

## SPC CHANGES

### Alimta

An indication for first-line treatment of patients with locally advanced or metastatic non-small cell lung cancer other than with predominantly squamous cell histology has been added to the summary of product characteristics for Alimta (pemetrexed; Lilly).

### Depo-Medrone

Warnings about potential psychiatric side effects reported with corticosteroids and systemic steroids have been added to the summaries of product characteristics for Depo-Medrone (methylprednisolone; Pharmacia) and Depo-Medrone with Lidocaine (methylprednisolone with lidocaine hydrochloride; Pharmacia).

### Forsteo

The 18-month course of Forsteo (teriparatide; Lilly) should not be repeated over a patient's lifetime, the summary of product characteristics now warns. In addition, increased alkaline phosphatase has been added as an uncommon adverse effect.

### Fucidin

The contraindications, excipients and storage conditions have been updated in the summary of product characteristics for Fucidin (sodium fusidate; LEO Pharma) tablets. The SPC now states that patients with rare hereditary problems of galactose intolerance, the Lapp lactose deficiency or glucose-galactose malabsorption should not take Fucidin. Gelatin and polyvinylpyrrolidone have been removed from the list of excipients and all-rac- $\alpha$ -tocopherol has been added. The SPC also now states that Fucidin does not require any special storage conditions.

### Humatrope

Information about use in elderly patients and patients requiring glucocorticoid therapy has been updated in the summary of product characteristics for Humatrope (somatropin; Lilly). The SPC now says that patients

aged 65 years or over are more sensitive to the action of Humatrope and may be more prone to develop adverse events, and that experience in patients over 80 years of age is limited. It also now says that if glucocorticoid therapy is required, glucocorticoid dosage and compliance should be monitored carefully to avoid either adrenal insufficiency or inhibition of growth promoting effects and that, in patients treated with somatropin, previously undiagnosed secondary hypoadrenalism may be unmasked, requiring glucocorticoid replacement therapy.

### Levitra

Sudden deafness has been added to the list of undesirable effects in the summary of product characteristics for Levitra (vardenafil; Bayer). The SPC also now says that sudden decrease or loss of hearing has been reported in a small number of post-marketing and clinical trial cases with use of PDE5 inhibitors.

### Neoral

Additional warnings have been added to the summaries of product characteristics for Neoral (cyclosporin; Novartis) soft gelatin capsules and oral solution. These include additional information about treatment of psoriasis and atopic dermatitis in elderly patients, children and adolescents and treatment of atopic dermatitis in patients with benign lymphadenopathy. The interactions sections of the SPCs have also been updated.

### Nimotop

Information about dosing for aneurysmal subarachnoid haemorrhage has been updated in the summaries of product characteristics for Nimotop (nimodipine; Bayer) tablets and solution for infusion. Information has been added about cytochrome P450, and the special warnings, interactions, pregnancy and lactation, undesirable effects and overdose sections have also been updated.

### Prevenar

Information about immunisation schedules has been updated in the summary of product characteristics for Prevenar (adsorbed pneumococcal polysaccharide conjugate vaccine; Wyeth). Additional information is also now included in the pharmacodynamic properties section.

### Somatuline Autogel

Information on self-injection has been added to the summary of product characteristics for Somatuline Autogel (lanreotide; Ipsen). The SPC now states that, for patients considered by their healthcare professional to be stabilised on their treatment, the injection may be given by an appropriately trained friend or relative of the patient, and that patients may self-administer the product after appropriate training.

## PRESCRIPTION PRODUCTS

### Binocrit

Binocrit (epoetin alfa) solution for injection is now available in pre-filled syringes from Sandoz. Net price: 6 x 1,000iu/0.5ml syringes, £30.55; 6 x 2,000iu/1ml syringes, £61.09; 6 x 3,000iu/0.3ml syringes, £91.64; 6 x 4,000iu/0.4ml syringes, £122.18; 6 x 5,000iu/0.5ml syringes, £152.73; 6 x 6,000iu/0.6ml syringes, £183.27; 6 x 8,000iu/0.8ml syringes, £244.36; 6 x 10,000iu/1ml syringes, £305.45. Legal category: POM.

## DISCONTINUED PRODUCTS

### Mexitil

Boehringer Ingelheim will discontinue Mexitil (mexiletine) injection and capsules at the end of June. Further information on 01344 741282.

### Paraplatin

Bristol-Myers Squibb has discontinued Paraplatin (carboplatin) injection 150mg/15ml and 450mg/45ml. Medical information on 0800 731 1736.

### Reyataz 100mg

Bristol-Myers Squibb has discontinued Reyataz (atazanavir) capsules 100mg. Medical information on 0800 731 1736.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Hydrocortone

Hydrocortone (hydrocortisone) tablets 10mg and 20mg will now be distributed by Auden Mckenzie. Further information on 020 8900 2122 (e-mail info@audenmckenzie.com).

