How publication guidelines for clinical pharmacology trials may help to accelerate knowledge transfer
Arne Ring and Kerstin Breithaupt-Grögler
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Our Executive Editor Arne Ring and his colleague Kerstin Breithaupt-Grögler write about the curious fact that there is little guidance for the methodology sections of a clinical pharmacology report or publication. In this editorial, some useful points to consider are given together with example cases describing best practice in the description of trial design, conduct, presentation of outcome variables, analysis and sample size.

Do final-year medical students have sufficient prescribing competencies? A systematic literature review
David J. Brinkman, Jelle Tichelaar, Sanne Graaf, René H. J. Otten, Milan C. Richir and Michiel A. van Agtmael
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We assume no one would doubt that doctors need to have prescribing skills. But what are they? David Brinkman and his team from Amsterdam are investigating this. For this paper, they did a systematic trawl through the literature to look at what has been written about the competence of final year medical students. Apparently, there is not a lot of consensus among faculty about what competences final medical students should have when they graduate. No one seemed to think that they knew enough however, so we should applaud the conclusion of the authors that more education is recommended even though the supporting evidence is not overwhelming.

Nutraceuticals: opening the debate for a regulatory framework
Antonello Santini, Silvia Miriam Cammarata, Giacomo Capone, AngelaIanaro, Gian Carlo Tenore, Luca Pani and Ettore Novellino
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The word nutraceutical suggests there is a class of pharmacologically active nutrients, and of course in a broad sense this is true. The situation can be quite confusing however, with semi-therapeutic claims being made without any clinical trial-based evidence. There is clearly a need for a more comprehensive regulatory framework and good definitions, and Antonello Santini and colleagues from Naples make a strong case in a paper that can be considered a primer for anyone interested in this grey area between food and medicine. Naples was the place that gave the world perhaps the ultimate nutraceutical, the pizza, so the interest of the authors is well justified.

Low molecular weight heparin for the prevention of severe preeclampsia: where next?
Kelsey McLaughlin, Ralph R. Scholten, John D. Parker, Enrico Ferrazzi and John C. P. Kingdom
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Data regarding any medicine for the prevention of preeclampsia are controversial, but there is reasonable consensus about acetylsalicylic acid, although less so about low molecular weight heparins. Kelsey McLaughlin from Toronto reviews the mechanisms and the evidence and concludes that a trial in a specific high-risk population should be conducted.

Gender differences in clinical registration trials: is there a real problem?
Geert Labots, Aubrey Jones, Sacó J. de Visser, Robert Rissmann and Jacobus Burggraaf
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There has been recent media attention to the suggestion that women get a bad deal as a result of clinical trial evidence, i.e. that they may be prescribed a drug that was predominantly tested in males. Geert Labots and colleagues from Leiden investigated this in the files of the FDA. Their hypothesis was that if this was the case the proportion of women in trials should be different from the male–female distribution of prevalence. It was not the case, although in early phases of research males predominated. This is likely to be the result of worries about pregnancy and is by itself discriminatory, as women are fully able to prevent pregnancy. However, overall we can fortunately conclude from this paper that in clinical trials women do seem to be treated equally.
Impact of antimicrobial stewardship programme on hospitalized patients at the intensive care unit: a prospective audit and feedback study

Maher R. Khour, Hussein O. Hallak, Mamoon A. Aldeyab, Mowaffaq A. Nasif, Aliaa M. Khalili, Ahamad A. Dallashi, Mohammad B. Khofash and Michael G. Scott
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After the use of antibiotics in livestock, overuse of antibiotics in humans is the major cause of the worldwide, deadly antibiotic multi-resistance epidemic. Prevention through controlling the use of antibiotics is therefore of paramount importance. Maher Khour from Jerusalem established a formal antibiotic stewardship program in his hospital. They accomplished very good reductions in antibiotic use without any changes in mortality and with shorter hospital stays. This is a compulsory read for anyone involved in antibiotic use policy.