

# AU InforMed

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Monday, January 10, 2005

**New Look** ... *AU InforMed* has been redesigned. Nothing dramatic, but some changes intended to make it easier to read, use and file.

## **NEW DRUGS, and other related stuff ...**

**MedWatch** ... The Warnings, Precautions, Adverse Events, and Dosage and Administration sections of the bevacizumab (Avastin<sup>®</sup> by Genentech) labeling have been updated. It is indicated for combination therapy to treat metastatic carcinoma of the colon or rectum. Arterial thromboembolic events, including cerebral infarction, transient ischemic attacks (TIAs), myocardial infarction (MI), and angina, occurred at a higher incidence in patients receiving bevacizumab in combination with chemotherapy as compared to those receiving chemotherapy alone. These events were fatal in some instances. In randomized, active-controlled studies, the overall incidence of arterial thromboembolic events was increased with the use of bevacizumab in combination with chemotherapy (4.4% vs. 1.9%). The incidences of both cerebrovascular arterial events (1.9% vs. 0.5%) and cardiovascular arterial events (2.1% vs. 1.0%) were increased in patients receiving bevacizumab in combination with chemotherapy. Read the 2005 safety summary, including links to the Dear Healthcare Professional letter and the revised label, at: <http://www.fda.gov/medwatch/SAFETY/2005/safety05.htm#Avastin>

## **FROM THE MEDICAL LITERATURE ...**



**Tsunami's** ... for those who may be interested, the CDC has posted a large reference page related to tsunami's and the related health effects. It includes information for travelers, humanitarian workers, health effects and more. Go to: <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/tsunamis/>



**A heavy topic** ... two articles in current issues have addressed the lack of solid information related to popular commercial diet plans. One study was a systematic review of four commercial weight loss programs and found that Weight Watchers had at least some information demonstrating benefit.<sup>1</sup> Another article reported on four diet plans that monitored 160 patients for about 18 months. Their conclusions were that overall adherence was low, but those that did stick to a plan lost weight and had cardiac risk factor reductions.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Tsai AG, Wadden TA. Systematic review: An evaluation of major commercial weight loss programs in the United States. *Ann Intern Med* 2005;142:56-66.

<sup>2</sup>Dansinger ML, Gleason JA, Griffith JL, Selker HP, Schaefer EJ. Comparison of the Atkins, Ornish, Weight Watchers, and Zone diets for weight loss and heart disease risk reduction: A randomized trial. *JAMA* 2005 Jan 5;293(1):43-53.



**Vitamin E** ... Investigators conducted a meta-analysis of 135,967 patients in 19 clinical trials and came to the conclusion that high dosage vitamin E ( $\geq 150$  IU/day) may increase all-cause mortality and that dosages of  $\geq 400$  IU/day should be avoided.

Miller ER III, Pastor-Barriuso R, Dalal D, Riemersma RA, Appel LJ, Guallar E. Meta-analysis: High-dosage vitamin E supplementation may increase all-cause mortality. *Ann Intern Med* 2005;142:37-46.



**Emergency contraception** ... may not be on the path to the den of iniquity. A recent paper describes a study of 2117 women over two years, comparing the use of emergency contraception, pregnancies, STI's; also changes in contraceptive and condom use and sexual behavior. Amongst the conclusions, one was that there was no change in sexual behavior, countering the argument that unrestricted access to emergency contraception would increase promiscuousness.

Raine TR, Harper CC, Rocca CH, Rischer R, Padian N, Klausner JD, Darney PD. Direct access to emergency contraception through pharmacies and effect on unintended pregnancy and STIs: A randomized controlled trial. *JAMA* 2005 Jan 5;293(1):54-62.

### Reviews of Note ...

- Müller-Lissner SA, Kamm MA, Scarpignato C, Wald A. Myths and misconceptions about chronic constipation. *Am J Gastroenterol* 2005 Jan;100(1):232-42.
- DeVault KR, Castell DO. Updated guidelines for the diagnosis and treatment of gastroesophageal reflux disease. *Am J Gastroenterol* 2005 Jan;100(1):190-200.

