

# Breakspear Medical Bulletin

Issue 33

Winter/Spring 2013

## Notes on the importance of quality dietary supplements

Ron Leon, Clinical Nutritionist Manager

**According to the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), in 2006 the worldwide market for dietary supplements was estimated at greater than \$60 billion (£38.3 billion). With so many consumers involved, quality control of dietary supplements is an extremely important area of concern.**



As anyone who has purchased dietary supplements knows, the prices for similarly labelled products vary enormously but perhaps not everyone realises that the quality of nutritional supplements varies greatly as well.

An international study, undertaken in 2001-2 at the Center for Preventive Doping

Research, Germany, tested 634 nutritional supplements from 13 different countries and found that approximately 15% of all non-hormonal supplements, such as vitamins, minerals and protein powders, contained anabolic steroids. Anabolic steroids are drugs that are usually used to enhance performance and can cause adverse health affects.

Researchers at the Royal Free and University College Medical School, London, purchased 21 probiotic preparations sold in the UK, to determine if the product label claims were accurate. By definition, probiotics are live microorganisms (bacteria), which benefit the host. In terms

*(Continued on page 11)*

## New look for Breakspear's ground floor

When returning patients arrive at Breakspear in 2013, they will notice a few changes immediately.

Reception is now on your right as you enter, while Patient Liaison has moved from the far end of the dining room, to share an open plan office with Accounts at the front of the building.



New Reception area with door leading to new shared Patient Liaison and Accounts office.

The walls and doors have changed colour and new seating has been added. Also, with the removal of the former Patient Liaison office, the dining room has been opened up and expanded to provide more seating for patients and there is now a long breakfast bar at the

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Inside

On the market: Kleen-Free	2
Ask Dr Prem Bajaj	3
Are pesticides undermining our children's health and intelligence?	4
The importance of scent-free products	5
New thoughts on studies on the benefits of fish oils	6
Notes on the benefits of salt	6
Recommended recipe	7
New thoughts on cellular damage caused by wireless phones	8
New thoughts on how to improve sleep patterns	8
Notes on non-coeliac gluten intolerances	9
Did you know..?	10
Introducing changes in our Accounts Department	12
Bulletin board	12



**Breakspear  
Medical Group Ltd**

Hertfordshire House  
Wood Lane  
Hemel Hempstead  
Hertfordshire HP2 4FD  
United Kingdom  
Tel: + 44 (0) 1442 261 333  
Fax: + 44 (0) 1442 266 388

## On the market: Kleen-Free (helps get rid of bed bugs)

A clinical review in the *British Medical Journal* January 2013 states, "[Bed bugs] have increasingly been found in low budget and upmarket hotels, hostels, bed and breakfasts, private homes, night trains, cruise ships and even nursing homes."

If you are travelling, to prevent being bitten or spreading bed bugs, inspect your hotel room, particularly under the mattress, for bugs or bug droppings, which look like black spots. (You may wish to store your luggage in the bath/shower while you inspect, as bed bugs do not generally travel on smooth surfaces.) If you find them, it is best to get other accommodation.

If you suspect bed bugs and cannot find other accommodation, there is a product called Kleen-Free, which is an enzyme based product that does not contain pesticides or chemicals. It helps by breaking down the protein in the bed bugs and causing them to prematurely moult. The product can be diluted and sprayed in all

### What are bed bugs?

*In a recent survey, only 10% of UK residents identified them from pictures.*

Bed bugs (*Cimex lectularius*) are blood feeding insects that can be transported by clothing, luggage, and furniture and travel through electrical wiring and ventilation ducts. During the day, they avoid light and hide in dark places; at night, they hunt for blood.

Bed bugs feed on people by injecting an anaesthetic when biting so that the initial bite is not felt. Most people do not react to the saliva but some people may experience an immediate and/or delayed reaction, which can happen up to 11 days later.

areas bed bugs may inhabit, added to the washing machine to wash any clothes that may have bugs on them and used as a carpet shampoo. Wash all clothes at 60°C with Kleen-Free or freeze delicate clothing.

To eliminate bed bugs from your home, usually a pest management company must be commissioned. However, in addition to spraying, washing and steam cleaning with Kleen-Free, be sure to regularly vacuum all furniture and any cracks in the walls, floorboards, etc.

