

FOCUSING ON DENTAL PHARMACOLOGY

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GUEST EDITOR

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Drugs. We give them and we get them.

It is my pleasure to be the guest editor of this month's *Journal of the California Dental Association* that focuses on dental pharmacology. As guest editor I primarily have the privilege and responsibility to contact some of the nation's best dental educators to tell you and me about dental pharmacology. And that is what I have done.

We are impacted each practice day by drugs, the ones we use and prescribe, and the ones that patients are taking, most of which are prescribed by their physician. Dr. Budenz has provided an informative article and update on the most common medication used in dentistry, local anesthetics. Dr. Chainani-Wu and Dr. Wu have updated us on immunosuppressant agents that we use infrequently, but are uniquely valuable in some oral soft tissue diseases. And, of course, some patients are taking immunosuppressants and the impact of these drugs on the body needs to be taken into consideration during dental treatment.

Dr. Clark has done a stunning job of broadening our awareness of pain management medication. Though it is infrequent that most of us treat chronic head and neck pain in general practice, an awareness of this group of disorders, and the broad range of medication used to treat it, is an eye-opener into the expanding scope of dentistry as a specialty within medicine.

The other side of the coin for dental pharmacology is manag-

ing patients who are taking medication unrelated to dental needs. Dr. Chavez has provided us with a framework by which to categorize pharmacological risk factors and to assist us in prioritizing management and treatment planning approaches to assure safe and successful dental outcomes. Dr. Migliorati, a national expert in the evolving science of bisphosphonate-related osteonecrosis, and his colleagues, have provided useful clinical decision-making suggestions on how to manage patients taking these drugs.

These authors have done the hard work so that you and I can update ourselves and our patients can thereby benefit from the knowledge we have gained.

Oh, one other thing. How can you improve your drug prescribing skills? Work with a pharmacist. See the interview between myself and Dr. Lofholm, president of the California Pharmacists Association, who have provided some interesting and informative perspective on pharmacy and dentistry.