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What's New in Treatment Information?

Beware of Counterfeit Products

Recently there have been reports of two counterfeit drug products. One is a counterfeit human growth hormone (rHGH, Serostim) and the other is counterfeit filgrastim (Neupogen). People with HIV commonly use both. Growth hormone is used to treat HIV-associated wasting disease and is now being explored to treat fat accumulation due to lipodystrophy syndrome(s). Filgrastim is used to raise neutrophils, a type of white blood cells, which are important in protecting the body from infections.

Counterfeit rHGH carries a lot number MNH605A. Any product with this number should be considered counterfeit and should not be used. The FDA reports the counterfeit product contains only 1/6 of the dose of rHGH. Previous reports of counterfeit rHGH revealed the old lot number to contain *human chorionic gonadotropin* (HCG) instead of rHGH. HCG has some anabolic affects and is being researched for its anti-HIV and anti-KS potentials. That counterfeit rHGH is still being analyzed for other contaminants. For more information, call Serono, the manufacturers of rHGH, at 1-888-275-7376.

Counterfeit filgrastim has a lot number of P000948 or P000890 and expiration date of 12/02. Further, the packet insert is on regular stock paper—not on thin, lightweight paper. For more information, contact Amgen, the manufacturers, at 1-800-772-6436 or <http://www.amgen.com/corporate/AmgenNews.html>.

If you suspect you have counterfeit product, return it to the pharmacy where you purchased it for a replacement.

New Peginterferon Results

Encouraging results of the pegylated interferon products to treat hepatitis C virus (HCV) were recently presented. The studies show that this new formulation, when used together with ribavirin

(Rebetol) is more effective in treating HCV than the standard regimen of regular interferon-alfa combined with ribavirin (Rebetron).

One study showed that about 35% of people who did not benefit from standard Rebetron as first line therapy achieved a reduction in HCV RNA levels with the combination of peginterferon alfa-2b (peg-Intron) and ribavirin after 24 weeks. Although the early results are encouraging, the usefulness of this combination as second line therapy will not be known until the study is completed.

Another study showed 61% of the participants, who had not used anti-HCV therapy before, had a sustained virologic response after 72 weeks of the peg Intron/ribavirin study. Specifically, 48% with genotype 1 (the most difficult type of HCV to treat) and 88% with genotypes 2 or 3 had a sustained response. The dose of peg-Intron was 1.5mcg/kg once a week with at least 10.6 mg/kg of ribavirin daily.

Peg-Intron is approved by the Food and Drug Administration to treat HCV when used alone, but not together with ribavirin. However, the result from the second study support using the combination, for which it is likely to be approved soon.

Results from a study of a different pegylated interferon (Pegasys) are also encouraging. This study included 1,121 people who have not taken anti-HCV therapy before and used the standard Rebetron, Pegasys alone or Pegasys in combination with ribavirin. The dose of Pegasys was 180mcg once a week and the dose of ribavirin was 1,000-1,200mg daily. At the end of 72 weeks, the percentage of people with HCV levels below 50 copies/mL were:

| | Pegasys alone | Rebetron | Pegasys + ribavirin |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|------------|---------------------|
| Overall Response | 30% | 45% | 56% |
| Response for genotype 1 | 21% | 37% | 46% |
| Response for genotype 2 or 3 | 45% | 61% | 76% |

Further analysis found that people who did not have a response by week 12 were highly unlikely to achieve undetectable HCV levels by study end. Also, people who were over 80% adherent to their meds were much more likely to achieve undetectable levels by study end. Side effects overall were similar among the three groups, although there appeared to be less severe flu-like symptoms and depression among people taking Pegasys and ribavirin than those on Rebetron.

What's New in Fund Raising?

