



CARDIOVASCULAR NEWS

FH update: Treatment reduces CV risk

Familial hypercholesterolemia (FH) is one of the most frequently occurring inherited genetic conditions. It results in markedly elevated low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol levels and can lead to premature cardiovascular (CV) disease and death.

In addition to exercise and a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol, medication is usually needed to lower LDL to safer levels. Increasing experience using statins among children with high cholesterol due to FH has shown excellent lipid-lowering, minimal adverse events and no short-term effect on growth or development.

Lipitor (atorvastatin calcium) is now indicated as an adjunct to diet to reduce total cholesterol, LDL-cholesterol and apolipoprotein B levels in boys and postmenarchal girls, 10 to 17 years of age with heterozygous FH—if, after an adequate trial of diet therapy, LDL-cholesterol remains ≥ 4.9 mmol/L, or ≥ 4.1 mmol/L with a positive family history of premature CV disease or two or more CV disease risk factors present in the patient.

Familial hypercholesterolemia update: Reducing cardiovascular risk through effective treatment. Press Release. Kirkland, Quebec, August 23, 2005.

New BP-lowering agents better at preventing cardiovascular events

The results of the Anglo Scandinavian Cardiac Outcomes Trial (ASCOT) have shown potential life-saving benefits for thousands of patients with high blood pressure (BP). The benefits were seen in patients receiving the combination of the BP drugs amlodipine and Coversyl (perindopril), compared with those receiving the older and most commonly used treatment strategy of a beta-blocker plus a diuretic. The newer therapy—amlodipine with perindopril—showed greater reductions in the risk of death (11%), stroke (23%) and cardiac events (16%) than traditional therapy.

An estimated five million Canadians suffer from high BP. Many need combinations of drugs to help keep their BP under control. ASCOT is the first study to investigate whether or not there are differences in outcomes between different combinations of drugs in patients who have high BP. ASCOT is the largest hypertension trial to take place in Europe, with over 19,000 patients taking part. *PCard*

Newer blood pressure reducing agents better at preventing cardiovascular events and mortality than traditional agents. Press Release. Montreal, Quebec, September 5, 2005.