

AU InforMed

Volume 3 Number 14 (Issue 77)

Friday, June 3, 2005



Key Inforbits

- All drugs recalled from Able Labs
- Children's Tylenol recalled
- Meningitis vaccine: New recommendations
- Reasons for rising healthcare costs
- New Rx bottle
- Ransomware

NEW DRUGS, and other related stuff ...

New Dose Form ... The FDA has approved a one time daily ciprofloxacin (Proquin XR[®] by DepoMed, Inc) for uncomplicated urinary tract infections on May 20, 2005. It is an extended-release formulation. It is termed their "gastric retention extended-release drug delivery system" and they are working on putting other drugs in the same delivery system. This is DepoMed's first product approval.

<http://www.depomedinc.com/>

<http://www.ptcommunity.com/Daily/DailyDetail.cfm?chosen=64093>

New Strength ... Duragesic[®] is now **available** in a 12.5mcg patch – they are calling it Duragesic 12[®] to minimize dosing errors that could be caused by a misplaced decimal point. It is **not** available in a generic in that strength. See new package insert. *Margaret R. Thrower, Pharm.D.*

http://www.janssen.com/active/janus/en_US/assets/jan/duragesic.pdf (package insert)

MedWatch ...- The FDA announced a nationwide recall of all manufactured drugs (mostly generic prescription drugs, including drugs containing acetaminophen) from **Able Laboratories** of Cranbury, NJ, because of serious concerns that they were not produced according to quality assurance standards. Able Laboratories has ceased all current production. People who have been taking drugs produced by this firm should speak with their health care provider or pharmacist to obtain a replacement drug product. Consumers should continue taking the medication until they have spoken with their health care provider. FDA has provided a list with the names of the recalled drugs and their imprint codes. Read the 2005 safety summary, including a link to the FDA News Release, at:

<http://www.fda.gov/medwatch/SAFETY/2005/safety05.htm#Able>

MedWatch ... McNeil and FDA notified consumers and healthcare professionals about a nationwide recall of all lots and all flavors of Children's TYLENOL Meltaways 80 mg, Children's TYLENOL SoftChews 80mg, and Junior TYLENOL Meltaways 160mg. The recall concerns the design of the blister package, information on the package, and bottle cartons for the products that may be confusing and lead to improper dosing, including overdosing.

Read the complete MedWatch 2005 Safety summary, including a link to the firm press release, at: <http://www.fda.gov/medwatch/SAFETY/2005/safety05.htm#Tylenol>

FROM THE MEDICAL LITERATURE ...



Smoking down ... According to the CDC, the proportion of female smokers in the U.S. dropped to below 20% for the first time in almost 30 years; the overall rate of U.S. smokers also continued to decline. About 21.6% of adults smoked in 2003, the lowest rate in the past two years. Slightly more than 24% of men and 19.2% of women smoked in 2003. The CDC survey found other changes in U.S. smoking behavior, including that 2003 had the lowest proportion (23.9%) of smokers ages 18 to 24 since 1991. Despite the decline, the U.S. is still far from its 2010 goal of having only 12.5% adults smoke.

CDC. Cigarette smoking among adults – United States, 2003. *MMWR* 2005 May 27;54(20):509-13.

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5420a3.htm>



New Immunization Recommendation ... for meningococcal disease ... New recommendations for a new meningococcal polysaccharide-protein conjugate vaccine (MCV4) (Menactra™ by Sanofi Pasteur). The thrust of the recommendations is routine vaccination for young adolescents (11-12 y/o); for the unvaccinated, before entering high school and for groups of adolescents and adults housed in close proximity, e.g., **college freshmen in dormitories**, military recruits), in addition to those traveling to endemic areas. For the whole report: CDC. Prevention and control of meningococcal disease: Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). *MMWR* 2005 May 27;54(RR-7):1-28.

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5407a1.htm>

Reviews of Note ...

- Nelson T. Selecting the right residency program. *Am J Health-Syst Pharm* 2005 Jun 1;62:1138, 1140.
- Wilkinson GR. Drug metabolism and variability among patients in drug response. *N Engl J Med* 2005 May 26;352(21):2211-21.
- Williams HC. Atopic dermatitis. *N Engl J Med* 2005 Jun 2;352(22):2314-24.

FROM THE LAY LITERATURE about medicine ...



Health care costs rising ... The typical family of four with an employer-sponsored health plan will spend more than \$12,200 on medical expenses in 2005, up from just \$8,400 a year in 2001, according to a new report. The employers, however, continue to absorb most of the cost, leaving our average family spending 17% of the overall cost. Although the employees' total share has remained steady at about 17% since 2001, actual dollars are increasing. In 2005, the average family is expected to hand over roughly \$2,035 in out-of-pocket expenses, up from \$1,925 in 2004 and \$1,480 in 2001. The biggest expenditure is hospital care in 2005, at 45% of the total, followed by physician costs at 37%, pharmaceuticals at 15%. Overall, costs rose 9.1% in 2005, down slightly from 10.1% in 2004 and 2003.

