSmithKline. Net price: 1 × 1ml, £31.18. Legal category: POM.

Nobligan Retard

Nobligan Retard (tramadol) prolonged release tablets are now available from Grünenthal. Net price: 60 × 100mg, £18.26. Legal category: POM.

DISCONTINUED PRODUCTS

Agenerase

GlaxoSmithKline will discontinue Agenerase (amprenavir) capsules 50mg and oral solution 15mg/ml in March. Further information on 0800 221441.

Amoxil

GlaxoSmithKline has discontinued Amoxil (amoxicillin) 125mg and 250mg syrup in 100ml. Further information on 0800 221441.

Halothane

Archimedes Pharma (formerly Concord Pharmaceuticals) has ceased producing halothane. Further information on 0118 9315050.

PRODUCTS MISCELLANY

Cetraben

Cetraben cream is now available in a 150g pump pack. This replaces the 125g tube, which has been discontinued. Net price: 150g, £2.88. Legal category: GSL.

Ensure Plus Fibre

Abbott Nutrition has renamed its Enrich Plus products Ensure Plus Fibre. The packs will display both names for a 12-month period to aid the transition. These changes are Advisory Committee on Borderline Substances approved.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Meropenem SPC

Information about dosing for renally impaired patients is incorrect in printed versions of the summary of product characteristics for Meropenem (meronem). AstraZeneca has written to healthcare professionals to make them aware of the error. The correct dose for patients with creatinine clearance of 26–50 is one unit dose every 12 hours. For patients with creatinine clearance of 10–25 it is one half-unit dose every 12 hours. For patients with creatinine clearance of <10 it is

one half-unit dose every 24 hours. Correct dosing information is available on all Meropenem packs, in the British National Formulary and at www.medicines.org.uk. Further information is available on 0800 7830033.

Schwartz products

Following acquisition of Schwarz Pharma Ltd by UCB Pharma Ltd all Schwarz products will be available from UCB from 2 January 2008. Customer services on 01753 534655.

AWARDS

Ask About Medicines

Entries are sought for the 2008 Ask About Medicines Awards for Excellence, developed in partnership with the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry. Activities and initiatives that have taken place between February 2006 and February 2008 are eligible to enter in six categories. Further information on 01225 333838 or at www.askaboutmedicines.org/awards. Closing date 29 February.

APPOINTMENTS

Alison Marshall

Alison Marshall, MRPharmS, medicines information manager at the Royal Surrey County Hospital, has been appointed visiting fellow in the Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences at the University of Surrey.

Trevor Jones

Trevor Jones, FRPharmS, has been appointed chairman of the clinical trial recruitment firm Synexus. He will be leading the company's international expansion plans.

ABOUT PEOPLE

University of Bradford

Carole Brown has been awarded a postgraduate master's degree in clinical pharmacy (community) with merit by the University of Bradford's School of Pharmacy. The following pharmacists have been awarded the postgraduate diploma in clinical pharmacy (community): Michael Child (with distinction); Khurshid Choudhry (with merit); Christine Grundy (with distinction); April Hann (with merit); Zulfiqar Jafry, Roselyn Kankondo (with merit); Ashwanth Singh; and Raman Sharma (with merit). The following pharmacists have been awarded the

postgraduate certificate in clinical pharmacy (community): Kathleen Aspin (with distinction) and Asharat Khaliq.

FUTURE EVENTS

CPD

North Western and Mersey regions of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society continuing professional development event to enable participants to learn about CPD from a Society facilitator, Up Holland, Lancashire, 20 January. Further information from Ross Groves (e-mail RLGPharm@aol.com).

Prescribing

Centre for Social Research in Health and Health Care one-day conference on safer prescribing across occupational boundaries, University of Nottingham, 22 January. Cost £30 (£20 for postgraduate students). Registration and further information on 0115 846 6248 (e-mail jade.inger@nottingham.ac.uk).

Non-medical prescribers

National Prescribing Centre conference for non-medical prescribers, entitled "Driving service redesign in 2008: opportunities and support for non-medical prescribers", London, 5 February. Free of charge. Further information at www.npc.co.uk.

Young people's health

Association for Young People's Health inaugural conference entitled "Young people's health — taking action", London, 6 February. Cost £75 (includes one-year AYPH membership). Further information at www.youngpeopleshealth.org.uk.

CORRECTIONS

Jean Coote

Information about Jean Coote was incorrect in the 15/22 December 2007 issue of the *Journal* (p717). She is currently responsible for the management of the pharmacy service at the Royal Alexandra Hospital, Paisley, and for pharmaceutical care in NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde. She was previously a clinical pharmacy area specialist and teacher practitioner and honorary lecturer in association with the University of Strathclyde. *The Journal* was given incorrect information.

COMPETITION WINNERS

Animal competition

The winner of our animal competition is Gurvinder Mahal, of Norwich, Norfolk. He will receive Marks & Spencer vouchers to the value of £50.

The total number of animals on our Christmas miscellany pages was 31, made up as follows: a pony (p720); a mouse (p721); a goldfish (p724); a gila lizard (p725); a tree frog (p726); two horses, a bird and a lobster (p729); a penguin (p730); a duck (p731); a monkey and a snake (p733); three ants (p734); six snakes and a beetle (p735); a turkey (p739); a crocodile (p740); and an elephant (p742).

Caption competition

Our Christmas caption competition winner is Chris Osborne, of Marlton, Devon, with his caption on the right

Other entries that amused our panel of judges included: "As in most pharmacies, training was on the job," from John and Jane Smith, of Beeston, King's Lynn; "Miss . . . Pot . . . Sit," from John Taylor, of Aberdour, Fife; and "Ava was



"My mummy says the letters page always gets me going"

learning the alphabet. She knew 'PJ' but the letters page was no help," from Shelley Chapman of Salford, Manchester.

Mr Osborne will receive a set of British Society for the History of Pharmacy bone china mugs.

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