### Breakspear Medical Bulletin

Breakspear Medical Group Ltd  
Hertfordshire House  
Wood Lane, Hemel Hempstead  
Hertfordshire HP2 4FD  
United Kingdom

#### Editor:

Carolyn Northcote Monro

#### Contributing writers:

Alina Andrei  
Dr Prem Bajaj  
Michele Kingston  
Dr Jean Monro  
Dr Basant Puri

**Breakspear Medical Bulletin** is a private publication that we aim to produce quarterly. It is for the promotion of environmental medicine awareness and Breakspear Medical Group Ltd. This newsletter is not intended as advice on specific cases but as a forum of information researched and stored at Breakspear Medical Group. We urge readers to discuss the articles in this bulletin with their health-care practitioners. Unauthorised reproduction of this newsletter, or quotation except for comment or review, is illegal and punishable by law.

© Copyright 2013 Breakspear Medical Group Ltd and its licensors. All rights reserved.

### New look for Breakspear's ground floor



Above: Dining room before Christmas.  
Right: dining room today.

(Continued from page 1)

window.

Due to the environmental effects on some patients, usually decorating and layout changes are kept to a minimum and completed during extended holidays so that the effects on patients are minimised.

While some maintenance decorating jobs will be performed throughout 2013, Phase 2 of the re-decorating, which will include updating the wards and doctors' offices, is likely to take place over the 2013-14 Christmas closure.

Please let us know what you think of our new look by completing a Patient Satisfaction Questionnaire. (These forms may be picked up



## Ask Dr Prem Bajaj

*I own dogs and they have often had ticks attached to them. I have removed these ticks, sometimes quite casually, without gloves, and I have had smears of blood on my hands. Sometimes when I have been able to take the ticks out, they have been alive and crawling. Would this put me at risk of contracting Lyme disease?*

Lyme disease is a zoonotic disease, which means that it can be transmitted between species. It can infect both dogs and people by the bacterium *Borrelia burgdorferi* and is often transferred by ticks.

Ticks get *Borrelia burgdorferi* by biting infected rats, mice, birds or squirrels. Ticks vary greatly in size and therefore sometimes can be very small and difficult to see.

When infected ticks bite people or other animals, the disease is passed on. Transmission of *Borrelia burgdorferi* from an infected tick is unlikely to occur before 36 hours of tick attachment, therefore it is wise to check for ticks daily and remove them promptly to help safeguard against Lyme disease.

Because dogs often visit outdoor areas where ticks thrive, and usually share your home, they may bring infected ticks into your house, which indirectly could pass on Lyme disease to the whole family.

Other pets, such as cats and even mice in your cupboards, may bring in infected ticks.

Recently at Bristol University, a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test was used to test 739 ticks from 3534 dogs for Lyme disease. The study found 17 dogs tested positive.<sup>1</sup> In the northeastern USA, as many as 50% of the dogs tested positive.<sup>2</sup> However, of those, a large percentage (as many as 85-95%) will never show signs of disease.

Detection of the infection can be difficult as the organism is difficult to culture and very rarely found in blood, urine, joint fluid or cerebrospinal fluid (CSF).

The human body builds no immunity against Lyme disease and, if we are bitten by infected ticks, we can be infected over and over.

It is important to prevent tick infestation of your dogs by removing ticks with gloved hands. (Infected blood on hands can lead to infection, if



### Symptoms of Lyme disease

Symptoms in humans include the characteristic bull's eye rash and erythema chronicum migrans, which is a rash that spreads out and spares the centre part, where

the tick was embedded. Early symptoms include fever, headaches, fatigue and depression. Left untreated, it may present as a chronic illness that can affect the joints, heart and central nervous system.

there is a break in the skin.)

Because the *Borrelia* organism is carried in the tick saliva, which is injected into its host to facilitate the tick's feeding, it could be that there may have been some of this present on contact areas of the tick and, if you do not wash properly, the organisms could be transferred.

As a precaution, one should regularly apply tick preventive medications to pets to reduce the risk.

