

The 2004 New Drug Awards

Products analysed during the past year in the New Products column of *la revue Prescrire* (issues 246 to 256 in 2004) are eligible for the annual New Drug Awards



The *Prescrire* awards for new drugs and indications are a rare opportunity to applaud new products released onto the French market that offer patients real therapeutic advantages.

Each month the editorial team presents systematic and comparative analyses of available data on all drugs newly marketed in France and on new therapeutic indications granted for existing drugs. The aim is to help the reader distinguish, among the plethora of lavishly promoted new commercial products (and despite the failings of the licensing authorities), those medications worth adding to their drug list or worthy of replacing existing drugs.

This analysis follows strict procedures (see www.prescrire.org) that include a thorough literature search, a large panel of reviewers (specific to each drug analysed), and a quality control system to check, among other things, that the text is perfectly congruent with the references.

Our work is financed exclusively by individual readers' subscriptions: neither the French nor English edition carries any paid advertising whatsoever, nor do we receive grants

or subsidies of any kind (see our yearly financial report in next issue).

All drugs analysed in the previous year's 11 issues of *la Revue Prescrire* are eligible for the New Drug Awards. Note that the selection process takes into account any new data published since the initial article was written. The editorial team confers the New Drug Awards, as well as the Information and Packaging Awards, in total independence. These awards are based solely on the results of a strict, systematic analysis aimed at

identifying major therapeutic advances for the patient. The rules governing the awards for new drugs are also available on the *Prescrire* website.

Therapeutic advance is defined as better efficacy, fewer or less severe adverse effects (for the same efficacy), or safer or more convenient administration. The 2004 New Drug Awards are granted to drugs meeting one or several of these criteria.

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Honours list

The following 3 drugs (in INN alphabetical order) provided a major advantage for some patients as compared with available treatments, though with some limitations.

<i>enfuvirtide</i>	FUZEON [°]	Combination therapy of HIV infected patients after multiple treatment failures with antiretrovirals (this issue page 60)	Roche
<i>morphine liquid form</i>	MORPHINE AGUETTANT [°] syrup	Ready to use for severe pain resistant to non opioid analgesics (la revue Prescrire n° 253)	Aguettant
<i>stiripental</i>	DIACOMIT [°]	Severe myoclonic epilepsy in infants; reduces seizure frequency (this issue page 57)	Biocodex

Noteworthy

The following 4 drugs (in INN alphabetical order) made a more modest contribution to patient management.

<i>atovaquone + proguanil</i>	MALARONE [°] pediatric	Malaria prophylaxis in children in areas where <i>Plasmodium falciparum</i> is resistant to chloroquine (la revue Prescrire n° 255)	Glaxo-SmithKline
<i>bosentan</i>	TRACLEER [°]	Pulmonary arterial hypertension; no proven impact on survival, but offers a modest functional benefit (this issue page 47)	Actelion
<i>laronidase</i>	ALDURAZYME [°]	Replacement therapy of type I mucopolysaccharidosis in the least affected patients (Prescrire International n° 74)	Genzyme
<i>topiramate</i>	EPITOMAX [°]	Single-agent therapy in a few patients with refractory epilepsy; many adverse effects (Prescrire International n° 73)	Janssen-Cilag

Special award

This medicine was available under another name and used in the same indication, but packaging was not in line with use and approval was lacking. A new preparation is now available:

<i>misoprostol</i>	GYMISO [°]	Combined with mifepristone, for drug-induced abortion (la revue Prescrire n° 253)	HRA Pharma
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Golden Pill Award Not awarded in 2004.

The Golden Pill Award is granted to drugs that provide a major therapeutic advance in a field in which no effective treatment was previously available

(the 12 drugs to have received this distinction over the last 24 years are listed in table on page 64).