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# *TABLET*

## Alzheimer's Patients Fare Poorly in Hospitals

According to a new study, Alzheimer's patients who are hospitalized have increased chances of requiring a move to a skilled nursing facility, or even dying within a one-year time period. Those with dementia are more likely to be hospitalized than their non-Alzheimer's counterparts, and often for physical symptoms that were missed and may have been preventable.

The study, conducted at the Harvard-affiliated Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital and Hebrew SeniorLife in Boston, cites that caregivers need to understand the risk of delirium so they can help the patients avoid hospital stays. The emotional stress and confusion that occurs when such patients are hospitalized seem to be closely linked.

There are many anecdotal incidences of patients who never seemed the same, or rapidly deteriorated, after a hospital stay. In a recent survey, of those Alzheimer's patients who survived hospitalization, 9% died within a year, as did 15% of those who suffered from delirium.

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## Transplants Skip Anti-Rejection Drugs

Transplant patients traditionally take anti-rejection drugs to facilitate their body's acceptance of a new organ so that it can perform its intended purpose. The drugs function by suppressing or lowering the immune system preventing the host body from "attacking" and rejecting the transplant. There are frequently side effects of these drugs ranging from fatigue to infection and increased cancer risk.

Stanford University is testing an alternative to the use of anti-rejection drugs. In the new procedure, in addition to the donated organ, transplant patients are also recipients of the donor's immune-producing cells. The body then develops a tolerance for the new organ. While in theory, this can eliminate the need for anti-rejection drugs; it can prove to be fatal to the patient if it fails. There are, however, a growing number of success stories and research continues in this area.

Doctors stress that no one should reduce or quit anti-rejection drugs except under close physician supervision.

### **New-Dedicated Pharmacy Phone Numbers**

#### **Nursing Homes:**

**516-992-3644**

#### **Residential Living**

**516-992-3646**

#### **Adult Care**

**516-536-0800**

#### **Billing**

**516-992-3642**

## RECIPE OF THE MONTH

### MARGARITA BEEF SKEWERS

**INGREDIENTS:** 1 Cup margarita mix, 1 TBS. white sugar, 2 cloves minced garlic,  $\frac{1}{4}$  Cup olive oil, 1 pound sirloin steak cut into 1  $\frac{1}{2}$ " cubes, 8 metal skewers, 16 mushrooms (stems trimmed), 1 sweet onion cut into 1" chunks, 1 large red or green bell pepper, cut into 1" pieces.

**DIRECTIONS:** Combine margarita mix, sugar, garlic and olive oil. Add sirloin cubes and marinate for at least 30 minutes. Preheat grill on medium heat. Put together skewers, alternating meat, mushroom, onion and pepper. Brush skewers with marinade. Grill skewers to desired finish. For medium cooking, grill for about 10 minutes.

## FDA APPROVALS...

Watson Pharmaceuticals has received FDA approval for its Abbreviated New Drug Application (“ANDA”) for **Budesonide Inhalation Suspension** 0.25mg/2mL and 0.5mg/2mL Unit-dose ampules, the generic equivalent to AstraZeneca's *Pulmicort Respules*. *Pulmicort Respules* is a steroid used as maintenance treatment of asthma and as prophylactic therapy in children ages 12 months–8 years. Watson plans to launch the product later this year.

Mylan Inc. has received final FDA approval for its ANDA for **Itraconazole Capsules** 100mg, the generic equivalent of Janssen Pharmaceutical Inc.'s *Sporanox*. This drug is indicated for the treatment of fungal infections that begin in the lungs, blastomycosis, histoplasmosis, and aspergillosis in patients who are intolerant of or who are refractory to amphotericin B therapy. **Itraconazole Capsules** are also indicated for the treatment of fungal infections of the toenails and fingernails in non-immunocompromised patients.

Qualitest has received FDA approval its ANDA for **Levetiracetam Extended-Release Tablets**, the generic equivalent of UCB Pharma's *Keppra XR*. *Keppra XR* is indicated as an adjunct in partial onset seizures in patients  $\geq 16$  yrs old. **Levetiracetam Extended-Release Tablets** will be available in 500mg and 750mg dosage strengths.

Sagent Pharmaceuticals announced the launch of **Oxacillin for Injection, USP** in three latex-free, preservative-free vial presentations. **Oxacillin** features the company's PreventIV Measures packaging and labeling designed to aid in the reduction of medication errors. **Oxacillin for Injection, USP** is a semisynthetic penicillin indicated in the treatment of infections caused by penicillinase producing staphylococci which have demonstrated susceptibility to the drug.

