



A U S T R A L I A N Pharmacist

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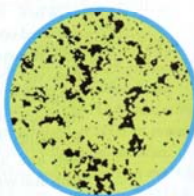
New data published in a recent issue of the *International Journal of Pharmaceutics*¹ challenge previous assumptions that all formulations of aciclovir-based cold sore creams are the same. The authors found wide variations in the level of propylene glycol (PG) in topical aciclovir creams, and these variations led to significant differences in skin penetration of the active ingredient aciclovir. The researchers analysed 139 topical aciclovir creams available over-the-counter (OTC) and found that over four out of five had less than 20% PG. *Zovirax*, with the optimal level of 40% PG, when compared to those sample formulations studied with less than 20% PG, showed significant superiority in skin penetration, delivering up to five times more aciclovir directly into the skin.

It is known that PG plays an important role in skin penetration, optimising and maintaining levels of aciclovir in the skin. Based on the mode of action of aciclovir, the greater the concentration and time the compound is present in the skin during viral reactivation of a cold sore, the greater the potential for clinical benefit.

Reference
1. Trotter L et al. Are all aciclovir cream formulations bioequivalent? *Int J Pharm*, Nov 4 2005;304:63-71

Paedpharm Maybe Baby

Australian OTC pharmaceutical company, Paedpharm, has relaunched *Maybe Baby* – the mini microscope which helps women predict when they are most likely to conceive – through pharmacies nationally.



Paedpharm has acquired the product from Optix, who launched *Maybe Baby* on the Australian market in 1999. Paedpharm has refreshed the product with new packaging and more comprehensive information and instructions to benefit users. A new web site has also been launched – www.maybebaby.com.au – which is designed to be a valuable source of information to those wanting to fall pregnant.

Maybe Baby uses saliva to pinpoint when women ovulate, as a rise in oestrogen levels can be detected by examining dried saliva. After users apply a small

amount of saliva to the lens and wait for it to dry, they will see patterns through the viewfinder – a fern pattern indicates the time is right to try for a baby, while a pebble pattern signifies the non-fertile period.

NXY-059 AstraZeneca

Results from the SAINT I (Stroke Acute Ischaemic NXY-059 Treatment) trial, published in the *New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM)*, report the effect of AstraZeneca's investigational drug NXY-059 intended for the treatment of acute ischaemic stroke (AIS). The data showed a statistically significant reduction with NXY-059 versus placebo on the primary outcome of stroke-related disability, as assessed on the Modified Rankin Scale (mRS) ($p=0.038$ at 90 days). Additional analysis of the data showed a reduction in the disability of patients at both ends of the scale, with 4.4% more patients treated with NXY-059 becoming free of symptoms (mRS 0 vs. mRS > 0; $p=0.003$) and 3.7% more patients able to walk without help and being less dependent on others for bodily needs (mRS < 3 vs. mRS > 3; $p=0.02$), compared to placebo.¹

Professor Stephen Davis, Director of Neurology and the Stroke Care Unit, Royal Melbourne Hospital, member of the SAINT I Steering Committee and co-author of the paper published in the *NEJM*, described the study results as extremely promising. 'Disability is recognised by clinicians as the most significant endpoint in stroke treatment. The significant improvement in disability