Drugs included on the Honours List provide a clear advantage for some patients in comparison to existing therapeutic options, albeit with certain limitations. Imatinib (GLIVEC°) is used inoperable or metastatic gastrointestinal stromal tumours (Novartis Pharma).

The following drugs (in alphabetical order of their international nonproprietary names – the INN is a drug’s “real name”) made a modest improvement in patient care:

- **Azacitidine (VIDAZA°)**, Celgene: poor-prognosis myelodysplastic syndromes and related disorders in adults not qualifying for haematopoietic stem cell allografting (Prescrire Int n° 113).

- **Japanese encephalitis vaccine (IXIARO°)**, Novartis Vaccines and Diagnostics: active immunisation of some adult travellers against Japanese encephalitis.

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At the end of each year, the Prescrire Drug Awards are based on the review articles published that year, and take into account any new data available since the initial articles were published. The rules governing the Drug Awards are available online, at www.english.prescrire.org.

Therapeutic advance is defined as better efficacy, fewer or less severe adverse effects (for similar efficacy), or safer or more convenient administration.

**2010: only one major advance, and only for a few patients.** As in 2008 and 2009, the Golden Pill Award was not attributed this year (see above and page 79). However, three drugs are worthy of note. Imatinib had already been on the market since 2002 for the treatment of inoperable or metastatic gastrointestinal stromal tumours. In the small number of patients concerned, after several years of follow-up, it has emerged that imatinib prolongs overall survival by more than 4 years, albeit at a cost of frequent and sometimes serious adverse effects. Its place as an adjuvant to surgical excision remains uncertain.

In some patients with poor-prognosis myelodysplastic syndromes and related disorders, adding azacitidine to symptomatic treatments prolongs overall survival by several months relative to standard cytotoxic drugs. But the assessment must continue, and haematological and gastrointestinal adverse effects must be taken into account.

Japanese encephalitis vaccine is useful for selected adults travelling to Asia in certain conditions. It is strongly immunogenic for at least a year, but we do not know how effectively it prevents clinical infections, or their accompanying sequelae and mortality. A risk of rare but serious adverse effects cannot be ruled out. This vaccine should be used with caution.

**Pilule d’Or/Golden Pill**

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.

**Honours list**

Drugs included on the Honours List provide a clear advantage for some patients in comparison to existing therapeutic options, albeit with certain limitations.

- **Imatinib** (GLIVEC° Novartis Pharma): inoperable or metastatic gastrointestinal stromal tumours.

**Noteworthy**

The following drugs (in alphabetical order of their international nonproprietary names – the INN is a drug’s “real name”) made a modest improvement in patient care:

- **Azacitidine** (VIDAZA° Celgene): poor-prognosis myelodysplastic syndromes and related disorders in adults not qualifying for haematopoietic stem cell allografting (Prescrire Int n° 113).

- **Japanese encephalitis vaccine** (IXIARO° Novartis Vaccines and Diagnostics): active immunisation of some adult travellers against Japanese encephalitis (Prescrire Int n° 106).