Help is on the Way VII; July 30 & 31

Northern California's biggest AIDS benefit concert is fast approaching and the Monday night black-tie gala is sure to be another

sell out. This all Broadway Concert is always packed with powerhouse performers and this year's gala features stars from many of Broadway's biggest shows including Marilu Henner (CHICAGO), Lucie Arnaz (*Lost in Yonkers/They're Playing Our Song*), Sam Harris (*The Life/Big River*), Hugh Panaro (*Phantom of the Opera/Les Miserables*), Sean McDermott (*Miss Saigon/Grease*), Colleen Fitzpatrick (*Cats/Into the Woods*), Carole Cook (*42nd Street/Radio Gals*), Nancy Dussault (*The Sound of Music/Carousel/Side by Side by Sondheim*), Charlotte Rae (*Li'l Abner*), Mary Jo Catlett (*Hello! Dolly!/Pajama Game*), and Valarie Pettiford (*Fosse*). Also slated are Jane Olivor, Bruce Vilanch, Brian Boitano, Brock Peters, Jill Eikenberry, Michael Tucker, Paula West, Meg Mackay and Kathy Garrick.

Project Inform is one of the beneficiaries and 100% of ticket sales will go directly to them. Buying tickets is a great way to support Project Inform and 5 other Bay Area AIDS agencies. Tickets only run from \$35 to \$75. Tickets that include the gala pre-performance reception, featuring complimentary wine tastings, special martini bars, and fabulous hors d'oeuvres by many of San Francisco's top restaurants start at \$125. Tickets are available by calling 415-273-1620 or by ordering online at www.helpisontheway.org.

Just Rubbers

Just Rubbers, the online condom store whose mission is to offer its clients a "discrete, professional service, providing exceptional products at an excellent value" has teamed up with Project Inform to offer you a new way to purchase condoms AND a new way to donate to Project Inform. When choosing condoms online, proceed to the online checkout and you'll have the opportunity to designate \$1 of your purchase total to Project Inform—each time you order!

No personal information is disclosed, and your order—delivered within 24 hours—will arrive in a plain package. Visit

www.justrubbers.com to read customer comments and to review the selection of condoms available. And don't forget to designate \$1 to Project Inform!

Project Inform "Evening of Hope 2001"

Tuesday, October 2; 6 – 9pm

Merchant's Exchange Ballroom, San Francisco

New Venue! New Format! Cocktails, sumptuous buffet, and silent auction, with emphasis on fun. This year's gathering will bring both new and longtime Project Inform supporters together for an evening of camaraderie and conversation to support one of the nation's most trusted and respected AIDS service organizations.

Wednesday, November 14; 6:30pm,

Cocktail reception; 8:00pm, Dinner and program, The Beverly Hills Hotel, Beverly Hills

Project Inform will honor a select few of the activists, volunteers and philanthropists who have contributed to the work of Project Inform since its founding in 1985. Confirmed honorees include: longtime supporter Barry Krost, producer and manager of some of Hollywood's leading talents; Brenda Freiberg, former Assistant Mayor of Los Angeles and Project Inform Board member; as well as AIDS activist and well-known comedian Bruce Vilanch.

Project Inform is also pleased to recognize Macy's West with this year's Corporate Leadership Award. Macy's West has been a visionary leader in its support of community organizations engaged in the fight against AIDS. Since 1988, Macy's Passport events alone have distributed over \$13 million to community organizations.

Formal invitations will arrive a month prior to the events. For more information, please call 415-558-8669 x223.

ADDRESS INFORMATION

Yes, I want to become a *Pledge Partner* and help Project Inform remain at the forefront of providing critically important HIV/AIDS treatment information!

Mr. / Ms. / Mrs.

Address City State Zip

Email Phone Fax

This is a new address. My (Our) old address was: Address

ENCLOSED IS MY ...

- Pledge Partner pledge of:** \$_____ per month for _____ months (\$40 or more per month for a year entitles you to Partners In Hope membership)
- Donation of:** \$35 \$50 \$100 \$250 Other \$_____
- In Honor of / In Memory of:** (circle one)
- Please omit my name from any public listing of donors to Project Inform.**

PAYMENT INFORMATION

Circle One: CHECK VISA MC AMEX

Credit Card # Exp. Date

Print Name Shown on Card

Signature

Phone Number WNEW