

SPC CHANGES

Acezide

Concomitant use of alpha blocking agents may increase the antihypertensive effects of captopril and increase the risk of orthostatic hypotension, the summary of product characteristics for Acezide (captopril/hydrochlorothiazide; Bristol-Myers Squibb) now states. The SPC also now states that concomitant use of carbamazepine and hydrochlorothiazide has been associated with risk of symptomatic hyponatraemia and that electrolytes should be monitored during concomitant use or, if possible, another class of diuretics should be used.

Aredia

Aredia (disodium pamidronate; Novartis) is now contraindicated in pregnancy and during breastfeeding, the product's summary of product characteristics states. In addition, the SPC warns that patients must be assessed before administration of Aredia to ensure they are properly hydrated, especially those receiving diuretic therapy. Renal deterioration, progression to renal failure and dialysis have been reported in patients after the initial, or a single, dose of Aredia, it says. Information regarding severe and occasionally incapacitating bone, joint and/or muscle pain in patients taking bisphosphonates has also been added.

Champix

The summary of product characteristics for Champix (varenicline; Pfizer) has been updated with the following statement: "Depressed mood may be a symptom of nicotine withdrawal. Depression, rarely including suicidal ideation and suicide attempt, has been reported in patients undergoing a smoking cessation attempt. These symptoms have also been reported while attempting to quit smoking with Champix. Clinicians should be aware of the possible emergence of significant depressive symptomatology in patients undergoing a smoking cessation attempt, and should advise patients accordingly."

Lyrica

There have been post-marketing reports of congestive heart failure in some patients receiving Lyrica (pregabalin; Pfizer), the product's summary of product characteristics now states. These reactions, it says, are mostly seen in elderly cardiovascular compromised patients during pregabalin treatment for a neuropathic indication and Lyrica should be used with caution in these patients. Stevens-Johnson syndrome and urinary retention have been added to the list of adverse events with unknown frequency.

Sebivo

The summary of product characteristics for Sebivo (telbivudine; Novartis) has been updated to include information about uncommon reports of peripheral neuropathy in patients treated with Sebivo. It states: "An increased risk of peripheral neuropathy has been observed when telbivudine and pegylated interferon alpha-2a are co-administered. Such increased risk cannot be excluded for other interferons alpha (pegylated or standard). Moreover, the benefit of this combination of telbivudine with interferon alpha (pegylated or standard) is not currently established."

COUNTER PRODUCTS

Feminax Ultra



Feminax Ultra (naproxen) tablets are now available from Bayer Healthcare for treatment of women aged 15 to 50 years with primary dysmenorrhoea. Recommended retail price: 9 x 250mg, £4.29. Legal category: P.

Piriton



Piriton (chlorphenamine maleate) tablets 4mg are now available from GlaxoSmithKline in 60-tablet packs. Recommended retail price: £5.99. Legal category: P.

Members' views

Opinion Leader Research was commissioned by the Council of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society to investigate the services that members would expect to be provided by a professional body.

Following qualitative research conducted in the autumn, OLR has now begun the quantitative stage of the research. Earlier this week, the research company started to send out questionnaires to about 15 per cent of members to determine more accurately what pharmacists would be like to see a professional body provide.

The more responses OLR receives, the more the package of services that is put together that will appeal to pharmacists in all disciplines and sectors.

The questions focus on three key components: leadership and advocacy, professional support, and professional development. In addition there is a section on costs of providing these components. Questionnaires are to be distributed by e-mail or post and the document will be branded with the logo above. Completing the questionnaire should not take more than 20 minutes and responses should be returned by 28 April.

For further details about OLR and the research, see April's edition of *Your Society*, distributed with this issue of *The Journal*.



APPOINTMENTS

Gail Caldwell

Gail Caldwell, MRPharmS, has been appointed pharmacy director at NHS Forth Valley. This is a new post within the health board.

Malcolm Clubb

Malcolm Clubb, MRPharmS, has been appointed community pharmacy development pharmacist at Community Pharmacy Scotland.

now available from a new website (www.pprt.org.uk).

FUTURE EVENTS

Marketing public health

Pharmacy Practice Research Trust evening lecture and reception, entitled "Managing and marketing public health messages", London, 30 April. Free of charge. Further information and registration form available from www.pprt.org.uk/events/index.shtml.

EHC training

Training sessions have been organised for pharmacists working in Merthyr Tydfil or Rhondda Cynon Taff who would like to provide emergency hormonal contraception via patient group direction. Further details from Emma.Hinks@merthyrtydfilhb.wales.nhs.uk and Claire.Dumble@rhonddacynontaffhb.wales.nhs.uk.

CORRECTIONS

Tribute to Arthur Pipe

A transcription error last week led to Arthur Pipe being described as a superintendent chemist in Cardiff at the end of the 1939-45 war (p381). In fact, he held this position at the start of the war.

ABOUT PEOPLE

APTUK awards

The winners of the Pharmacy Technicians of the Year Awards 2007 — organised by the Association of Pharmacy Technicians UK and sponsored by AAH Hospital Service — are Michael Butterfield from Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust (supply chain award) and Susan Mirczuk from Wrexham Maelor Hospital, North East Wales NHS Trust (clinical award).

RESOURCES

PPRT website

Information about the Pharmacy Practice Research Trust, including its research activity, funding, awards, bursaries and events, is

Accessing SPCs

The summaries of product characteristics and patient information leaflets for medicines licensed in the UK are available via <http://emc.medicines.org.uk>.

Notice-board welcomes information relevant to pharmacists, which can be e-mailed to notice-board@pharmj.org.uk. There is no charge for inclusion but *The Journal* cannot guarantee a particular publication date or that the item will be published. An organisation wishing to guarantee inclusion can arrange an advertisement, for which there would be a charge (contact advertdept@rpsgb.org).