# Dental notes

*Prepared by **Michael McCullough**, Chair, Therapeutics Committee, Australian Dental Association*

## Drug interactions with complementary medicines

Most dentists are unlikely to ask about the use of complementary medicines when taking their patients' medical histories, however many of these medicines have potentially significant interactions with commonly prescribed drugs. Of particular note is the frequency that many of these medications interact with anticoagulants, particularly warfarin. Many 'blood-thinning' herbal products could result in significant bleeding after not only major oral surgery, but also minor oral procedures. It is therefore advisable that dentists obtain information regarding their patients' use of herbal or complementary medications. However, the routine recommended local measure of haemostatic material in the socket, suture and tranexamic acid as a mouthwash usually controls any bleeding.

## Further reading

Abebe W. Herbal supplements may require modifications of dental treatment. Dent Today 2009;28:136-7.

# Top 10 drugs

These tables show the top 10 subsidised drugs in 2009–10.

*Table 1*

**Top 10 drugs by DDD/1000 pop/day** *†

| Constituent drug | PBS/RPBS ‡ |
|---|---|
| 1. atorvastatin | 80.83 |
| 2. irbesartan | 33.85 |
| 3. perindopril | 28.60 |
| 4. ramipril | 27.35 |
| 5. simvastatin | 25.55 |
| 6. rosuvastatin | 25.51 |
| 7. paracetamol | 24.01 |
| 8. candesartan | 22.16 |
| 9. esomeprazole | 21.49 |
| 10. aspirin | 17.67 |

DDDs in this table include use in combination products

*Table 2*

**Top 10 drugs by prescription counts** †

| Drug | PBS/RPBS ‡ |
|---|---|
| 1. atorvastatin | 11 017 309 |
| 2. esomeprazole | 6 256 960 |
| 3. simvastatin | 4 720 865 |
| 4. rosuvastatin | 4 688 857 |
| 5. paracetamol | 4 290 327 |
| 6. perindopril | 3 999 467 |
| 7. pantoprazole | 3 815 186 |
| 8. metformin hydrochloride | 3 390 708 |
| 9. atenolol | 3 140 001 |
| 10. irbesartan | 3 118 022 |

*Table 3*

**Top 10 drugs by cost to government** †

| Drug | Cost to government (A$) | DDD/1000 pop/day * PBS/RPBS ‡ | Prescriptions PBS/RPBS ‡ |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. atorvastatin | 633 711 616 | 68.94 | 11 017 309 |
| 2. rosuvastatin | 291 559 863 | 25.51 | 4 688 857 |
| 3. ranibizumab | 237 199 442 | – ¶ | 113 126 |
| 4. clopidogrel | 209 904 583 | 10.39 | 2 993 979 |
| 5. esomeprazole | 203 325 839 | 21.49 | 6 256 960 |
| 6. salmeterol and fluticasone | 167 529 715 | – § | 2 948 869 |
| 7. olanzapine | 159 202 466 | 3.00 | 935 179 |
| 8. simvastatin | 154 029 119 | 20.95 | 4 720 865 |
| 9. adalimumab | 152 526 189 | 0.29 | 85 616 |
| 10. rituximab | 119 344 969 | – ¶ | 65 225 |

* The defined daily dose (DDD)/thousand population/day is a more useful measure of drug utilisation than prescription counts. It shows how many people, in every thousand Australians, are taking the standard dose of a drug every day.

† Based on date of supply. Does not include private prescriptions or prescriptions under PBS co-payment.

‡ PBS Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, RPBS Repatriation Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme

¶ World Health Organization has not allocated a DDD for this drug

§ Combination drugs do not have a DDD allocated

Source: Drug Utilisation Sub-Committee (DUSC) Database, as at September 2010. 