

AU InforMed

Volume 3 Number 26 (Issue 89)

Tuesday, October 11, 2005



Key Inforbits

- Menactra[®] and Guillain Barré Syndrome
- Leading causes of death in the U.S.
- OTCs in pregnancy
- Compounding pharmacists
- Breast Cancer Awareness Month
- National Medical Librarians Month

NEW DRUGS, and other related stuff ...

MedWatch ... The FDA and CDC notified consumers and health care providers of five reports of Guillain Barré Syndrome following administration of Meningococcal Conjugate Vaccine A, C, Y, and W135 (Menactra[®], by Sanofi Pasteur). It is not known yet whether these cases were caused by the vaccine or are coincidental. Guillain Barré Syndrome (GBS) is a serious neurological disorder that can occur, often in healthy individuals, either spontaneously or after certain infections. GBS typically causes increasing weakness in the legs and arms that can be severe and require hospitalization. The FDA and CDC are asking any persons with knowledge of any possible cases of GBS occurring after Menactra[®] to report them to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System <https://secure.vaers.org/VaersDataEntryintro.htm> (VAERS) to help the agencies further evaluate the matter.

Read the complete MedWatch 2005 Safety Summary, including a link to the FDA News Release, at:

<http://www.fda.gov/medwatch/safety/2005/safety05.htm#Menactra>

FROM THE MEDICAL LITERATURE ...



Leading causes of death in the U.S. ... The Good, the Bad, and the Oldie ... Review of 32 years of mortality data (1970-2002) showed some interesting trends. Investigators looked at the six leading causes of death; heart disease, stroke, cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, accidents and diabetes mellitus. The good news is that the age-standardized death rate from all causes decreased, with heart disease and accidents showing the best improvements. However, deaths from COPD and diabetes increased dramatically over the time period, although these deaths occur at older ages.

Jemal A, Ward E, Hao Y, Thus M. Trends in the leading causes of death in the United States, 1970-2002. *JAMA*. 2005 Sep 14;294(10):1255-59.



Big bucks for research ... Overall funding for biomedical research has nearly doubled over the last 10 years, to \$94.3 billion. The pharmaceutical industry accounts for the largest percentage at 57% and this has remained constant over the last 10 years (56 to 61%). Government (federal, state, local) funding is next at 36% with the NIH being the single largest contributor at 28%. One thing that has changed over the last 10 years is the portion from

industry that goes to basic vs. clinical science with the portion going to clinical trials increasing from 28% to 41%.

Moses H III, Dorsey ER, Matheson DHM, Thier SO. Financial anatomy of biomedical research. *JAMA*. 2005 Sep 21;294(11):1333-42.



Folic acid, still ... According to a recent survey from the CDC, only about 1/3 of child-bearing age women consume adequate amounts of folic acid (>400µg daily), which has been shown to dramatically decrease neural tube defects in newborns. The vitamin supplement recommendation was first made by the Public Health Service in 1992 and foods have been fortified since 1998. However, there has actually been a drop in consumption from 2004 to 2005, of 40% to 33% of women taking folic acid daily. As health professionals, we must do our part in this public service message!

CDC. Use of dietary supplements containing folic acid among women of childbearing age-United States, 2005. *MMWR* 2005 Sep 30;54(38):955-8.

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5438a4.htm>



OTCs and Pregnancy ... Hey pharmacists, listen up! A recent survey found that 2/3 of pregnant women take an over-the-counter drug during pregnancy. Acetaminophen is most common followed by ibuprofen, pseudoephedrine, aspirin, naproxen, diphenhydramine, and guaifenesin. The study also found that medication-taking actually increased in pregnancy, compared to prior to pregnancy. This is a great place for pharmacists to be involved, eg, how many combination products are out there?!?

Werler MM, Mitchell AA, Hernandez-Diaz S, Honein MA, and the National Birth Defects Prevention Study. Use of over-the-counter medications during pregnancy. *Am J Obstet Gynecol* 2005 Sep;193:771-7.

Reviews of Note ...

- Panlilio AL, Cardo DM, Grohskopf LA, Heneine W, Ross CS. Updated U.S. Public Health Service guidelines for the management of occupational exposures to HIV and recommendations for postexposure prophylaxis. *MMWR* 2005 Sep 30;54(No. RR-9):1-17 [Note: In these guidelines the PHS makes the bold statement that, under the section of Toxicity and Drug Interactions of Antiretroviral Agents, "Consultation with a pharmacist might be considered." p. 5.]
- Loder EW, Buse DC, Golub JR. Headache as a side effect of combination estrogen-progestin oral contraceptives: A systematic review. *Am J Obstet Gynecol*. 2005 Sep;193:636-49.

FROM THE LAY LITERATURE about medicine ...



