

May, edition of M.D. Pharmacy's monthly newsletter. Articles regarding your medications, their safety, and the politics behind the price you pay for them. Please share this with your neighbors.

Chronic Pain Linked to Low Vitamin- D

"Physicians who care for patients with chronic, diffuse pain that seems musculoskeletal-and involves many areas of tenderness to palpation-should strongly consider checking vitamin-D level" said Dr. Michael Turner M.D. from the Mayo Clinic. He went on to say that many patients that had been thought to have fibromyalgia are, in fact, suffering from symptomatic vitamin-D inadequacy. Special vigilance is required when other risk factors are present, such as obesity, darker pigmented skin, or inadequate exposure to sunlight. The researchers found that patients who had low vitamin-D levels and required narcotic pain medication for other conditions required much higher doses- nearly twice as much- for pain relief as those with adequate levels of vitamin-D. For patients trying to maintain an already adequate level of vitamin-D, the doctor recommended 10 to 15 minutes of sun exposure with no sunscreen on the trunk and arms and legs 3 times a week. This recommendation was hotly contested by the American Academy of Dermatology, who recommends that vitamin-D be obtained from a healthy diet and supplements rather than unprotected exposure to the sun's ultra-violet radiation, a known skin cancer risk factor. (Medscape.com)

First New Gout Drug in 40 Years Approved

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved Takeda Pharmaceuticals new drug -Uloric- as the first new drug for gout in 40 years. Gout is an intensely painful condition, suffered by 5 million victims in the U.S. alone, and is linked to high levels of uric acid in the blood. Most doctors already use the generic drug allopurinol to control high uric acid levels, but thousands of patients suffer serious side-effects from allopurinol and until now have had no good alternative for treatment. (UPI)

Study: Cholesterol Drugs Lower Blood Clot Risk

Statin drugs, taken by millions of Americans to lower cholesterol and prevent heart disease, also can cut the risk of developing dangerous blood clots that can lodge in the legs or lungs, a major study suggests. The results provide a new reason for many people with normal cholesterol to consider taking these medicines, sold as Crestor, Lipitor, and several generic statins. Many doctors believe that other statins would give similar benefits, though Crestor is the strongest such drug. It also has the highest rate of a rare but serious muscle problem, and the consumer group "Public Citizen" has campaigned against it,

saying there are safer alternatives. Crestor can cost 3-4 times as much as one of the older generic statins. One doctor from the University of Rochester School of Medicine said, "If more of them (the studied patient group) were on aspirin, you would have less benefit from the statin". (Associated Press)

Independent Pharmacy: Still the Gold Standard in Customer Satisfaction

Once again, American consumers rate independent pharmacies the best and most trusted healthcare advisors and customer-service practitioners in all of pharmacy retailing. The survey results of the 2008 Pharmacy Satisfaction Digest strongly reaffirm the ability of the single-store independent pharmacist to best meet the needs and expectations of the patient, despite the unprecedented assaults on their core business. Those of us that have survived the challenge are stronger for it, but too many practitioners have succumbed to the unrelenting pressure on gross margins from managed-care plans, and daunting competition from mail-order pharmacies or chain operators who rely on non-health related sales- tobacco and liquor- to subsidize the pharmacy department's overhead and shrinking profit margins. The results of the survey show independent pharmacy again, as the resounding favorite in satisfaction levels for consumers. The various categories of the study were: trust of the pharmacist as source of medical information, satisfaction with counseling and advice from the pharmacist, personal relationship with the pharmacist, the opportunity to speak to the pharmacist, and satisfaction with professional service issues. Of the six classes of prescription providers in the study, the independent rated first in all, while the chain pharmacies rated second-to-last, just one percentage point ahead of the least-satisfactory, mail-order /on-line pharmacies. (WilsonRx, Pharmacy Satisfaction Report)

The pharmacists and staff at M.D. Pharmacy, your neighborhood pharmacy.