



## Drug-related topics selected for relevance to patient care

In choosing drug-related topics for the *CCJM*, we assign highest priority to developments that are changing the practice of medicine. Our aim is to keep you informed of how to appropriately use new classes of drugs and existing drugs with new indications, alternative strategies when a drug is no longer available, and, occasionally, other aspects important to optimal patient care.

This issue of the *CCJM* illustrates our approach.

In a Medical Grand Rounds segment, Dr. John McHutchinson and Dr. Zobair Younossi discuss the promises and shortcomings of the newest drug therapy for hepatitis C, combination interferon and ribavirin (page 476). They discuss the subtleties of this therapy, how to determine when it is and is not working, and the latest findings on how genotyping of the virus can help identify which patients are most likely to experience a response to treatment.

Dr. Joel Richter discusses the impact of the recent withdrawal of cisapride (Propulsid) from general distribution (page 471). Dr. Richter, chairman of the Department of Gastroenterology at the Cleveland Clinic and a former president of the American College of Gastroenterology, tells how the limited-access program for cisapride will work and how to enroll patients, and he describes alternatives for this drug, which is used to treat gastroparesis and gastroesophageal reflux disease.

Yet another aspect of drug therapy is discussed in "Preventing prescription drug abuse" (page 473) by Dr. J.H. Isaacson, which covers prescribing policies and warning signs to watch for.

We hope the topics we have chosen interest you, and we are always interested to hear what other topics you would like us to cover.

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