

Medical Briefs

An abridged look at current events in and around the health-care industry

Atomoxetine Reduces ADHD Symptoms

A new report published in this month's *American Journal of Psychiatry* shows that once-daily dosing of atomoxetine (Strattera™), an investigational non-stimulant compound, significantly reduced core symptoms of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in children and adolescents. The six-week, randomised, placebo-controlled study of 171 patients showed a once-daily dose of atomoxetine to relieve ADHD symptoms into the evening without causing insomnia.

"Effective treatment of ADHD involves not only a reduction of ADHD symptoms but also an improvement in social and family activities for children and their families," said Dr. Michel Maziade, head of the department of psychiatry, faculty of medicine, Université Laval. "A treatment option that provides symptom control into the evening has the potential to improve interactions for the whole family."

Once-Daily Atomoxetine (Strattera™) Reduces ADHD Symptoms Throughout the Day and Into the Evening. Press Release, Toronto, Ontario, November 5, 2002.

New Three-Day Treatment for Pediatric AOM

A new shorter course pediatric dosing indication for an antibiotic in the oral treatment of acute otitis media (AOM) could mean the end of compliance concerns. Pfizer Canada Inc. announced Health Canada's approval of a new three-day dosing indication for its antibiotic Zithromax® (azithromycin dihydrate) in the oral treatment of AOM, which is caused by haemophilus influenzae (β -lactamase positive and negative strains), moraxella catarrhalis, or streptococcus pneumoniae in children six months and older. The treatment is administered 10 mg/kg per day for three days.

"An antibiotic that can be prescribed for three days is a tremendous benefit to physicians and parents alike," says Dr. Johanna MacCormick, chief, division of otolaryngology, Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario. "For physicians, compliance is a big concern, especially with children. Surveys show more than half of kids stop taking their medication by the third day of treatment and up to 82% by the ninth day. Being able to prescribe an antibiotic that can be taken safely and effectively for three days may help improve compliance."

The studies looking at the safety and efficacy of the three-day Zithromax regimen involved 1,395 children six months and older.

Short-course Therapy for Pediatric Acute Otitis Media is Now Even Shorter. Press Release, Montreal, Quebec, November 18, 2002.

Cardiovascular Death Reduced with Losartan

A new analysis from the landmark Losartan Intervention For Endpoint reduction in hypertension (LIFE) study comparing Cozaar® (losartan potassium) to the beta blocker atenolol showed that treatment with Cozaar in the subgroup of hypertensive patients with left-ventricular hypertrophy (LVH) without clinically evident vascular disease significantly reduced the combined risk of cardiovascular death, heart attack and stroke by 19%. The subgroup involved 6,886 patients, 55 to 80-years-old, representing three-fourths of the LIFE study population.

The results also showed that losartan reduced the risk of stroke by 34% in this patient population. These findings are consistent with the overall results of the LIFE study, conducted in 9,193 patients with hypertension and LVH. In LIFE, losartan, an angiotensin II antagonist, reduced the combined risk of cardiovascular morbidity and mortality by 13%. Losartan is indicated to treat high blood pressure.

“This particular subanalysis is significant because it demonstrated that treatment with losartan produced superior results for a relatively low-risk group of patients,” said Dr. Richard Devereux, co-chairman of the LIFE study, and professor of medicine, Weill Medical College of Cornell University, New York, New York.

New Subanalysis from Landmark LIFE Trial Presented at American Heart Association Meeting. Press Release, Chicago, Illinois, November 19, 2002.

Relieving Menstrual Migraines

Women who suffer from migraine headaches associated with menstruation may find relief with Imitrex® tablets, according to the combined results of two studies. More than half of the women treated with Imitrex when pain was mild, experienced complete freedom of their migraine pain two hours after treatment (61% and 51% with 100 mg and 50 mg respectively, versus 29% with placebo).

The research showed Imitrex, taken when the migraine pain is mild, is effective in providing relief of pain and the associated symptoms of menstrually associated migraine (MAM). The American Council for Headache Education estimates about 60% of women with migraines note an increased number of headaches in association with their menstrual period. In 10% to 14% of these women, the migraine occurs around the time of the period and at no other time.

The two randomised, double-blind, placebo-controlled, single-attack studies evaluated 752 females, between the ages of 18 and 65, with at least a one-year history of migraine, six-month history of regularly occurring MAM, and who experienced moderate to severe MAM pain preceded by a mild pain phase.

