WORLD of PHARMACY
Snippets of news from around the world

Lancet Laboratories gets international certification for HbA1c testing methods
Towards the end of last year, Lancet Laboratories announced that it is the first and only routine pathology laboratory in South Africa to be awarded the gold-standard certification for Haemoglobin A1c (HbA1c) testing method by the National Glycohemoglobin Standardization Program (NGSP).
This now means South African healthcare professionals have access to the most accurate HbA1c pathology method for monitoring blood glucose control and predicting long-term complications, enabling them to make more targeted treatment-management decisions for their diabetic patients.

It is estimated over 400 000 South Africans are being managed with diabetes in the private sector alone. With radical shifts in lifestyle and culture, South Africans are progressively becoming more affected by diabetes and its debilitating long-term complications including heart disease, blindness, amputation, kidney disease and erectile dysfunction, said Dr David Rambou, Chemical Pathologist and Head of Lancet Laboratories Quality Assurance Division.
The HbA1c provides an average blood glucose value from the previous six to 12 weeks. While other routine laboratories throughout South Africa perform the HbA1c test, Lancet is the first and only routine pathology laboratory in South Africa to achieve NGSP certification. This indicates to healthcare professionals that the HbA1c test result produced by Lancet is the most reliable, accurate and traceable to the gold standard reference method used in the Diabetes Control and Complications Trial (DCCT) and United Kingdom Prospective Diabetes Study (UKPDS).
The findings from DCCT and UKPDS have significantly changed the way diabetes is managed today. NGSP certification of Lancet’s HbA1c testing methods enables healthcare professionals to directly interpret their patient’s results using the findings from these landmark studies, supporting them to better manage their patient’s care, said Dr David Rambou.

In addition to monitoring and screening blood glucose levels, this year, the American Diabetes Association (ADA) released a position statement endorsing HbA1c as a tool for diagnosing diabetes. Importantly, however, the ADA recommended that the HbA1c result used for establishing a diagnosis is performed by a NGSP certified laboratory.

In South Africa, the Society for Endocrinology, Metabolism and Diabetes of South Africa (SENDASA) has called for all major laboratories to submit themselves for NGSP certification as a matter of urgency, however, due to the limited number of NGSP certified routine pathology laboratories in South Africa, both SENDASA and the Centre for Diabetes and Endocrinology (CDE) have not yet recommended the HbA1c test as a diagnostic tool for diabetes.

While diabetes can be successfully controlled, patients who are not accurately monitored and managed are at a higher risk for developing serious long-term health complications. This in turn places additional pressure on an already overburdened healthcare system. Lancet’s NGSP certification provides healthcare professionals with greater peace of mind knowing they have access to the most accurate information available to support their diabetes treatment, management decisions, concludes Dr David Rambou.

References available on request.
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Merck supports 18 days of activism for health of the nation
Imagine a world where bruises and broken bones no longer keep a mother from caring for her children. Imagine a world where children can receive an education without being abused at school; where rape is an unimaginable horror that lives only in over-active imaginations. Imagine a world without violence against women and children.
With the support of organisations like Merck, in the fight for a world where women and children are safe, this seemingly unattainable goal can become a reality. Supporting this notion and in recognition of ‘16 Days of Activism for No Violence against Women and Children’, Merck proudly sponsored an awareness day hosted at the Alexandria Health Centre at the beginning of December 2010.
The alignment of Merck with this social responsibility initiative was a natural fit for this is a company invested not only in pharmaceuticals but in people and in total wellness; it operates with a view to enhancing the lives of its consumers so that they can live to their full potentials.

The pharmaceutical giant also supported the event incorporated presentations from influential members within the community, highlighting whether psychological or physical, women and children who are subjected to terrible forms of violence are let traumatized and unable to realise their full potential and participation in public life. The event placed further emphasis on how gender-based violence acts as a barrier to solving sociocultural challenges such as extreme poverty, prostitution, teenage pregnancy and HIV/AIDS pandemic.

‘South Africa unfortunately is still home to unacceptable high levels of violence against its women and children’, says Merck Senior Marketing Manager, Phina McKeel. ‘This campaign directly challenges the citizens of Alexandria to declare a respite on acts of violence towards women and children. The ultimate goal of course, is to make this truck a permanent one.’

In support for the campaign, Merck urged the community of Alexandria to wear the official white ribbon – a symbol of peace – to visibly and publically demonstrate their pledge to never commit or condone violence against women and children.

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CUPS
Our Community upliftment Programmes (CUPS) provide support for initiatives such as upliftment of facilities through occupational health and safety at Siphumelele (Medi-Park Pharmacy), fitness attire for Colossus Health Club (Thosung Pharmacy) and development of sportsmen with Ilifa Elite Performance Academy (Embo Pharmacy Group).

These initiatives, however small or large, have a huge impact on the future of those involved.

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