Cancer Deaths Decrease

The continuous decline in cancer death rates in the United States over the past 2 decades has resulted in an overall drop of 23%, and more than 1.7 million cancer deaths averted, according to the latest annual report on cancer incidence, mortality, and survival from the American Cancer Society. There are three principal reasons for the steady decline: reduction in smoking and the implementation of tobacco control, improvements in treatment, and the success of "wise screening."

The report, which tabulates cancer statistics from 1991 to 2012, was published online January 7 in CA: A Cancer Journal for Clinicians.

Source: Medscape

FDA Approves Zurampic for Patients With Gout

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved lesinurad (Zurampic, AstraZeneca) 200 mg once daily to treat gout-associated hyperuricemia, in combination with a xanthine oxidase inhibitor (XOI). Lesinurad works by increasing excretion of uric acid and reducing its production.

"Controlling hyperuricemia is critical to the long-term treatment of gout," Badrul Chowdhury, MD, director of the Division of Pulmonary, Allergy and Rheumatology Products in the FDA's Center for Drug Evaluation and Research said in a news release announcing the approval. "Zurampic provides a new treatment option for the millions of people who may develop gout over their lifetimes."

Gout presents as sudden onset of severe pain in and swelling of a joint, in many cases in the big toe. It affects 1.6 million people in the United States, 85% of whom are men. Only some people with hyperuricemia develop gout.

Three randomized, placebo-controlled studies evaluated the safety and efficacy of lesinurad with an XOI in 1537 participants for up to 12 months. The treated patients had reduced serum uric acid levels compared with placebo. Adverse reactions included headache, increased blood creatinine, and gastroesophageal reflux disease. Use without an XOI or in too high a dose increased risk for acute renal failure.

An FDA advisory board recommended approval in October, but some members of the committee expressed concern about the drug's safety profile. A 400-mg dose of the drug was associated with an increase in the incidence of adverse events, serious adverse events, serious and nonserious renal adverse events, major adverse cardiovascular events, and death compared with placebo.

The approved dose of 200 mg was associated with a lower incidence of serious adverse events and was considered safe.

Source: Medscape
Cold Cap to Prevent Hair Loss During Chemo Cleared in US

Many cancer patients facing chemotherapy are aghast at the prospect of losing their hair, and for some years now in Europe and elsewhere there have been various scalp-cooling devices that promise to reduce this side effect. Now the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has cleared the first such device for marketing in the United States. The DigniCap Cooling System (manufactured by Dignitana Inc, in Lund, Sweden) has undergone a pivotal trial conducted at several centers in the US, and has been cleared for use to reduce hair loss in female breast cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy.

DigniCap is a computer-controlled system that circulates cooled liquid to a cap worn on the head during chemotherapy treatment. The cooling cap is covered by a second cap made from neoprene, which fastens under the chin and holds the cooling cap in place. It also acts as an insulation cover to prevent loss of cooling, the agency explains.

The cooling action is intended to constrict blood vessels in the scalp, which, in theory, reduces the amount of chemotherapy that reaches cells in the hair follicles. The cold also decreases the activity of the hair follicles, which slows down cell division and makes them less affected by chemotherapy. The combined actions are thought to reduce the effect chemotherapy has on the cells, which may reduce hair loss, the agency explains.

The efficacy of the device was studied in 122 women with stage 1 and stage 2 breast cancer who were undergoing chemotherapy, using recognized chemotherapy regimens that have been associated with hair loss, the FDA notes. The data from this study may also be applied to some stage 3 and stage 4 breast cancer patients because they may have a benefit-risk profile comparable to that of the patients enrolled in this study.

The primary endpoint was a self-assessment of hair loss by the women using standardized photographs at 1 month (3 to 6 weeks) after the last chemotherapy cycle. More than two thirds (66%) of patients treated who wore the device reported losing less than half their hair.

In the clinical trial, the chemotherapy regimens for early breast cancer that were used are known to cause 100% of hair loss in 100% of women. In one study, which involved 30 women, the DigniCap cooling system allowed 70% of women to keep "a significant amount of their hair."

The most common side effects of the cooling system include cold-induced headaches and neck and shoulder discomfort, chills, and pain associated with wearing the cooling cap for an extended period of time.

Source: Medscape
What a Difference 100 Years Make!

Here are a few of the “necessities” that were invented 100 years ago in 1916. What will be next?

