

### 1. Ketek™ approved in Canada

Health Canada has approved Ketek™ (telithromycin), the first in a new family of antibiotics called ketolides, for once daily and short-term treatment for a variety of upper and lower respiratory tract infections. In one clinical trial involving over 300 patients suffering from community-acquired pneumonia, 94.6% of the patients were cured with a once-a-day, ten-day treatment of Ketek compared to 90.1% of those treated with high doses of amoxicillin three times daily. The drug is now available across the country.

**How does it apply to your practice?** “In most cases, physicians prescribe antibiotics without knowing exactly which bacteria are affecting their patients,” explains Dr. Jacques La Forge, respirologist at the Institut de cardiologie et de pneumologie, Hôpital Laval. “By using a targeted spectrum antibiotic, such as Ketek™, physicians increase the potential of curing their patients once and for all and not having to recommence treatment with a different antimicrobial agent.”

Health Canada Approves the First in a New Family of Antibiotics. Press Release, Laval, Quebec, November 6, 2003.

### 2. New indication for Pariet™

A new indication for Pariet™ (rabeprazole sodium), a new fast-acting prescription ulcer medication in the proton pump inhibitors (PPI) class, has been approved by Health Canada. When taken in combination with appropriate antibiotics, Pariet can help get rid of *Helicobacter pylori* (*H. pylori*), a bacterium that causes more than 90% of ulcers of the small intestine.

**How does it apply to your practice?** When used in combination with antibiotics to wipe out *H. pylori*, the drug offers doctors and their patients an effective and safe treatment option (if used according to its approved prescribing information). Dr. Lawrence Cohen, associate professor of medicine at the University of Toronto, states that an antibiotics/Pariet combination “can successfully eradicate the infection in most patients and allow ulcers of the duodenum to heal, as well as lower the chance of ulcers coming back.”

Fast-acting Ulcer Medication, Pariet™, Now Approved in Canada to Treat *H. Pylori* Infection. Press Release, Toronto, Ontario, November 4, 2003.

### 3. Positive results in juvenile rheumatoid arthritis study

The results of the first study, in ongoing research being done on cyclooxygenase-2 selective inhibitors in Orlando, Florida, show that Vioxx® (rofecoxib) has similar efficiency in a population aged two to 17 years with juvenile rheumatoid arthritis (JRA) compared to the traditional non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug, naproxen. Findings of the study, conducted among 310 pediatric patients, also showed that significantly fewer gastrointestinal adverse events were seen in patients taking lower-dose rofecoxib relative to naproxen.

**How does it apply to your practice?** Despite these encouraging results, rofecoxib is not approved for the treatment of JRA in Canada. However, these findings may lead to a more successful treatment of patients with JRA in the near future.

Encouraging Results Presented at American College of Rheumatology. Press Release, Orlando, Florida, October 27, 2003.

### 4. New data in cardiovascular disease prevention

New data in the continuation of the Heart Outcomes Prevention Evaluation (HOPE) study show that the angiotensin-converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitor, Altace® (ramipril), provides sustained prevention of cardiovascular disease, while also offering reductions in heart attack and diabetes. The HOPE-The Ongoing Outcomes (HOPE-TOO) study, a 2.6-year extension of HOPE, was conducted to determine whether the cardiovascular benefits of Altace would persist beyond the 4.5 years originally studied in HOPE. The HOPE study found the use of Altace, 10 mg, compared to placebo significantly reduced the rates of death, heart attack, and stroke in high-risk cardiovascular patients.

In HOPE-TOO, patients who were originally assigned to Altace benefited from continued prevention of major cardiovascular events, with a 19% risk reduction of heart attack. The risk reduction of diabetes development was also evident, at 34%.

**How does it apply to your practice?** “This extension emphasizes that to understand the full benefits or harm from various prevention or treatment strategies often requires extended observation of patients for several years after the end of the trials,” said Dr. Salim Yusef, co-principal founder and professor of medicine at McMaster University. “The HOPE-TOO results confirm the sustained value of Altace.” The findings are considered important given that cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in the industrialized world.

New Data Show Sustained Benefit of Ramipril (Altace®) in Preventing Major Cardiovascular Events. Press Release, Laval, Quebec, September 24, 2003.