



CARDIOVASCULAR NEWS

Lipitor® prevents cardiovascular disease

Health Canada has approved Lipitor® (atorvastatin calcium) for the prevention of cardiovascular disease.

The approval is based on the findings of the Anglo-Scandinavian Cardiac Outcomes Trial (ASCOT), which found the lowest dose of Lipitor, 10 mg/day, reduced relative risk of heart attack by 36% compared to placebo.

Ninety-eight per cent of patients on starting doses of 10 mg, 20 mg or 40 mg, reach their target low-density lipoprotein level with Lipitor. Current guidelines encourage physicians to aggressively treat

patients with high cholesterol, especially those with coronary heart disease or other major risk factors.

“No other lipid-lowering agent has shown an effect as dramatic as Lipitor in terms of reducing cardiovascular disease and in offering this significant health benefit as fast as Lipitor,” said Dr. Bernard Prigent, vice-president & medical director, Pfizer Canada. “Lipitor clearly is different in its early ability to reduce heart attacks among a very broad population of patients, regardless of cholesterol levels.”

Health Canada approves Pfizer's Lipitor® to lower risk of heart attacks. Kirkland, (Quebec). October 6, 2004.

Increased physician accountability for blood pressure management

Greater physician accountability is necessary to ensure patients are receiving the best possible treatment for high blood pressure, according to Dr. Frans Leenan, director of the hypertension unit at the University of Ottawa Heart Institute.

Leenan was the principal investigator for the Canadian arm of the Anithypertensive and Lipid-Lowering Treatment to Prevent Heart Attack Trial (ALLHAT).

The study involved 42,000 patients and revealed inexpensive diuretics were an effective starting

point for treating high blood pressure. In addition, the study found diuretics can be combined with one or two other medications to achieve optimum control of high blood pressure.

According to the University of Ottawa Heart Institute, one-quarter of all Canadians suffer from hypertension. Uncontrolled high blood pressure is a leading cause of heart attacks, strokes and heart failure.

Heart Institute specialist wants to set standards to ensure quality care is universal. Ottawa (Ontario). September 28, 2004.

Early diagnosis of congestive heart failure

An American poll revealed nearly half of all patients hospitalized for the first time due to congestive heart failure (CHF) could have been diagnosed in their doctor's office.

The poll surveyed 261 CHF patients. The data was part of a study presented at the Heart Failure Society of America 2004 Scientific Meeting in Toronto this September.

According to the poll, patients with delayed diagnosis took more medications, suffered more symptoms, used more hospital resources and were more likely to suffer from comorbid conditions, such as diabetes or depression.

"Even with recent advances in heart failure treatment and increased establishment of disease education programs, [this] poll shows us that there is still ample room for more education and earlier diagnosis in order to prevent acute attacks of heart failure that cause patients to be hospitalized," said Brenda S. Thompson, RN, MS and lead study presenter.

According to American Heart Association statistics, more than 50,000 Americans die of CHF each year.


Study finds earlier diagnosis and better education of heart failure patients could lead to better outcomes: Heart failure patients with delayed diagnosis are hospitalized more often and have more symptoms. Toronto (Ontario). September 14, 2004.

New standard for Canadian blood

Canadian Blood Services welcomes the new Canadian Standards Association (CSA) standard on blood and blood components (CSA-Z902-04).

"While Canadian Blood Services is already highly regulated, CSA-Z902 is a substantial achievement because it is a single, authoritative and comprehensive standard covering virtually all aspects of blood, from the vein of the donor to the vein of the recipient," said Dr. Graham Sher, chief executive officer of Canadian Blood Services.

The CSA standard reinforces the safety of the blood system in Canada in the minds of all Canadians in hopes of building trust and, hopefully, encouraging blood donations.

According to a Canadian Blood Services poll, 87% of Canadians believe donating blood is safe and 78% are confident that Canada has an adequate and safe blood supply. Still, while 28% of Canadians say they plan to donate blood, only 3.5% actually do. 

Canadian Blood Services welcomes additional safety measures. Ottawa (Ontario). September 22 2004.