



# CARDIOVASCULAR NEWS

## Canadian studies show Altace® reduces heart failure

Two new Canadian-led studies published in *Circulation* demonstrate the drug Altace® (ramipril) significantly reduces the onset of symptomatic and often-fatal heart failure and is a cost-effective treatment for patients at high risk of cardiovascular disease. An estimated 200,000 to 300,000 Canadians, the majority of whom are women, have heart failure.

Researchers looked at data from 9,297 patients who completed the Heart Outcomes Prevention Evaluation (HOPE) study and received either 10 mg of ramipril or a placebo daily. The researchers found that ramipril reduced the risk of all heart failure by 23%. Patients who received

ramipril also had a lower rate of hospitalization and death due to heart failure.

In addition, patients treated with ramipril whose systolic blood pressure (SBP) was above 139 mmHg had a 33% reduction in heart failure risk, compared to a 9% reduction for those whose SBP was below 139 mmHg.

New analyses of landmark HOPE study show ramipril (Altace®) reduces heart failure and demonstrates cost-effectiveness for treatment of high-risk cardiovascular patients. Laval (Quebec). April 23, 2003.

## Medication for “bad” cholesterol gets Canada’s thumbs up

EZETROL™ (ezetimibe) has been approved in Canada to reduce low density lipoprotein (LDL), and total cholesterol in patients with high cholesterol levels. It is the first of a new class of cholesterol-lowering agents since the introduction of statins to the Canadian market over 15 years ago. Ezetimibe, a cholesterol absorption inhibitor, works uniquely by inhibiting the absorption of cholesterol in the intestine. The addition of ezetimibe 10 mg a day to ongoing statin monotherapy resulted in an additional LDL-cholesterol reduction of 25% compared with 4% in the addition of placebo.

“This represents a major therapeutic advance in the treatment of high cholesterol as a high per-

centage of Canadians with elevated cholesterol fail to achieve their recommended LDL cholesterol goal,” said Dr. Rafik Habib, director of the Centre Cardio-vasculaire de Laval.

In clinical trials, ezetimibe was well tolerated with a side-effect profile similar to placebo. The drug was discovered by Schering Plough Corporation, developed in partnership with Merck & Co., Inc., and will be marketed by Merck Frosst/Schering Pharmaceuticals.

Ezetrol™, the first of a new class of cholesterol-lowering drugs in 15 years, approved by Health Canada. Montreal (Quebec). June 18, 2003.

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## Good news for obese patients

Treatment with the prescription weight loss medication Xenical® (orlistat), in combination with diet and lifestyle changes, is shown to improve all five components of metabolic syndrome in obese patients, as compared to those on diet and lifestyle changes alone. This finding is according to the Xenical® in the Prevention of Diabetes in Obese Subjects (XENDOS) study that was presented at the 63rd annual meeting of the American Diabetes Association.

Metabolic syndrome describes a cluster of cardiovascular risk factors, such as high waist circumference, abnormal blood lipid levels and high blood pressure in a single patient, leading to an increased risk of Type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and death.

The XENDOS study is the first time that a weight loss medication has been shown to prevent or delay the onset of Type 2 diabetes in an at-risk patient population. In the sub-analysis presented, orlistat-treated patients with metabolic syndrome experienced a significantly greater reduction in waist measurement and blood pressure, and significantly greater improvement in glycemic control, as compared to the control group.

Xenical® (orlistat) improves cardiovascular risk factors in patients with metabolic syndrome. New Orleans (Louisiana). June 16, 2003.

## Diabetic patients benefit from Lipitor®

The University College of London has announced preliminary results from a major study that showed diabetic patients who took Pfizer's cholesterol-lowering medicine Lipitor® (atorvastatin calcium) had significantly fewer heart attacks, strokes, and surgical procedures compared to patients who received placebo.

In the Collaborative Atorvastatin Diabetes Study (CARDS), roughly 2,800 patients with Type 2 diabetes and no previous history of heart disease or stroke were treated with atorvastatin calcium 10 mg a day, or placebo to compare

the effectiveness in reducing major coronary events, strokes, or surgical revascularization procedures.

As a result of significant benefit demonstrated by atorvastatin calcium, the independent steering committee of CARDS stopped the four-year study two years earlier than planned. All patients in the study have been notified, and instructed to continue taking the drug until contacted by their physician for their one followup visit.

Patients taking Pfizer's Lipitor® show significant cardiovascular benefit, major study shows. Kirkland (Quebec). June 16, 2003.

