

## New Biotène For Dry Mouth Sufferers

XEROSTOMIA (dry mouth) affects an estimated 10 million people in the UK. The most common cause is medication and over 400 commonly prescribed drugs cause dry mouth as a side effect, which can have adverse effects on patient compliance.

The Biotène range is said to be the first of its kind in the UK to offer long lasting relief from dry mouth. It works by boosting the levels of the protective enzymes found naturally in saliva to help maintain a healthy balance in the mouth - reducing harmful bacteria and sustaining the beneficial bacteria. The products also contain no menthol, alcohol or sodium lauryl sulphate.

In severe cases of dry mouth, patients may experience difficulty swallowing, eating and in some cases speaking. Milder symptoms include a dry or burning sensation in the mouth, cracked lips, bad breath, mouth sores and bleeding gums.

Biotène Oralbalance Gel provides dry mouth relief for up to 8 hours. The Biotène Oralbalance Dry Mouth Care System contains Biotène Oralbalance Gel (50g) Toothpaste (75ml) and Mouthwash. The complete range is also available from pharmacies.

For surgery information and sample pack telephone Anglian Pharma on 01438 743 070 or visit [www.drymouth.org.uk](http://www.drymouth.org.uk)



## The Scottish Medicines Consortium (SMC) Delivers Its Recommendation for the Use of Topamax® Monotherapy in Epilepsy in Scotland

THE Scottish Medicines Consortium (SMC) has completed its assessment of Janssen-Cilag's anti-epileptic Topiramate (Topamax®) and, following a full submission, has advised that:

"Topiramate is accepted for restricted use within NHS Scotland for its extended (monotherapy) indication. It should be initiated only by physicians who have appropriate experience in the treatment of epilepsy.

"Topiramate should be used principally in patients who have not benefited from treatment with an older anti-convulsant drug such as carbamazepine or sodium valproate, or for whom these drugs are unsuitable because of contraindications, interactions or poor tolerance.

"Its use for second-line therapy in epilepsy is unaffected by this recommendation."

Topamax® is a broad spectrum anti-epileptic drug, which can offer advantages for patients with generalised seizures, partial seizures and for those patients whose epilepsy cannot be definitively classified. A recent study concluded that Topamax® was at least as effective as therapeutic doses of carbamazepine and sodium valproate. In addition, the low risk of weight gain with Topamax® singled it out as a particularly effective option in patients where weight gain may create or aggravate existing health problems.

For more information contact Janssen-Cilag on Tel. 01494 567567.



## ILAE UK Chapter 2004

THE 3-day 2004 International League Against Epilepsy UK Chapter (ILAE) meeting is being held in Cardiff in the City Hall, 23-25th June 2004. There is a wide-ranging programme, covering topics from the changing structure of epilepsy care (NICE, GP contract, specialist nursing), epilepsy surgery (cognitive and visual field outcomes), basic science ("what's hot and what's not"), learning disability (clinician and carer perspectives) and epilepsy in children (syndromes, febrile seizures and predicaments). There will be a controversial debate entitled "people with epilepsy should be informed about SUDEP at their first specialist consultation". There will also be a practical and interactive session (push button voting) on "Difficult epilepsy consultations".

There will be platform and poster presentations, and presentations by the prizewinning Gowers' essayists. For many, however, the highlight will be Alan Richens receiving the ILAE UK Chapter Certificate of Excellence in Epilepsy Award; Alan will then describe his passion for vintage cars in a talk entitled "Therapeutic Motoring". The meeting will be closed by honoring the late Sheila Wallace, in a touchingly personal symposium on childhood epilepsy, arranged and presented by several of her close professional friends.

The Gala dinner will be at the Angel Hotel. The Cowbridge Male Voice Choir will sing before the meal, and there will be a chance to dance afterwards. There will also be TV coverage of live European Cup football for those for whom football is as important as epilepsy.

The meeting is being generously sponsored, keeping the costs affordable. Download the registration form from the ACNR web site ([www.acnr.co.uk](http://www.acnr.co.uk)), or e-mail [denise@conference2k.com](mailto:denise@conference2k.com) for more information.

## Survey Highlights Unnecessary Burden of Peripheral Neuropathy and Neuropathic Pain

RESULTS from a survey of over 600 patients presented at the Pain Society's Annual Scientific Meeting reveal that peripheral neuropathy (PN), a neurological condition that may affect up to 8% of the population, has a much greater impact on quality of life than previously thought.

Data from this survey, conducted by the Neuropathy Trust, highlights neuropathic pain (NeP) as being one of the principal symptoms associated with neuropathy. However, the data also suggest that the impact on the patient extends far beyond pain: over a quarter suffer depression as a result of PN and NeP, and one in two experience sleep disturbance.

PN is a common condition that is often distressing, and sometimes disabling or even fatal. The population prevalence is about 2.4%, rising with age to 8% and this prevalence is likely to increase in the future due to the rising burden of diabetes (a cause of PN).

The Neuropathy Trust believes that the extent of suffering that patients experience is unnecessary. Even a modest increase in the awareness of PN and NeP amongst healthcare professionals and the general public could go a long way towards alleviating the burden of these diseases. The Survey data highlight that the extent to which patients are satisfied with their treatment correlates strongly with early diagnosis, thus indicating the need for fast-track referral.

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