Study Results Give Hope to Women Who Suffer Migraine Headache During Their Periods. Press Release, Toronto, Ontario, November 25, 2002.

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Making Diabetes Management Easier for Canadians

The new Becton Dickinson (BD) Latitude™ Diabetes Management System promises to make life for Canadians with diabetes a lot easier. The system is the first product that organises all the tools a person needs to test blood glucose levels and inject insulin in one self-contained package. The BD Latitude Diabetes Management System includes a blood glucose monitor, a lancet device with five adjustable-depth settings, 33G lancets (the most thin on the market), test strips, a compartment for lancets and pen needles, and a compartment to hold an insulin pen.

Canada is the first country to get this system. Some of the benefits include: the convenience of an all-in-one system, 50% less pain with 33-gauge lancets, smaller blood samples needed than most monitors, five-second results, memory that holds up to 250 results and insulin records, compatible with most insulin-injection pens, and software that allows users to transfer data to a personal computer.

“Many people with diabetes do not test their blood as often as they should because of painful testing, time restraints and inconvenience,” says Dr. Barry H. Ginsberg. “The BD Latitude Diabetes Management System will make the management of their condition simpler, more comfortable and reliable.”

Becton Dickinson Canada Launches Innovative Way for Canadians to Manage Diabetes. Press Release, Oakville, Ontario, December 3, 2002.

Remember This...

Remembering is difficult... but even more difficult if you have Alzheimer Disease. A disease, which affects the brain, erases memory, and eventually takes life itself.

The Alzheimer Society provides information, support and funds research into the cause and cure. To find out more contact your local Alzheimer Society.

www.alzheimer.ca
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Alzheimer Society



Pfizer Awards Lipoprotein Science Researcher

Pfizer Young Investigator Award for Basic Lipoprotein Science has been granted to Dr. Dino Trigatti, one of Canada's many promising young lipoprotein science researchers. Pfizer Canada granted the \$25,000 award to this emerging scientist as part of its ongoing commitment to recognise and foster Canadian research in the field of lipoprotein science.

"The research award will significantly help me to become established as an independent investigator in the field of lipoprotein metabolism. The research that it will support in my lab will hopefully reveal new steps that can be targeted in developing therapies aimed at preventing atherosclerosis and heart disease in people," said Dr. Trigatti, an assistant professor in the biochemistry department at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.

Dr. Trigatti and his research team at McMaster University are applying genetic techniques in laboratory animal models to shed light on some of the ways that high-density lipoprotein (HDL), the "good cholesterol," protects against atherosclerosis and heart disease. The current research is aimed at understanding just how the HDL receptor guards against atherosclerosis. Dr. Trigatti has had a long-standing interest in understanding how different cells exchange fats (cholesterol, fatty acids) with their environments. Alterations in these processes may play important roles in the development of a variety of diseases, including heart disease, diabetes, and obesity. 

Annual Research Award Advances Lipoprotein Science Research. Press Release, Kirkland, Quebec, November 21, 2002.

Bone up on the evidence.

FOSAMAX[®] (alendronate sodium)—Demonstrated efficacy in the treatment of male osteoporosis

At 24 months of study,

FOSAMAX[®] significantly reduced the risk of new vertebral fractures in men with

osteoporosis by 89% (absolute risk: alendronate 10 mg once daily, 0.8%, placebo, 7.1%; p=0.02)^{1,2,3,4}

¹ Randomized, double-blind, controlled (n=247) study: the effect of alendronate 10 mg or placebo, given daily, on bone mineral density (BMD) in men aged 51-87 years (mean age 65 years). Daily alendronate (10 mg) at the first, second and fourth weeks of each 2-week treatment cycle (28) and 150 mg weekly from the third week in control groups (n=121) or 10 mg daily at the first week that was at least 1 SD below the mean in control group, and at least one vertebral fracture of history of an osteoporotic fracture. Patients were randomized to placebo (n=121) or 10 mg alendronate once daily (n=126). All patients received daily supplements of 500 mg calcium, in the form of calcium carbonate, and Vitamin D supplements (400 IU) daily in the United States and 400-450 IU daily in other countries. Duration of study 2 years.

² Using quantitative methods.

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