

# WHO Drug Information

## Contents

### General Policy Topics

Clinical pharmacology: twenty years on 43

### Personal Perspectives

Improving therapeutics through an ADR monitoring centre 45

### Reports on Individual Drugs

Misuse of skin bleaching agents 47

Community-based ivermectin therapy 48

Safety of pertussis vaccines 49

Corticosteroids and spinal-cord injury 50

Anticonvulsant-induced malformations: which fetuses are at risk? 51

Long-term lithium reduces risk of suicide 52

Intrauterine devices: longer effective lifespan 52

Long-term use of beta-blockers: the need for sustained compliance 52

Life after benzodiazepine withdrawal 53

Parenteral quinine: an essential drug 54

Leishmaniasis: prospects of improved treatment 54

Calcium blockers and diuretics: an additive antihypertensive effect 56

Thiazides in hypertension: a case of chronic overdosage? 56

### General Information

Isomerism as a determinant of pharmaceutical activity 58

Orphan drugs: have the aims been met? 60

Drug information for patients: how does it help? 61

Prescription costs: doctors need more information 61

Drug supplies in disasters 62

### Regulatory Matters

Adenosine deaminase: replacement therapy 64

Analgesic combinations: toward a more rational market 64

BCG instillation in bladder cancer 64

Combination products: guidelines for registration applications 64

Cytomegalovirus immune globulin 65

Disintegration specifications for tablet formulations 65

Epoetin alfa approved for zidovudine-induced anaemia 65

Fenoterol: safety in severe asthma questioned again 65

Ibuprofen: exacerbation of renal disease 66

Liquid paraffin: further restrictions 66

Methylene blue: an antidote reappraised 66

Phenolic throat sprays and oedema of the larynx 67

Triazolam and amnesia 67

Trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole: risks in the elderly 67

L-tryptophan and eosinophilia-myalgia syndrome: an update 67

Xamoterol: yet more restrictions 68

### Advisory Notices

Aluminium content of parenteral drug products 70

Antibiotic prophylaxis of infective endocarditis 70

Beta blockers: is there true cardioselectivity? 71

Biperiden: dependence liability 71

Bronchodilator drugs and hypokalaemia 71

Carbamazepine: stability problems 72

Citilone: hypersensitivity reactions 72

Flucloxacillin and hepatitis 72

HIV-2 screening test 73

Isotretinoin: yet more rigorous labelling imposed 73

Imipenem and cilastatin: CNS disturbances 73

Loperamide: voluntary withdrawal of infant formulations 73

Metoclopramide: the need always to weigh hazards and benefits 74

Pirprofen: withdrawal following hepatotoxic reactions 74

### Essential Drugs

Atypical mycobacteria 75

### Recent Publications

Regulating change 80

### Proposed International Non-proprietary Names: List 63

81