

AU InforMed

Volume 3 Number 4 (Issue 67)

Monday, February 7, 2005

NEW DRUGS, and other related stuff ...

New Generic ... FDA approved an ANDA for fentanyl transdermal system in 25 µg/hr, 50 µg/hr, 75 µg/hr, and 100 µg/hr strengths by Mylan Pharmaceuticals on January 28, 2005. The innovator drug is Duragesic® by Alza Corp.

<http://www.fda.gov/bbs/topics/ANSWERS/2005/ANS01339.html> (FDA Talk Paper)

<http://investor.mylan.com/phoenix.zhtml?c=66563&p=irol-newsArticle&ID=668151&highlight=> (Manufacturer press release)

http://www.mylanpharms.com/pdf/PDS-FentanylTDS_MYL-036.pdf (Manufacturer link)

Approvable ... In an apparently unexpected move, the FDA issued an approvable letter for a device to treat depression, *VNS Therapy System* by Cyberonics, Inc. The device is roughly similar to a pacemaker, also implanted under the skin and wires that provide stimulation to the Vagus nerve. The company expects approval in May this year. Gives a whole new picture of shock therapy.

Rosenberg D. Cyberonics shares surge as FDA approves device for treating depression. *Wall Street Journal online* 2005 Feb 3.

FROM THE MEDICAL LITERATURE ...



Danger! .. Danger! ... Dispensing robots ... in an article from the AMA News, insurance companies are apparently footing the bill to install “robot vending machines” in physician’s offices, but stocked only with generic drugs. The stated intent is to encourage and eventually change the habits of physicians, so that they will prescribe more generics rather than brand names. As always, the bottom line is the bottom line, saving the insurance company money. That’s not the problem; does anyone else see the missing link here – the pharmacist!

Kazel R. Robot rep latest tactic in generics push: The dispensing machines are among the newest tools managed care firms are using to get doctors to steer patients toward medications that are less expensive. *Amednews.com* 2005 Jan 31.

<http://www.ama-assn.org/amednews/2005/01/31/bil20131.htm>

Reviews of Note ...

- Meyerhardt JA, Mayer RJ. Systemic therapy for colorectal cancer. *N Engl J Med* 2005 Feb 3;352(5):476-87.
- Smith KM, Romanelli F. Recreational use and misuse of phosphodiesterase 5 inhibitors. *J Am Pharm Assoc* 2005 Jan/Feb;45(1):63-75.
- Sink KM, Holden KF, Yaffe K. Pharmacological treatment of neuropsychiatric symptoms of dementia: A review of the evidence. *JAMA* 2005 Feb 2;293(5):596-608.

FROM THE LAY LITERATURE about medicine ...

Vocabulary ... Nanomedicine ... roughly the marriage of nanotechnology and medicine which is a new branch of science that deals with VERY small technology. Some examples of nanomedicine include: **Quantum dots or “qdots”** are bits of material perhaps only a few atoms wide that luminesce in different colors at different sizes. **Amphiphiles** that form into nanofibers and then a healing gel for prevention of scar tissue and promotion of healing. **Nanotubes** that are 100,000th the diameter of a human hair can be coated with enzymes that may allow monitoring of blood sugar for instance, by shining an infrared light on them. Then there are **“photothermal nano-shells”** and due to their ability to absorb energy for normally innocuous infrared light, find tumors and kill them by burning them, selectively. Interesting stuff!

Weiss R. Nonmedicine’s promise is anything but tiny. *Washington Post.com* 2005 Jan 31; p. A08.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A49758-2005Jan30.html?referrer=email>



Airborne ... Oprah says so ... This particular “dietary supplement” seems to be getting a lot of press; its in the New York Times! And, Oprah Winfrey recently praised the product on her show. It is manufactured by Knight-McDowell Labs, founded by the creator of the product, a former schoolteacher. The product is a combination of various vitamins and herbs, including 1000mg of vitamin C. However, as with nearly all of these products, particularly the combinations, little or no scientific data exist of their effectiveness.