Whitehouse K. Average family medical costs will exceed \$12,200 this year. *Wall Street Journal online* 2005 May 26; p. D2.



and Here is one reason ... In less than a year after acquiring an Italian manufacturer, Sigma-Tau has raised the price of a cancer drug, procarbazine (Matulane®) from 60¢ to \$55 a

pill. Sigma-Tau acquired Matulane from Roche in 1998. According to the chief operating officer of Sigma-Tau Pharmaceuticals Inc. the company raised the price in order to make a profit to cover the high cost of developing medicines for rare diseases, which have small patient populations. Wow. I feel better already.

Anand G. Italian drug firm draws fire for boosting prices. *Wall Street Journal online* 2005 Jun 1; p. B5.



(Photo credit: Davies + Starr)

New Prescription Bottle ... A fine arts student developed a whole new prescription bottle as a thesis project and teamed with Target to launch the idea. It is to debut this fall. Much thought and research went into this project; read the article from *New York Magazine* for a quick primer on the redesign of a product over 50 years old. The concept centers around changing how the label is designed as well as the bottle itself.

Consideration was given to placement of information (eg, the name of the store vs. the name of the drug) as well as size of type. Color combinations and shape of the bottle were considered as well.

Bernard S. The perfect prescription: How the pill bottle was remade – sensibly and beautifully. *New York Magazine* 2005 Apr 18.

<http://www.newyorkmetro.com/nymetro/health/features/11700/index.html>

EECP ... or Enhanced External CounterPulsation ... Although its been around for decades, it has FDA approval (for CHF) and Medicare reimbursement (for advanced angina), it hasn't hit the cardiovascular big time. It consists of inflatable cuffs around the calves thighs and upper thighs that rapidly inflate and deflate, timed to the filling and emptying of the heart. It seems effective though the rationale is murky; in some ways it mimics exercise. Cardiologists seem skeptical and there are few rigorous studies. It also requires five hours per week for seven weeks and costs about \$7000 per treatment course.

Mishori R. Getting pumped. *Washington Post.com* 2005 May 31; p. HE01.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/05/30/AR2005053000550.html?referrer=email>



Humorless? ... Have you ever wondered why no one laughs at your jokes or your snide remarks? There may be a medical reason – they are brain-damaged! In a study published in *Neuropsychology* 25 people were tested, 16 with brain damage to the right frontal lobe of the brain; they were unable to distinguish between standard statements and those meant as sarcasm. That explains a lot.

Talan J. Why some people just don't get it. *LA Times.com* 2005 May 30.

<http://www.latimes.com/features/health/la-he-sarcasm30may30,1,4485404.story?coll=la-headlines-health>

NEW RESOURCES in the DILRC ...

- Duplay D, vp. *Physicians' Desk Reference for Nonprescription Drugs and Dietary Supplements*. 26th ed. Montvale, NJ: Thomson PDR, 2005.
- Duplay D, vp. *Red Book*. 2005 ed. Montvale, NJ: Thomson PDR, 2005.

- Gehlbach SH. *Interpreting the Medical Literature*. 4th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2002.
- Schwinghammer TL, ed. *Pharmacotherapy Casebook*. 6th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2005.

Update ...

New Edition of *Health Information for International Travel* ... The CDC announces the availability of the 2005-2006 edition of *Health Information for International Travel* (“Yellow Book”). It has been completely revised, updated, and reorganized. Sections that have been expanded include those covering immunosuppressed travelers, disabled travelers, cruise-ship travel, and children who travel. New sections have been added on air travel, norovirus infection, SARS, and legionellosis. Copies can be ordered through the CDC Travelers' Health website at <http://www.cdc.gov/travel>.

TIMELY TOP TECH TIP ...

Vocabulary ... Ransomware ... There's a new kid on the block. In another version of one of the oldest crimes around, a computer virus has been developed that, once infecting your computer, it encrypts your documents, preventing you from accessing them. You then receive a message to send \$XX to an account to download software so that you can see your own documents! Its fairly low tech at the moment, but it could get nastier. The antidote is prevention. Keep antivirus software up-to-date, and back up files.

Graham-Rowe D. Pay up or the PC gets it. New Scientist.com 2005 Jun 4.

http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2005-06/ns-puo060105.php (EurekAlert – source)

<http://www.newscientist.com> (New Scientist)



The last “dose” ...

World Environment Day

June 5, 2005

"Green Cities" is the theme of World Environment Day, June 5, 2005. This annual event, established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1972, highlights environmental issues, encourages persons worldwide to participate in sustainable and equitable development, and promotes awareness of the importance of communities in changing attitudes toward environmental concerns. San Francisco is the host city for World Environment Day 2005. CDC's environmental health activities are detailed at <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov> and <http://www.cdc.gov/nceh>. Additional information about World Environment Day 2005 is available at <http://www.wed2005.org>.

CDC. Notice to readers: World environment day. *MMWR* 2005 Jun 3;54(21):540.

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5421a6.htm>

An electronic bulletin of drug and health-related news highlights, a service of ...

Auburn University, Harrison School of Pharmacy, Drug Information Center

• Phone 334-844-4400 • Fax 334-844-8366 • <http://www.pharmacy.auburn.edu/dilrc/dilrc.htm>

Bernie R. Olin, Pharm.D., Director