Dr. Reddy's Laboratories has launched **Atorvastatin Calcium Tablets**, the generic version of Pfizer's *Lipitor tablets*. *Lipitor* is an HMG-CoA reductase inhibitor indicated for the prevention and risk reduction of cardiovascular disease (eg, myocardial infarction, stroke, revascularization procedures, hospitalization for CHF, angina) and hypercholesterolemia (eg, heterozygous familial and nonfamilial hypercholesterolemia, mixed dyslipidemia, primary dysbetalipoproteinemia). **Atorvastatin Calcium Tablets** are available in 10mg, 20mg, 40mg, and 80mg dosage strength tablets in 90- and 500-count bottles.

### TOPICAL STEROID CREAMS

Topical steroid creams are largely prescribed for a variety of skin conditions including eczema, psoriasis, contact dermatitis (allergic reactions to products, bug bites, or poison ivy/ oak/sumac) and other skin conditions that cause itching and inflammation.

Steroid creams, also known as cortisone creams, are safe when used correctly, but may create side effects for patients. Side effects can frequently be traced to over-use, and may include susceptibility to skin infections, major eye issues such as cataracts or glaucoma (when creams are used around the eye), skin discoloration, and in extreme cases, Cushing's syndrome. In Cushing's syndrome, the adrenal glands cease to work properly. Abruptly discontinuing the use of the medication is extremely dangerous and can cause an adrenal crisis and severe blood pressure drop.

Instructions for steroid use should be adhered to in order to maximize efficacy and minimize side effects.

Like with other medications, a steroid cream should only be used to treat the condition that it was prescribed for. Steroid creams should not be used on infected skin or open wounds because they can affect the body's immune system.

Finally, using an old prescription steroid cream to treat a new skin condition is not advised. Potency and concentration varies in active ingredients in various creams. To avoid creating a problem, it is recommended to dispose of old creams after use or consult your doctor or pharmacist before using it again.

### NEW AIDS DRUG INDICATION

The FDA is considering approval for a new indication for *Truvada*, in the fight against AIDS. *Truvada*, which contains a combination of two antiretroviral drugs, has shown strong results in sub-Saharan Africa. The pill was developed to treat patients already infected with HIV. Early studies published by The New England Journal of Medicine indicate that it can also prevent heterosexual HIV transmission. Some US doctors are already prescribing *Truvada* to uninfected, high-risk patients as an off-label use with some insurers covering the cost.

The FDA will make its approval determination on the HIV prevention indication by September 14, 2012.

## SUDOKU

				2			7	
9						3		
		4			6			
				3				
1	4		7		8		9	
		8	5		1	2		
		5	6			9		1
		1			2			

*See Solution on the last page.  
No peeking!*



## Ask the Pharmacist

**Question:** A patient on Quetiapine (Seroquel) required an EKG, which came back abnormal. How does this medication affect the heart?

**Answer:** Quetiapine (Seroquel), a popular antipsychotic, has been recently linked with increased reports of a prolonged Q-T interval on an EKG, which is considered abnormal. A Q-T interval refers to two of the waves of a heart's electrical rhythm. Its prolongation can cause *torsades de pointes*, a dangerous arrhythmia that can lead to cardiac arrest and possible sudden death. The adverse reports were mostly in cases where a greater than normal recommended daily dose of 800mg was used. Quetiapine's labeling always included a "potential risk" of QT prolongation, but now it elaborates on specific medications to avoid with it, and conditions to be cautious with, if considering its use Quetiapine.

This side effect is not unique to Quetiapine as most antipsychotics, new or old generation, can prolong the Q-T interval. The older anti-psychotics (haloperidol, thioridazine or chlorpromazine) are notorious for cardiac side effects and are to be avoided with Quetiapine. Ziprasidone (Geodon) and loperidone (Fanapt) are the new generation agents most frequently associated with Q-T prolongation. The ones with least known risk are Aripiprazole (Abilify), Olanzapine (Zyprexa), Lurasidone (Latuda), and Asenapine (Saphris).

Other classes of Q-T prolongers include macrolide antibiotics (Biaxin, Zithromax); quinolone antibiotics (Cipro, Levaquin, Avelox); Bactrim; tricyclic antidepressants (amitryptiline); methadone; certain anti-arrhythmics (amiodarone and quinidine); anti-emetics (Zofran, Kytril, Reglan); and most of the oral antifungals (Diflucan, Vfend), among others. The drugs listed herein are commonly seen in long-term care settings.