Duenwald M. Keeping colds at bay. Or maybe not. *NY Times.com* 2005 Feb 1.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/02/01/health/01cons.html?oref=login>



Yes, your mother is right to worry ... Tattoos and piercings can be a problem, even in the best of hands. A simple rule is that any penetration of the dermal or mucosal barrier opens a path to infectious agents. Most of the time there are no consequences, but about 10% of piercings become infected. The worst cases are HIV and Hepatitis C transmission, but resistant organisms are beginning to emerge resulting in disfiguring surgery in some cases. Also, if you are considering a tattoo, thinking you can have it removed later, if necessary, start saving now; it will cost approximately \$2000 to \$10,000. Read the article below for a rundown on all the various nasties that can happen.

Kreahling L. The perils of needles to the body. *NY Times.com* 2005 Feb 1.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/02/01/health/policy/01tatt.html?pagewanted=1>



Pharmacists highlighted ... A special supplement in *U.S. News and World Report* gives a brief account of the travails of a pharmacist. The article is generally positive about the growing impact of pharmacists but also cited the growing time crunch and insurance/third party hassles.

Special Health Report: The Druggist is in. *U.S. News and World Report* 2005 Jan 31.

<http://www.usnews.com/usnews/issue/050131/health/31turf.b.htm>

Flu vaccine shortage ... Yeah, right ... No one seems quite sure what happened, but many areas can’t seem to give them away. A combination of many factors have played a role, including a mild flu season to date. Officials are now speculating about next year. The public has received so many mixed messages, next year’s flu season demand will be increasingly difficult to predict.

Levine S. Health Groups Now Worry About Flu Shot Surplus: CDC Takes Unusual Steps to Dispense Vaccine.

Washington Post.com 2005 Jan 28; p. B01.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A42887-2005Jan27.html?referrer=email>

AUBURN HSOP FACULTY in the literature ...

- Hester EK, Thrower MR. Current options in the management of olanzapine-associated weight gain. *Ann Pharmacother* 2005 Feb;39(2):302-10.
- Berger BA, Krueger KP, Felkey BG. The pharmacist's role in treatment adherence, Part 2: An introduction to motivational interviewing. *US Pharm* 2005 Jan;30(1):53-6.

NEW RESOURCES in the DILRC ...

- Hale TW. Medications and Mothers' Milk. 11th ed. Amarillo, TX: Pharmasoft Publishing, 2004.
- Kumar V, Abbas AK, Fausto N. Robbins and Cotran Pathophysiologic Basis of Disease. 7th ed. Philadelphia: Elsevier/Saunders, 2005.
- Gourley DR. APhA's Complete Review for Pharmacy. 2nd ed. Washington, DC: APhA, 2004.

TIMELY TOP TECH TIP ...

Answers engine Walter Mossberg, a tech guru is saying good things about an entire search service devoted to providing direct answers to search queries, rather than just links. It is Answers.com, and it is available at www.answers.com. Using a variety of reference sources, such as dictionaries and encyclopedias, it generates an organized page of relevant information about your search query without requiring you to click on any further Web links. It comes from GuruNet, an Israeli company that developed a little-known, but slick, reference utility called GuruNet a few years back. Answers.com is free, and it does have ads. Some downsides include that it currently has answers for only about a million available topics; it relies heavily on Wikipedia, which has been criticized because it isn't written or edited by experts. But unlike some sources like the online Encyclopedia Britannica, Answers.com is free and instantly searches multiple reference works from multiple publishers. May be worth a try.

Mossberg WS. Unlike search engines, answers.com responds with data, not links. *Wall Street Journal online* 2005 Jan 27; p. B1.



The last "dose" ...

In the fields of observation chance favors only the prepared mind.

-- Louis Pasteur (1822-1895)

from Inaugural lecture, University of Lille [December 7, 1854]

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

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Bernie R. Olin, Pharm.D., Director