### King Pharmaceuticals

The contact numbers for King Pharmaceuticals have changed to: 01462 434366 (customer services telephone number), 01773 510123

(ordering telephone number) and 01773 810644 (ordering fax number).

## APPOINTMENTS

### Sukhjit Singh Grewal

Sukhjit Singh Grewal, MRPharmS, has been appointed head of education and training at the National Pharmacy Association. He was previously head of membership at the NPA.

## ABOUT PEOPLE

### Wendy Griffiths

Wendy Griffiths, MRPharmS, has been named as a supporter of the year by Coeliac UK. She was nominated in the "your local pharmacist" category.

## AWARDS

### ABPI pharmacy awards

Applications are being sought for the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry pharmacy awards. Three awards, for England, Scotland and Wales, are open to practising pharmacists. Entrants will need to show: innovative practice that has improved the use of medicines; significant improvements in the quality of prescribing, dispensing or administration of medicines; and service developments that ensure patient access to high quality care and medicines. The awards will be judged by a panel of senior NHS professionals and the ABPI. Winners will be announced in August and will receive £500 to spend on activities which further professional development and enhance patient care. Application forms are available from Martin Anderson, ABPI, 12 Whitehall, London SW1A 2DY or via the

## 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>.

## Contact us

Notice-board welcomes information relevant to pharmacists, which can be e-mailed to [notice-board@pharmj.org.uk](mailto: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](mailto:advertdept@rpsgb.org)).

ABPI website ([www.abpi.org.uk](http://www.abpi.org.uk))  
Closing date 13 July.

## WANTS

### Chlamydia screening

The pharmacy programme at the University of Western Australia is conducting research into a best practice pharmacy-based chlamydia screening model. Sajni Gudka and Xuan LiYow would like to hear from anyone who has been involved in running or overseeing pharmacy-based chlamydia screening. They can be contacted by e-mail at [sajni.gudka@uwa.edu.au](mailto:sajni.gudka@uwa.edu.au) or [xuanpea@gmail.com](mailto:xuanpea@gmail.com).

## RESOURCES

### PSNC website

A news stream and a facility to sign up for RSS feeds have been added to the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee website ([www.psn.org.uk](http://www.psn.org.uk)), which has been relaunched.

### Anticoagulant therapy

The National Pharmacy Association has produced a

template standard operating procedure and guidance notes for the supply of anticoagulant therapy. These can be downloaded from the members' area of the NPA website ([www.npa.co.uk](http://www.npa.co.uk)).

### Pseudoephedrine

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society has issued guidance outlining how community pharmacy staff should deal with requests for potentially suspicious purchases of pseudoephedrine- and ephedrine-containing products. The guidance can be downloaded from the Society's website ([www.rpsgb.org](http://www.rpsgb.org)).

## FUTURE EVENTS

### Pain management

Welsh Centre of Pharmacy Professional Education pain management therapeutic update, Bodelwyddan, Denbighshire, 30 April. Further information available from the WCPPE website ([www.cardiff.ac.uk/phrmy/wcppe](http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/phrmy/wcppe))

### NHS IT

Welsh Centre of Pharmacy Professional Education course on NHS IT developments, Rossett,

Wrexham, 20 May. Further information available from the WCPPE website ([www.cardiff.ac.uk/phrmy/wcppe](http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/phrmy/wcppe))

### Antibiotic prescribing

NPC-Plus workshop on antibiotic prescribing and treating common infections in primary care, Keele University, 22 May. Cost £45. Further information from Katie Edwards on 01782 584795 (e-mail [k.l.edwards@mema.keele.ac.uk](mailto:k.l.edwards@mema.keele.ac.uk)).

### Patient involvement

Healthcare Events conference on patient involvement and empowerment, London, 22 May. Cost £558.13 (commercial), £399.50 (NHS and private healthcare organisations). Further information on 020 8541 1399 (e-mail [naomi@healthcare-events.co.uk](mailto:naomi@healthcare-events.co.uk)) and via the Healthcare Events website ([www.healthcare-events.co.uk](http://www.healthcare-events.co.uk)).

### Anticoagulation

Welsh Centre of Pharmacy Professional Education meeting, "Anticoagulation and pharmacy update", Rossett, Wrexham, 18 June. Further information available from the WCPPE website

([www.cardiff.ac.uk/phrmy/wcppe](http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/phrmy/wcppe)).

## CLARIFICATIONS

### Headache paper

We have received an update on the affiliations of authors of the paper entitled "Guidelines for community pharmacists on the management of headache" (*PJ*, 15 March, p311). Sally Greensmith was working for Guildford and Waverley Primary Care Trust when that article was researched and written. She then moved to the National Prescribing Centre for two years until March 2007. The article did not form part of her role with the NPC. She is now community pharmacy development lead for South East Coast Strategic Health Authority. Lisa Jamieson now works in the new Surrey PCT.

## CORRECTIONS

### Alison Moore

The letter by Alison Moore published last week (p471) was from Mrs A. M. Moore, of Dumfries, and not Dr A. Moore, of London, as stated.

Advertisement