Clinics at Wal-Mart ... It's been reported earlier, but its growing. Large retail chain pharmacies are exploring setting up **health clinics in their stores**. Wal-Mart, Rite-Aid, Target and Walgreen's are some that have been mentioned. Generally staffed by nurse practitioners, these clinics are catering to those with acute sickness. Insurance companies love them because they are far cheaper than an emergency room or physician office visit. Physician's in general, don't like them. Profit is always the motive, but the stores don't profit from the clinic itself, as it is contracted with another company, but the prescriptions generated and front-end merchandise sold are the targets. For pharmacy, this could be a boon or bane, depending on how it is approached.

Spencer J. Getting your health care at Wal-Mart. *Wall Street J* 2005 Oct 5; p. D1.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB112847351020560194.html?mod=djemHL>



Psychiatric drug use down in children ... according to a recent article psychiatric drug use in U.S. children has dropped by 20%. This is attributed to the recent reports of increased suicidality in the pediatric population treated with antidepressants. These have already precipitated additional warnings on the package label, and has caused an outright ban in the U.K. Everyone agrees more data, particularly long-term, is necessary, but that's where the agreement ends. The pharmaceutical industry feels this data should be funded by the taxpayers, and vice versa. A few more warts are exposed as to the sometimes numerous studies showing less-than-favorable outcomes that never see the light of day.

Vedantam S. Psychiatric drugs' use drops for children: Suicide warnings raise bigger fears on testing process.

Washington Post.com 2005 Oct 8; p. A01.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/10/07/AR2005100701795.html?referrer=email>



Same old, same old ... More or less a plug for **compounding pharmacists**. This article touts the abilities of the compounding pharmacist to make an "old remedy" like new, primarily with different flavorings, or with different deliveries, eg, as a lollipop. They also can create "old favorites" that are no longer manufactured (providing the ingredients are still approved).

Associated Press. Cold remedies – new twists on old products. *CNN.com* 2005 Oct 7.

<http://www.cnn.com/2005/HEALTH/conditions/10/07/cold.remедies.ap/index.html>



Flu stories ... A review of recent events, trying to put some perspective on the real danger of a "bird flu epidemic" this year. Our government is putting together a worst-case scenario plan for the event of a pandemic while some experts argue against such a disaster actually happening. It appears unlikely such a pandemic could happen this year, but on the other hand, based on history of flu pandemics, "we're due."

Grady D. Danger of flu pandemic is clear, if not present. *New York Times.com* 2005 Oct 9.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/10/09/national/09flu.html?hp&ex=1128830400&en=e1a0fad64313f36b&ei=5094&partner=homepage>

Medicare Part D ... Scams ... Few, if any, have a good handle on what "Part D" is going to entail, so now you also have to worry about the scammers. Here are some of the things popping up: Trying to "sign you up" before November 15; charging an application fee; if you don't sign up now, you will lose other benefits. Beware, for your patients!

Graham T. Part D: The Details, Scam Alert. *Washington Post.com* 2005 Oct 4; p. HE03.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/09/30/AR2005093002116.html?referrer=email>



National Breast Cancer Awareness Month ... October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Breast cancer is the most common cancer and the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths among women in the U.S. According to *United States Cancer Statistics: 2002 Incidence and Mortality*, approximately 180,000 cases of breast cancer were diagnosed among women in 2002, and approximately 41,000 women died from the disease. Among men, approximately 1,600 cases of breast cancer were diagnosed, and 369 men died from the disease.

CDC. National Breast Cancer Awareness Month-October 2005 *MMWR* 2005 Oct 7;54(39):981.

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5439a1.htm>

NEW RESOURCES in the DILRC ...

- Abramowicz M, ed. *Handbook of Antimicrobial Therapy*. 17th ed. New Rochelle, NY: The Medical Letter, Inc, 2005.

- Joint Commission Resources. *Preventing Medication Errors: Strategies for Pharmacists*. Oakbrook Terrace, IL: Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations, 2001.

TIMELY TOP TECH TIP ...

A new electronic resource is available through the RBD Library, "Natural Standard" was founded by clinicians and researchers to provide high quality, evidence-based information about complementary and alternative therapies. This international multidisciplinary collaboration now includes contributors from more than 100 eminent academic institutions." You can find this new resource at <http://www.naturalstandard.com/> or from the AU Library home page, go to "Find Articles and Databases" then "Databases by Title" then click on "N" and "Natural Standard" and take a look at this new database.

The last "dose" ...



Ninth Annual National Medical Librarians Month, October



October is the Medical Library Association's (MLA's) ninth annual [National Medical Librarians Month \(NMLM\)](#) celebration. MLA declared October as NMLM to applaud medical librarians for the many efforts and accomplishments they have made in the interest of quality health care. Go by and wish your medical librarian a "happy October."



National Pharmacy Week, October 23-29, 2005



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