Other preventative measures include:

- keeping grass/lawns mown short
- removing high grasses and bushes from near the home
- wearing protective clothing when you are going to be in an area where ticks are often found, such as near old stone walls, in high grasses and wooded areas, particularly ones where deer are present
- always thoroughly inspecting the skin and clothes of your children and yourself after being in such locations, particularly in late spring and summer

Lyme disease is the most common tick-borne illness in the USA and Europe. It is best not to risk infection.

If you have found a tick or extracted one, you can have it tested to see if it has the *Borrelia* species. You may send the dead tick in a non-crushable container to Breakspear and request that the test be completed for a fee of £70. (It is illegal to send live organisms in the post.)

References:

1. Smith FD, Ballantyne R, Morgan ER, Wall R. Estimating Lyme disease risk using pet dogs as sentinels. *Comp Immunol Microbiol Infect Dis*. 2012;35:163-7.
2. Available from: <http://vetmedicine.about.com/od/zoonotic/a/CW-LymeDisease>. Accessed 11 Feb 2013.

## Are pesticides undermining our children's health and intelligence?

**Alina Andrei, Nutritional Therapy Intern**

In the last edition of the *Bulletin* (Issue 32), the cover article explained the importance of eating organic food. Shortly after we featured that article, a study on the effects of pesticides on children was published.

The importance of feeding our children organic, instead of conventionally grown, foods is highlighted in a recent report, published in October 2012 by the Pesticide Action Network North America Group. The report focuses on the effects of pesticides on children's health and brain development and function. It would seem clear that pesticides are significantly detrimentally affecting the wellbeing of our children.

The report points out that children are sicker than they were a generation ago and concludes that pesticides are a key driver of this trend. This comes as no surprise, considering that, in the USA alone, an estimated 1.1 billion pounds of pesticides are used each year.

Infants and young children are the most vulnerable to pesticide exposure. Their primary detoxifying organs, especially in the first 6 months of life, are still not yet fully developed, and therefore are less able to process and excrete harmful chemicals. In addition, pesticide exposure occurs largely through touching, inhaling or ingesting. Children have a greater exposure to touching than adults and their skin is more permeable. Their lung surface area relative to breathing rate is higher, which means that inhalants are absorbed more in their vulnerable lungs than in adults. Also, their gastrointestinal absorption is greater, especially of alkaline pesticides.

During the first years of life, children's brains are at their peak rate of development and many processes that occur during this time are vulnerable to disruption from pesticides. In fact, the damaging effects of pesticides start even earlier, in the womb, where even at low levels, pesticides have been found to alter the brain architecture.

A "silent pandemic" is ensuing as a result of the

damage that chemicals are causing to the children's developing minds, as public experts from Harvard and Mt. Sinai Hospital state.<sup>1</sup> The rate of children diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) continued to rise at an average of 5.5 % per year from 2003 to 2007 and autism rates jumped 250% in one decade.



A "silent pandemic" is ensuing as a result of the damage that chemicals are causing to the children's developing minds...

Experts point out that although changes in diagnosis could play a role, this cannot fully explain the upward trend.

Links have been found between ADHD and exposure to

organophosphates and pyrethroid insecticides during pregnancy and throughout childhood. In autism, studies found that prenatal exposures to pesticides are particularly damaging, thus supporting the notion that pesticides could play a role in pervasive developmental disorders.

The impaired brain development also means a lower IQ. This could have significant effects not only at an individual level but across a whole society. This was well emphasised by Dr Ted Schettler in 2000 who stated, "a loss of 5 points in IQ is of minimal significance in a person with an average IQ. However, a shift of 5 IQ points in the average IQ of a population of 260 million increases the number of functionally disabled by over 50% (from 6.0 to 9.4 million) and decreases the number of gifted by over 50% (from 6.0 to 2.6 million)".<sup>2</sup>

Pesticide and other chemical exposure also contribute to many other childhood health concerns, including cancer, birth defects and early puberty.

Genetic predisposition to cancer is an important factor but studies show that exposure to environmental carcinogens may trigger the development of cancer.

Childhood leukaemia, brain tumours and neuroblastomas are the cancers most commonly linked to pesticide exposure. Timing of exposure seems to be particularly important, with exposure during foetal development and parental exposure during conception being the most important.

