Key Inforbits

- MedWatches.
- Height and weight increasing.
- New heart failure guidelines.
- Laborist?
- NABP clerkship!
- Back up that hard drive!

NEW DRUGS, and other related stuff …

MedWatch … Safety-related drug labeling changes for May 2005 have been posted on the MedWatch website that includes 42 drug products with safety labeling changes to the CONTRAINDICATIONS, BOXED WARNING, WARNINGS, PRECAUTIONS, or ADVERSE REACTIONS sections.
The Summary page -- http://www.fda.gov/medwatch/SAFETY/2005/may05_quickview.htm -- provides drug names and a listing of the sections changed.
The Detailed view -- http://www.fda.gov/medwatch/SAFETY/2005/may05.htm -- includes sections/subsections changed and a description of new or modified safety information in the Contraindications, Boxed Warning, or Warnings sections. The full labeling may be accessed by clicking on the drug name in the detailed view.
The following drugs had modifications to the CONTRAINDICATIONS and/or WARNINGS/BOXED WARNINGS sections:

- Alora (estradiol transdermal system)
- Arixtra (fondaparinux sodium) injection
- Atacand (candesartan cilexetil) Tablets
- Cefuroxime Inj USP and Dextrose Inj USP
- Clozaril (clozapine) Tablets
- Lodine (etodolac capsules and tablets)
- Midol Extended Relief (220 mg naproxen sodium)
- Pegasys (peginterferon alfa-2a)
- Requip (ropinirole hydrochloride) Tablets
- Tagamet HB (200mg cimetidine) Tablets
- Zestoretic (lisinopril/hydrochlorothiazide) Tablets
- Zestril (lisinopril) Tablets
- Zocor (simvastatin) Tablets

MedWatch … Accutane® …FDA notified healthcare professionals and patients of a strengthened risk management program, iPLEDGE, for Accutane® and generic isotretinoin. The strengthened program requires registration of wholesalers, prescribers, pharmacies and patients who agree to accept specific responsibilities designed to minimize pregnancy exposures in order to distribute, prescribe, dispense and use Accutane®. In addition to approving the iPLEDGE program, FDA has approved changes to the existing warnings, patient information and informed consent document so that patients and prescribers can better identify and manage the risks of psychiatric symptoms and depression before and after prescribing isotretinoin.
FROM THE MEDICAL LITERATURE ...

QuickStats: Mean Weight and Height Among Adults Aged 20--74 Years, by Sex and Survey Period --- United States, 1960--2002

Mean Weight and Height Among Adults Aged 20–74 Years, by Sex and Survey Period — United States, 1960–2002

From the early 1960s to 2002, the mean weight for men and women aged 20--74 years increased 24 pounds, and the mean height increased approximately 1 inch. During 1999--2002, the mean weight of men aged ≥20 years was approximately 190 lbs. and the mean height was approximately 5 ft., 9 in.; among women, the mean weight was approximately 163 lbs. and the mean height was approximately 5 ft., 4 in.


Drugs samples … how effective? … A recent study shows that physician residents in inner city clinics were more likely to prescribe more expensive, advertised drugs when they had access to free drug samples (p=0.04). However, looking at the actual numbers there is not a great deal of “clinical significance” so interpretation could go either way. It was a small sample size and short observation period and the correlation did not appear very strong. However, it is apparently good enough for our pharmaceutical industry friends.

New heart failure guidelines … just published electronically, a joint update from the American College of Cardiology and the American Heart Association. There are many changes reflecting additional options available since the last update. About 5 million people in the U.S. are living with heart failure with an additional half-million diagnosed each year. Also, the “official” name has been changed from “congestive heart failure” to “heart failure” to reflect the broader spectrum of disease. The guidelines will be published in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology and in Circulation in the September 20 issue. Hunt SA, Abraham WT, Chin MH, et al. ACC/AHA 2005 guideline update for the diagnosis and management of chronic heart failure in the adult: A report of the American College of Cardiology/American Heart Association Task Force on Practice Guidelines (Writing Committee to update the 2001 Guidelines for the Evaluation and Management of Heart Failure). American College of Cardiology web site. http://www.acc.org/clinical/guidelines/failure/index.pdf

Reviews of Note …


FROM THE LAY LITERATURE about medicine …

Vocabulary … Laborist … a new subspecialty may be emerging, a “laborist” or a physician employed by a hospital for delivering babies. The concept is to relieve community physicians, particularly outside of large teaching hospitals, from being on-call 24/7 for their pregnant patients. This is an offshoot of the “hospitalist” who is a physician with their primary practice in a hospital. It also seems to be stimulated by a “younger generation” who don’t wish to be tied so strongly to a practice as to have no free time. Appleby J. Some health systems explore laborist idea. USA Today. 2005 Aug 9. http://www.usatoday.com/news/health/2005-08-08-laborists-usat_x.htm


Vending machines again … Another story about the adoption of vending machines in pharmacies, these in California, to accommodate the long lines waiting for prescriptions. At the moment they are being utilized for refills only and are promoted to alleviate long lines at the prescription counter or for “after-hours” pickups. They operate much like an ATM, with a customer pin number, etc. A manufacturer of the machines said, “But wherever there is a labor shortage, there is an automation solution.” There is even discussion of videoconferencing capabilities at the machine! Slippery slope … ? Roan S. Enter your PIN, get a prescription. LA Times.com 2005 Aug 15. http://www.latimes.com/features/health/la-he-selfdispense15aug15,1,1019037.story?coll=la-headlines-health
Update …

Clerkship opportunity … The National Association of Boards of Pharmacy (NABP), based in Mount Prospect, IL (suburb of Chicago) has announced an advanced pharmacy clerkship opportunity. It will be a part of the Professional Affairs department. For more information, contact the Customer Service Department at 847-391-4406 or custserv@nabp.net


AUBURN HSOP FACULTY in the literature …


TIMELY TOP TECH TIP …

🔍 Hard Drive Backups: If you haven’t thought about this, you should. A crashed hard drive, which will invariably happen just BEFORE you turn in that critical paper, can make for a very bad day (or week, or month, or even semester). A few options to consider:

- External hard drive that backs up the entire hard drive.
- Two external hard drives, storing one “off site” for security purposes and swapping them on a regular basis (for those bordering on paranoid).
- Backing up data on the Internet, with services designed for such purposes.
- Backing up selected files/folders (e.g., My Documents) on CD's.
- Backing up selected files/folders on other external devices (e.g., floppy disk, USB pen disk or flash drive).

Whatever you pick, just pick something. You will sleep better!

For further information for those technologically challenged, see your local IT specialist.

✉️ The last “dose” …

It is not enough to have a good mind. The main thing is to use it well.

-- René Descartes [1596-1650]

*Le Discours de la Méthode, I*