### FROM THE LAY LITERATURE about medicine ...



**Mail order killing pharmacies** ... Nothing new to pharmacists, but apparently the trend continues with several big employers now requiring mail order services to be used by their employees.

Freudenheim M. Drugstores fret as insurers demand pills by mail. *NY Times.com* 2005 Jan 1.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/01/01/business/01drugstore.html>

**Medicare Formulary** ... The United States Pharmacopeia (USP), as a federal advisory panel announced a list of 146 types of prescription drugs on January 3, 2004 that should be covered under Medicare's new drug benefit and that prescription drug plans should offer beneficiaries at least two drugs of each type. In general insurers and PBMs like the idea and the pharmaceutical industry does not. Also, various groups such as those advocating for Alzheimer's disease and arthritis, sometimes feel the formulary is too strict because the guidelines did not guarantee coverage for new costly effective drugs that might be needed to treat certain conditions.

Pear R. Advisory panel lists drugs it wants new law to cover. *NY Times.com* 2005 Jan 4.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/01/04/politics/04drug.html?pagewanted=all>



**I resolve** ... Some uncommonly cogent advice on medicine and how to "interpret" some of the information and direction that we receive from various sources, in the form of some "standard" new year's resolutions.

Anonymous. The year in preview: Only healthy thoughts for 2005. *Washington Post.com* 2005 Jan 4, pg. HE01.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A45502-2005Jan3.html?referrer=email>

**Tort reform???** ... The Bush administration began a push for tort reform last week, an advertised agenda item for the President. A couple of stories indicate that this is going to be a wide ranging discussion, whether or not it appears in the final bill. One story from the *Washington Post* indicates that there is special language in the proposed bill to specifically protect Big Pharma from punitive damages in lawsuits. Another story from the *New York Times* discusses an apparent Bush viewpoint that a small number of incompetent physicians are to blame for a large portion of malpractice suits and they should be removed.

Pearl R. Panel seeks better disciplining of doctors. *New York Times.com* 2005 Jan 5.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/01/05/politics/05docs.html?oref=login>

VandeHei J. Malpractice bill shields drugmakers. *Washington Post.com* 2005 Jan 5; Page A03

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A48417-2005Jan4.html>

### **Update ... Student Opportunities**



**Practice Memo** ... Per the last issue of *AU InforMed*, pharmacy students can sign up to for the ePractice Memo and receive a special section of *The Practice Memo* called "The Chain Advantage." Articles in this section highlight opportunities in chain community pharmacy, key career and financial tips for pharmacy students, scholarship information and more. Students can [sign up for the ePractice Memo](#) and can receive issues of *The Chain Advantage*. This issue of *The Chain Advantage* highlights internship, rotation, and residency opportunities available at NACDS headquarters in Alexandria, VA..



**Public Health Service** ... a good article on the United States Public Health Service (USPHS). It has a long and storied history, and there are a great many opportunities for **pharmacists**. Some of the Public Health Service agencies include the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Indian Health Service (IHS). The article will be available online later at:

<http://www.fda.gov/fdac/default.htm> For more information on the USPHS, go to:  
[www.usphs.gov](http://www.usphs.gov)

Rados C. A medical militia at the FDA. *FDA Consumer* 2005 Jan-Feb;39(1):12-17.

### **AUBURN HSOP FACULTY in the literature ...**

Doorenbos NJ, Sharma RK, Traore M. Pharmacodynamic investigations of *Polypodium polypodioides* L. Watt. *Journal of the Alabama Academy of Science* 2004;75(1):1-6.

## The last “dose” ...

To accompany the two articles mentioned above in the Medical Literature section concerning the “efficacy” of diet plans ...

He had had much experience of physicians, and said “the only way to keep your health is to eat what you don't want, drink what you don't like, and do what you'd druther not.”



--Mark Twain (Samuel L. Clemens) [1835-1910]

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*Bernie R. Olin, Pharm.D., Director*