*(Continued on page 5)*

## The importance of scent-free products



According to the Daily Mail Online 5 November 2012, recent research from Mintel found:

- 28% of people would prefer skincare products to come without a scent.
- 60% of people classify their skin as being sensitive.
- up to 72% of asthmatics are affected by fragrance.



that have been used to cancel out the product's natural scent." Many natural, essential oils contain the same constituents as synthetic fragrances and will cause reactions.

Major manufacturers are starting to recognise that consumers want fragrance-free products. Companies such as Olay, Elizabeth Arden, La Roche-Posay and Philip Kingsley are all manufacturing no-scent products.

To stay scent-free, be sure to read the ingredients and avoid any products containing "parfum", even if you cannot detect a smell.

*Breakspear Medical Group has a strict scent-free policy, which means all patients, visitors and staff are asked not to wear anything perfumed/scented when attending the clinic. For more information about becoming scent-free, ask for our leaflet on the topic.*

Cosmetic dermatologist, Dr Sam Bunting says that it is the fragrance that is the most common cause of allergy from cosmetics.

There are more than 5,000 synthetic fragrance compounds used by the beauty industry.

The Mail article states, "As there is no regulatory definition of 'fragrance free', a product that claims this might well contain natural ingredients that are scented or even synthetic ingredients

### Are pesticides undermining our children's health and intelligence?

*(Continued from page 4)*

Seasonal exposure to pesticides during pregnancy has additionally been linked to increased risk of birth defects. Also, it has been found that pesticide exposure has endocrine-disrupting effects leading to early puberty in both girls and boys.

The report points out that the endocrine-disrupting effects of pesticide exposure may also play a role in the rise of childhood obesity, diabetes and asthma.

Researchers noted that the obesity epidemic coincided with the marked increase in the usage of industrial chemicals, including pesticides, over the past 40 years. Pesticides also influence the expression of genes that contribute to obesity, in what is called 'epigenetics', and some of these changes have been found to be passed from one generation to the next.

The role of pesticides in the incidence of asthma is linked to pesticides being respiratory irritants and to their negative effect on the body's immune system.

The published study group, Pesticide Action Network North America, recommends the following policies:

- **Prevent** the pesticide industry from selling agricultural products that can harm children's health, by taking swift action on the existing pesticides, blocking the approval of harmful new pesticides and by preventing harmful low-level exposures.
- **Protect** children where they live, learn and play by withdrawing and stopping the use of old and new harmful pesticides in schools, homes, parks and playgrounds.
- **Invest** in farmers stepping off the pesticide treadmill.

The exposure to pesticides comes not only from pesticides used in agriculture but also from pesticides used in homes, gardens, schools and hospitals. A particularly high exposure risk for children comes from the use of pet products that contain neonicotinoids to control fleas and ticks.

The report strongly highlights that children's health should be a national priority and that policies should be put in

place that protect children from the health harms of pesticides.

Reducing pesticide use would not only protect children's health and wellbeing now, it would also protect future generations.

#### References:

1. Grandjean P, Landrigan PJ. Developmental neurotoxicity of industrial chemicals. *Lancet*. 2006;368:2167-78.
2. Schettler T, Stein J, Reich F, Valenti M. In harm's way: toxic threats to child development. Available from: [www.bvsde.paho.org/bysana/fulltext/harm.pdf](http://www.bvsde.paho.org/bysana/fulltext/harm.pdf) Accessed 18 Feb 2013.

## New thoughts on studies on the benefits of fish oils

Some people may recall when children had to swallow a spoonful a day of cod liver oil as a vitamin supplement.

Fat is truly essential to the human body and is a dominant feature in our brains.

Within the last decade, a number of randomised clinical trials have been published which support using fish oils for the prevention of fatal heart attacks and strokes.

However, in a recent study, published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, September 2012, researchers combined the results of 20 studies of 68,680 patients and concluded that a daily supplement of fish oil did not prevent cardiovascular disease. As a result, some people are now wondering whether fish oils do actually have a benefit.

The dramatic variation in the results of fish oil studies in various diseases has been commented on in the past by experts in the field of free radicals.

