

October 2009

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# The Mortar & Pestle

*Long Term Care Newsletter*



**Shelly's Medication Services - 1504 Grundy's Lane - Unit #8 - Bristol, Pa. 19007**

## H1N1 More Dangerous Than Thought

Researchers at the University of Wisconsin have reported that a new study shows that the virulence of the H1N1 flu virus may have been underestimated. According to virologist Yoshihiro Kawaoka and his research team, the H1N1 virus is different from other usual flu viruses. It exhibits an ability to infect cells deep in the lungs, where it can cause pneumonia and, in severe cases, death. Seasonal viruses typically infect only cells in the upper respiratory area. This characteristic of H1N1 is similar to those of other pandemic viruses, notably the 1918 virus which killed tens of millions of people at the end of World War I. Interestingly, it is believed that people born before 1918 harbor antibodies that will protect against the H1N1 virus.

## Genes May Have Role in Colorectal and Prostate Cancers

Several studies now suggest there may be a common genetic link to the development of colorectal and prostate cancers. Results of the study, led by Brent Zanke, MD, PhD, of Cancer Care Ontario, were reported online in *Nature Genetics* along with results of case controls studies from the US and UK. Malcolm Dunlop, MD, of the U. of Edinburgh, said the findings are likely to question how the malignancies develop. A small percentage of patients were found to have a common thread, but he cautions that the exact pathway is still unknown. According to U.S. researcher Christopher Haiman, PhD, of the University of Southern California, this is the first time that a common genetic risk factor has been shown to be associated with multiple cancer types.

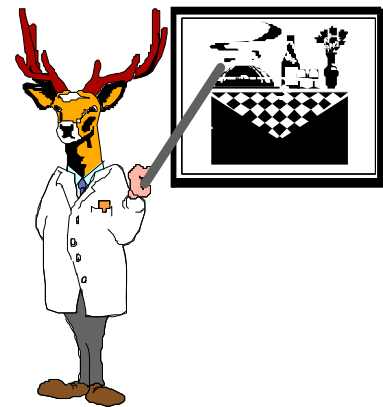
## Swine Flu Vaccine Approved

The FDA has approved the new swine flu vaccine in a long-anticipated step toward starting vaccinations in October. In making the announcement HHS Secretary Sebelius said she hopes to get limited supplies distributed early in October. The bulk of vaccine will start arriving Oct. 15, and Sebelius said it should be available at 90,000 sites around the country.

"We will have enough vaccine available for everyone eventually," Sebelius said. The government has ordered 195 million doses for now, but may order more if needed. Typically 100 million Americans seek flu vaccine every year.

## Educational Dinner Programs Continue

Shelly's educational dinner programs continue on October 22, with **Esai Pharmaceuticals** as co-host. **Robert Portney, MD**, of Boston, MA will speak on a number of topics related to ***Alzheimer's Disease in the LTC Setting***. This will be a case-based workshop, featuring video of real patients. Dr. Portney is a geriatric neuropsychiatrist on the faculty of Harvard Medical School.



This month we'll be at **The Buck Hotel** 1200 Buck Road in Feasterville, PA. We're back to our usual times this month. The Sip'n'sign registration will start at 6:30 PM. Our program and dinner will begin at 7:00. Join with colleagues from around the Delaware Valley for this informative and enjoyable evening of dining and discovery. Reserve your place today by calling **SMS** at 215-785-6616. Select #5 and speak to Barry or Stan.

*Words of Wisdom continues with "Food for Thought" - Last Verse*

I've drained the cup of disappointment and pain  
And gone many days without song,  
But I've sipped enough nectar from the roses of life,  
To make me want to live on.

... Author Unknown



### Prescription Descriptions

**Interactions with Tamoxifen** The FDA plans to add new warnings to the drug Tamoxifen, used for the treatment of breast cancer. It is converted to an active metabolite by Cytochrom P450 (CYP2D6) enzymes in the liver. However, this conversion can be decreased by medications that inhibit CYP2D6 and in women who are slow metabolizers, resulting in an overall decrease in tamoxifen's benefits.

It is estimated that nearly 1/3 of all patients on tamoxifen also take antidepressants for depression or the treatment of hot flashes. Women who take tamoxifen in conjunction with paroxetine, fluoxetine, duloxetine or bupropion may have substantial CYP2D6 inhibition and reduced tamoxifen efficacy. Other anti-depressants are weaker inhibitors of CYP2D6. These include: citalopram, escitalopram, desvenlafaxine and venlafaxine.

The consultant pharmacist is ideally positioned to identify this drug interaction in long term care patients. Pharmacists should speak with both the patient and the physician regarding risks associated with the medication combination and offer alternative therapy options which pose less risk for decreased metabolism of tamoxifen.

### Laughter ... the best Prescription - Engineers vs. Managers

A group of managers were told to measure the height of a flagpole. They went to the flagpole with ladders and tape measures. They proceeded to fall off of the ladders, drop the tapes, etc. The whole thing was a mess. An engineer happened by and saw what was going on, He pulled the flagpole out of the ground, laid it down, measured it from end to end, gave the answer to a manager and walked away. After the engineer left, one manager turned to another and snorted. "Isn't that just like an engineer, we need the height and he gave us the length."

### Quick drug info on the Web

[WWW.SMSLTC.COM](http://WWW.SMSLTC.COM)

Choose the link to Drug Information



### Dr. Feelegoode's Corner



No home remedy this month, but the answer to a curious question. Did you ever wonder why people seem to get the flu in colder months? A team of scientists at NIH may have found the answer.

They say the virus' outer covering hardens to a rubbery gel in colder temperatures. This makes it easier for the virus to pass between people. At warmer temps the gel melts to a liquid that isn't tough enough to protect the virus against the elements. During Spring and Summer the outer membrane cannot enter its gel .state and the virus dries out and weakens. Now you know!



### GO GREEN!

Send name and organization in e-mail titled "Newsletter" to [BarryP@SMSLTC.com](mailto:BarryP@SMSLTC.com) Receive the Mortar & Pestle by e-mail, starting next month.

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Partnership In Long Term Care

