

## SPC CHANGES

### CellCept

Cases of progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy (PML), sometimes fatal, have been reported in patients treated with CellCept (mycophenolate mofetil; Roche), the summaries of product characteristics for CellCept now warn. In the reported cases, patients generally had risk factors for PML, including immunosuppressant therapies and impairment of immune function. The SPCs say that consideration should be given to reducing the total immunosuppression in patients who develop PML, but in transplant patients this may place the graft at risk. Warning about cases of spontaneous abortion reported in pregnant women exposed to CellCept has also been added.

### Inovelon

Clinicians should use clinical judgement when assessing whether to prescribe Inovelon (rufinamide; Eisai) to patients at risk of further shortening of their QTc duration (eg, patients with congenital short QT syndrome or those with family history), the summary of product characteristics for Inovelon now states.

### Prostap 3 and Prostap SR

The summaries of product characteristics for Prostap 3 (leuprorelin acetate; Wyeth) and Prostap SR depot injections have been updated with the following new indications: metastatic prostate cancer; locally advanced prostate cancer, as an alternative to surgical castration; as an adjuvant treatment to radiotherapy in patients with high-risk localised or locally advanced prostate cancer; and as an adjuvant treatment to radical prostatectomy in patients

with locally advanced prostate cancer at high risk of disease progression.

### Relpax

A warning about reports of serotonin syndrome when triptans are used concomitantly with selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors or serotonin and noradrenaline reuptake inhibitors has been added to the summary of product characteristics for Relpax (eletriptan; Pfizer).

### Symmetrel

Information relating to Parkinson's disease has been added to the pharmacodynamic properties listed in the summaries of product characteristics for Symmetrel (amantadine hydrochloride). The SPCs now warn that Symmetrel has been shown to be a low affinity antagonist of the N-methyl-D-aspartate (NMDA) subtype of glutamate receptors. Overactivity of glutamatergic neurotransmission has been implicated in the generation of parkinsonian symptoms. The clinical efficacy of amantadine is thought to be mediated through its antagonism at the NMDA subtype of glutamate receptors. In addition, amantadine may also exert some anticholinergic activity, the SPCs say.

### Zevalin

New information about the need for close monitoring for signs of extravasation during administration of Zevalin (ibritumomab tiuxetan; Bayer Schering Pharma) has been added to the product's summary of product characteristics. The SPC also includes new information about the potential for Zevalin-associated radiation to cause damage to lymphoma-surrounding tissue and complications due to lymphoma swelling, and a shelf life extension to four years.

## PRESCRIPTION PRODUCTS

### Episenta

Episenta (sodium valproate) solution for injection 1,000mg/10ml is now available from Beacon. Net price: 5 x 10ml ampoules, £116.67. Legal category: POM.

### Coversyl Arginine

Coversyl Arginine (perindopril arginine) and Coversyl Arginine Plus (perindopril arginine/indapamide) tablets will be available from Servier from

## RECALLED PRODUCTS AND SAFETY ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Xyzal

UCB Pharma has initiated a voluntary recall of the following batches of Xyzal (levocetirizine) 0.5mg/ml oral solution 200ml because some units of the product contain particles of polyfluorotetraethylene (Teflon). The affected batches are:

| Batch    | Expiry date | Distributed in |
|----------|-------------|----------------|
| BN 06L19 | 11/2008     | Ireland        |
| BN 07B21 | 01/2009     | Ireland        |
| BN 07D16 | 03/2009     | UK             |

UCB Pharma has evaluated the case and concludes that this defect does not pose a significant risk to patients' health since polyfluorotetraethylene is chemically inert and non-toxic. However, to minimise any risk, UCB has initiated a voluntary recall at pharmacy level. Pharmacists should contact their wholesaler to arrange return of quarantined stock. Wholesalers should contact UCB customer services on 0800 953 0183 to arrange return of quarantined stock.

### Optium-H test strips

Abbott Diabetes Care has requested 33 affected UK hospitals to quarantine one batch of blood glucose test strips (Optium-H, lot 53929) used by healthcare professionals in conjunction with the Optium Xceed and Optium meters. Some strips in lot 53929 can give falsely low results in the hyperglycaemic range, which could result in cases of high blood sugar being missed for some patients with diabetes. Abbott is contacting all users by telephone and e-mail to ensure that affected strips are quarantined. No other batches of Optium-H blood glucose test strips are known to be affected. Further information on 0500 467466.

1 April. Net price (Coversyl Arginine): 30 x 2.5mg, £11.36; 30 x 5mg, £11.36; 30 x 10mg, £11.36. Net price (Coversyl Arginine Plus): 30 x 5mg/1.25mg, £14.49. Legal category: POM.

management at Lancaster University Management School. The "Leaders for change" scheme provides £3,000 for training and development. Further information is available from the "open for applications" section of the Health Foundation website ([www.health.org.uk](http://www.health.org.uk)). Closing date 9 May.

## DISCONTINUED PRODUCTS

### Migraleve Yellow

McNeil Products will be discontinuing the 12-tablet pharmacy pack and the 48-tablet prescription-only pack of Migraleve Yellow (paracetamol/codeine). The 24-tablet pack will continue to be available as a pharmacy medicine. Further information on 01628 822222.

## PRODUCTS MISCELLANY

### NebuChamber

NebuChamber devices are now available from AstraZeneca for use with Pulmicort metered dose inhalers. Net price: £8.56.

## AWARDS

### Leaders for change

The Health Foundation is looking to support 14 healthcare professionals who are leading service improvement at a local level to attend a modular learning programme in change

## CORRECTIONS

### AstraZeneca news

Symbicort is one of the four AstraZeneca products involved in the company's "Making the most of your medicines" scheme and not Singulair as stated in a news item last week (p327). The training described is being provided by NPC Plus, not the National Prescribing Centre itself.

### David Kent's letter

In the letter from David Kent published last week (p334), the percentage mentioned in the fourth to last paragraph should have been 0.28 per cent and not 0.0028 per cent.

### Grainger

The wife of the late Herbert Grainger died not long after their diamond wedding anniversary, and not their golden wedding anniversary as stated in last week's issue (p348).

## Contact us

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