

TRADE MEDIA ALERT**08 October 2008****3 in 1: Cholesterol lowering; ADHD in children; PET scans for cancer**

NPS is adopting a new approach to issuing media releases to trade. Following is a brief outline of three stories relevant to health professionals.

Story 1: PET scans in oncology – not always the answer

More than 90 percent of PET scans worldwide are now used for oncology indications. PET scans are more accurate than “conventional” imaging in a range of cancers, according to Dr Aravind Ravi Kumar from the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital.

Positron Emission Tomography (PET) is increasingly used in cancer detection, staging and for monitoring effects of therapy, he says. Dr Ravi Kumar warns, however, that not all abnormalities on PET scans are due to cancer, and that not all cancers can be detected with a PET scan. The applications and limitations of PET are explained using actual patient scans as examples in the October issue of *Australian Prescriber*.

Story 2: Lowering cholesterol – small changes = big difference, without medicines

People can respond to dietary changes within four to six weeks. Lowering their low density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol by up to 30 percent can significantly reduce their risk of coronary heart disease.

“If cholesterol reductions of these amounts can be achieved by changes in lifestyle... there may be no need for many patients to take cholesterol-lowering medicines,” says Professor David Colquhoun, a cardiologist from Wesley Medical Centre in Brisbane. “Statins should only be prescribed if these changes in lifestyle have not worked.”

Story 3: Many factors to consider in getting treatment right for ADHD

The quality of a child's relationships and their diet are now known to be minor risk factors implicated in attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Biological factors, including genetics, remain the most significant factor, however, so they must all be considered before treatment can begin.

“ADHD is rarely encountered as a pure, discrete disorder,” says Professor Alasdair Vance from the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne. “That's why it is so important that children are properly assessed, so they can get the right support such as speech therapy, educational remediation and occupational therapy”.

The first line treatment for ADHD continues to be psychosocial interventions alone, however, there is evidence that some children will do better when medicines are given in conjunction with comprehensive behavioural interventions. “Side effects also need to be well considered and understood,” he says.

For the complete articles visit the Australian Prescriber website www.australianprescriber.com

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