**Hamburger Bun** - The hamburger bun was invented in 1916 by a fry cook named Walter Anderson, who co-founded White Castle in 1921.

**Lincoln Logs** - Lincoln Logs is the name of a children’s toy consisting of notched miniature wooden logs, used to build miniature forts, cabins, and buildings. Lincoln Logs were invented in 1916 by John L. Wright, son of famous American architect Frank Lloyd Wright.

**The Supermarket** - The concept of a “self-service” grocery store was invented by American entrepreneur Clarence Saunders and his Piggly Wiggly stores. Beforehand, customers would shop at a general store where a clerk behind a counter would fetch inventory in limited quantity for customers to purchase. With Saunders’ new innovation of self-service, customers would be able to choose a wider selection of goods at competitive prices. Saunders' first store opened in Memphis, Tennessee, in 1916.

**Tow Truck** - The tow truck was invented in 1916 by Ernest Holmes, Sr., of Chattanooga, Tennessee. He was a garage worker who was inspired to create the invention after he was forced to pull a car out of a creek using blocks, ropes, and six men. An improved design led him to manufacture wreckers.

**Light Switch Toggle** - The design for the toggle light switch was patented in 1916 by William J. Newton and Morris Goldberg of Lynbrook, New York.

---

**New Solutions and Services Coming To Rx Advantage Customers in 2016**

**New solutions and services:**

a. **RxNow** – On site Pyxis type machine for EDK that is interfaced today and we are using in other states. Alabama is waiting for ALBOP final approval.

b. **ViewMasterRx** - Online access to medications, residents, statements, etc.

c. **EZMAR** – Our own proprietary EMAR product that is live in hundreds of facilities throughout the U.S.

d. **Access to over 30 EMAR interfaces including AHT, Point Click, etc.** Our interfaces in addition to being bi-directional also meet CMS guidelines in place for new NCPDP Script 10.6 D for exchanging information.

e. **QBR** – Quarterly Business Reviews, including cost containment reports and key cost drivers with actionable recommendations

f. **PMC University** – Online CE for Administrators and nurses
Recipe

“The right prescription for good food”

Recipe of the month

KING CAKE

Cake Ingredients:
2 – 8 ounce cans reduced-fat crescent rolls
4 ounces reduced-fat cream cheese
2 TBSP confectioners’ sugar
1 tsp vanilla extract
2 TBSP butter
1/3 cup light brown sugar
1 TBSP ground cinnamon

Mardi Gras Icing Ingredients:
1 cup confectioners’ sugar
1 to 2 TBSP skim milk
1/2 tsp vanilla extract
Yellow, green, red, blue food coloring

ICING

The Advantage Pac

Rx Advantage pioneered the use of multi-unit dose packaging (Advantage Pac) in Alabama and Florida and has been utilizing and improving this technology for over 15 years. The team at Rx Advantage has over 300 years of combined experience using multi-unit dose packaging (Advantage Pac). The Advantage Pac is a multi-unit dose, easy to read, separate, and tear open, pre-poured package produced by automated dispensing machines. This unique, “tamper evident, compliance packaging” has the residents name, drug dose, drug description, and administration time printed on each Advantage Pac. All of our customers can choose whatever cycle is convenient. (i.e. 7-day, 14-day, etc...) Most customers choose 7-day or less cycles. Since the Advantage Pacs are dispensed in revolving cycles, it eliminates the need for nursing staff to process refill requests for routine oral solid medications or “auto-refills,” Rx Advantage is the only pharmacy that provides a Batch Update when a medication is discontinued. Our Batch Update gives your nurses instructions on how to handle the discontinued medication, giving your nurses additional information to help ensure this change will be handled properly.

Dispensing in cycles allows for a real time split-billing allotment to an appropriate payor source throughout the month eliminating the manual re-bill function of traditional pharmacy practices. Dispensing a 7-day supply of routine oral solid medications versus 30 days, reduces waste at the facility by up to 80%. Studies prove that utilizing automation and providing detailed information directly on packaging, like our Advantage Pac, significantly improves accuracy. Nurses using our systems today have seen as much as a 50% reduction in med pass time after implementing our Advantage Pac System.

CMS required all LTC Pharmacies to dispense brand-name medications in increments of 14 days or less beginning January 1, 2013. Rx Advantage is proud to have exceeded this requirement for the past 15 years for both brand and generic medications.