

The Prudent Prescriber

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Pharm Reps ≠ Rational Prescribing

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What's New and Coming?

- ☆ Altace is now available as generic ramipril in both the 5mg and 10 mg strengths. The price remains high: 5mg AWP \$1.80/tab, 10mg AWP \$2.11/tab. Lisinopril, enalapril available at 25¢ - 35¢/tab.
- ☆ Zyrtec and Zyrtec D are now FDA approved for over the counter status. Patients will be able to purchase all formulations of these products at pharmacies without a prescription after January 21, 2008.
- ☆ Acavar-20/50 OTC
 - Ads claim this product as a "European Breakthrough" for weight loss "without change in exercise or diet."
 - Contains multiple sources of caffeine, including xanthines, green tea, yerba mate plus vitamin B6.
 - Each capsule contains 200mg caffeine.
 - The company website claims 24 of 25 patients lost "significant weight" using this product.
 - Recommended dose is 2 capsules 15 minutes before a "main meal". Not more than 4 capsules in 24 hours.
 - 60 capsules cost \$39.99.
 - My Take:
 - Two capsules is the caffeine equivalent of two 12 oz. (tall) brewed coffees.
 - No evidence that it works! I'll pay a little more for my caffeine fix at the coffee shop.

Antibiotics do NOT



help acute bronchitis

β-blockers in post-MI save lives

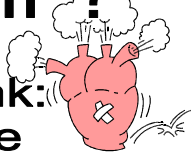


Pill splitters save big

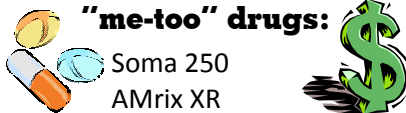


CHF?

Think:
Ace
Aldactone
B-blocker
Dig
Diuretic



Avoid these expensive "me-too" drugs:



Soma 250
 AMrix XR
 Xyzal
 Veramyst
 Ultram ER
 Ambien CR
 Coreg CR

Treat diabetics BP to 130/80



New Generics in 2008

Drug	Patent Exp.	Notes
Fosamax (alendronate)	February 6	Both Barr and Teva will have 180 days exclusivity on 35mg and 70mg tabs
Cardura XL (doxazosin e.r.)	February 22	Don't look for a pediatric extension
Risperdal (risperidone)	June 29	Several manufacturers claim 180 days exclusivity
Imitrex (sumatriptan)	August 6	Both tablets and injection will be available
Sonata (zaleplon)	December 6	Zzzzzzzz
Wellbutrin XL (bupropion e.r.) 150mg	"2008"	Wellbutrin XL 300mg are generically available now



now available
 on the
Generic Marquee

Altace → ramipril
Norvasc → amlodipine
Ambien → zolpidem
Zoloft → sertraline
Flonase → fluticasone nasal
Zocor → simvastatin

Did you hear the one about “sudden hearing loss with erectile dysfunction drugs”? DID YOU HEAR?



- J. Laryn Otolgy, April 2007 published a case report of sudden hearing loss in a man taking Viagra.
- The FDA has identified 29 post-marketing reports of sudden hearing loss in men taking PDE5 inhibitors over the last 10 years.
- Most cases, involved one ear and in one-third of cases the event was temporary.
- My Take:
 - ☆ With millions of doses of Viagra, Cialis and Levitra prescribed, three reported cases/year are pretty rare events.
 - ☆ For now, I wouldn't hear of bending on this one. I've erected to remain firm in my prescribing of these products.

ACEs = ARBs

- Study by Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), online version of Ann Int.Med November 2007.
- A meta-analysis of 61 studies involving 16,597 patients comparing ACEs and ARBs followed from 12 weeks to 5 years.
- Results:
 - Similar effect on BP.
 - Dry cough in 1.7% of ACE patients and 0.6% of ARB patients.
 - No apparent differences between ACEs and ARBs on lipid levels, progression of diabetes, renal disease.
- My Take:
 - ✓ No pharma money here!
 - ✓ Start with an ACE and save the patient an average of \$45/month over ARB.
 - ✓ Very low rate of cough reported for ACEs in this study. NNT with an ARB to prevent one patient with cough was 91.



Good News!

Ophthalmologists will continue to be able to use Avastin off label for macular degeneration. Genentech rescinded (after arm wrestling with a bunch of ophthalmologists) its decision not to provide Avastin to compounding pharmacies. Genentech will make the drug directly available to ophthalmologists. This decision has huge financial implications for macular degeneration patients who would have been forced to pay about \$2000 per injection for Lucentis (also a Genentech drug) instead of the usual \$20 - \$100/injection for Avastin.

Probiotics: Preventing Acute Diarrhea

- A well done meta-analysis (Sazawai et.al Lancet Infect.Dis 2006; 6: 374-382) reviewed 34 randomized controlled trials with 4,844 patients comparing the effect of probiotics and placebo in preventing diarrhea due to antibiotics, traveler's diarrhea and primary infectious diarrhea.
- The probiotics used were *S boulardii*, *L rhamnosus GG*, *Lactobacillus acidophilus* plus *Lactobacillus bulgaricus*. Doses ranged from 1×10^6 to 3.7×10^{10} colony forming units per day.
- Results:
 - ☆ Overall, probiotics were associated with less acute diarrhea (Risk Ratio = 0.65) both in adults and children.
 - ☆ The probiotics worked best in antibiotic associated diarrhea (19 trials; RR=0.48), next best in primary infectious diarrhea (9 trials; RR=0.66) and not at all with traveler's diarrhea (6 trials; RR=0.92).
 - ☆ The most effective organisms were *S boulardii* and *L rhamnosus GG*.

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