Physical conditions that predispose one to Q-T prolongation are advanced age, female gender and heart disease. Slow heart rate and any drugs that slow the heart rate, such as beta blockers, increase risk. Low magnesium, potassium or calcium and any drugs that lower their levels, such as diuretics and laxatives, also cause EKG changes. Renal or hepatic insufficiency reduces elimination of any precipitating drugs that can also contribute to side effects.

Quetiapine is popular because it works not only for schizophrenia, but helps in both phases of bipolar disease and treats severe depression. It is also shorter acting which makes it easier to titrate and useful in acute behavioral conditions. It's associated with the least involuntary movement effects. It's sedating effects makes quetiapine useful for patients who also have trouble sleeping. Lastly, it was just released in generic form, ensuring that quetiapine use will continue.

The main thing to watch out for is precipitating conditions and giving with concomitant Q-T prolongers.

## 2012 Seminars\*

### Chem Rx Long Beach

- 8/15 – Dinner Program presented by GlaxoSmithKline:  
Treatment of Partial-Onset Seizures (Seasons 52 @ 7 PM in Garden City)
- 8/28 – Dinner Program presented by Novo Nordisk:  
Optimizing the Use of Insulin Analogs in Long-Term Care  
(Prime Bistro @ 6:30 PM in Lawrence)
- 9/12 – Fall Educational Seminar  
[Addiction Treatment/Mental Health/HIV-AIDS]  
(Leonard's of Great Neck, Great Neck) **\*\*CASAC Credits Only\*\***
- 12/6 – Winter Educational Seminar (Leonard's of Great Neck, Great Neck)

### Chem Rx New Jersey

- 9/6 – Fall Educational Seminar (The Imperia, Somerset)
- 12/5 – Winter Educational Seminar (Forsgate CC, Monroe Township)

### Chem Rx Albany

- 10/2 – Fall Educational Seminar (The Desmond Hotel)

\*Other dates may be added or changed

Please contact your Chem Rx Education Team for further information:

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### Coming Soon:

Check our website for the agenda of the upcoming seminars. [www.chemrx.net](http://www.chemrx.net)

Scan the Chem Rx bar code on your smart phone to have instant access to our website.

## Upcoming Chem Rx Client Events

- 8/19 *The Daytop Strawberry Festival (Madison Avenue, NYC)*
- 9/10 *The Addictions Care Center of Albany; Flexing Your Humor Muscle: A Workshop for Healthcare and Treatment Professionals Featuring Mark Lundholm, Recovery Comedian  
(ACCA Center for Training & Professional Development)  
**\*\*This event has been sponsored by Chem Rx Pharmacy Services, LLC\*\****
- 9/13 *Nassau County AHRC Foundation Margiotta Memorial Golf Outing  
(The Muttontown Club, Long Island)*
- 9/20 *IP Community Services Waves of Healing Benefit Cruise  
(World Yacht Marina)*
- 9/29 *The Addictions Care Foundation presents the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Start Smart Field Day (Addictions Care Center of Albany Campus)*



Your Chem Rx Team shows its true colors on "Jersey Day."

## Healthcare Providers with Hepatitis B Virus

The CDC has updated recommendations for healthcare providers who are infected with Hepatitis B Virus. The last changes to the guidelines appeared in 1991.

### Summary:

- Healthcare providers need not notify patients of their hepatitis B virus status.
- Hepatitis B virus DNA serum levels, in addition to hepatitis B e-antigen status, should be used to monitor infectivity. HBV DNA levels serve as better a prognostic gauge of infectivity.
- For healthcare professionals requiring oversight, specific suggestions are provided for expert review panels.
- A hepatitis B virus level of 1,000 international units/ML (5000GE/mL) is the guideline threshold value recommended by the CDC as "safe" for practice.

### Sudoku Solution

5	1	3	9	2	4	6	7	8
9	2	6	8	1	7	3	5	4
7	8	4	3	5	6	1	2	9
8	5	7	2	3	9	4	1	6
1	4	2	7	6	8	5	9	3
6	3	9	1	4	5	7	8	2
4	6	8	5	9	1	2	3	7
2	7	5	6	8	3	9	4	1
3	9	1	4	7	2	8	6	5

For more complete information, visit [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

### Contact Chem Rx

### [www.chemrx.net](http://www.chemrx.net)

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Please feel free to submit your questions, comments

or suggestions to Chem Rx via e-mail to [shanna@chemrx.net](mailto:shanna@chemrx.net).

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