It has been suggested that this variability may result from the fact that one of the long-chain fatty acids found in fish oil, namely DHA

(docosahexaenoic acid), is particularly prone to oxidation. This is because DHA molecules are very long and have 6 double-bonds each.

The other main omega-3 fatty acid in fish oils, EPA (eicosapentaenoic acid), is less prone to oxidation, as its

molecules are shorter, with fewer double bonds. There is reason to suspect that the free radical oxidation products of DHA (and EPA) may be harmful and so the results of fish oil studies may depend on the level of such oxidation and other varying factors.

A much safer alternative to standard fish liver oil may be to take DHA-free products, which are based on ethyl-EPA. This is an ethyl ester of EPA, which protects the EPA from oxidation, and so helps prevent free radical formation.

*Breakspear Medical Group stocks high-quality essential oil products, which are completely free of DHA and which are based on ethyl-EPA.*



## Notes on the benefits of salt

Many people cannot hide their surprise to see Breakspear's Medical Director, Dr Jean Monro, putting a good shaking of salt on her meals.

Some people are astonished to hear that salt is essential for our good health and development.

Not only does it help balance blood sugar levels and blood pressure, but it aids in digestion, is needed to make bones stronger, helps support the immune system, can help prevent muscle cramps and aid with chronic fatigue.

Sodium is an essential nutrient that is not manufactured within the body and therefore it must be consumed.

Most salt used by our bodies comes from food and some from water. Salt is a natural preservative for food, as it lowers its water activity, reducing the pathogenic-microbial



growth. It is used in bread making to influence the strength, expansion and texture of dough. It is also used in cheese making, as it is required to cure and develop the cheese's consistency.

As with other essential nutrients, different people have different salt requirements. Factors such as genetics, physical condition, diet, stature, environment and stress

may affect the amount of salt one needs. In most healthy people, the kidney will excrete excess salt.

Primarily those claiming salt is unhealthy have focused only on the blood pressure variable.

*If you are concerned about your salt (sodium) levels, ask your Breakspear doctor about your levels. Sodium levels are measured in standard haematology and biochemistry (H&B) tests, which many of our patients have already completed.*

## Recommended recipe

Michele Kingston, Clinical Nutritionist

**Quinoa (pronounced KEEN-wah) is a seed closely related to spinach, beetroot and chard. It can be used like a grain to make sweet or savoury dishes.**

Try this recipe for warm and nutty cinnamon quinoa for breakfast or a snack. It is not only tasty and satisfying, it is gluten-, dairy- and sugar-free and provides a good balance of protein and carbohydrates to ensure stable blood sugar levels, whilst providing vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and fibre.

Quinoa is a good alternative to cereal or porridge, as it has a much lower glycaemic load than oats or wheat. This makes it useful for weight loss and when one is trying to balance blood sugar.

Quinoa also contains all the essential amino acids, making it a complete protein, unlike grains. It has high levels of magnesium, potassium and manganese and antioxidants such as quercetin.

The low-allergy potential of quinoa, coupled with its relatively high digestibility, also makes it ideal for those who suffer with food intolerances or digestive dysfunction.

With all these benefits, it is not surprising that the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has officially declared that the year 2013 be recognized as "International Year of Quinoa".

## Recipe

### appeal to readers

Do you have some favourite recipes that you'd like to share with other people who have common food allergies/sensitivities?

Email your recipes to the editor:  
[cmonro@breakspearmedical.com](mailto:cmonro@breakspearmedical.com)  
 or send a copy in the post to the clinic,  
 Attn: CN Monro.

## Warm and nutty cinnamon quinoa

Free from dairy and grains



(serves 4)

### Ingredients

250ml coconut milk  
 250ml water  
 170 grams quinoa (rinse quinoa before cooking)  
 300 grams fresh blueberries  
 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
 35 grams chopped pecans or walnuts

### Method

1. Combine milk, water and quinoa in a medium saucepan.
2. Bring to a boil over medium heat. Once boiling, reduce the heat to low; cover, and simmer for 10 minutes or until most of the liquid is absorbed.
3. Give it a stir whilst it is simmering, to check it is not sticking to the bottom of the pan, and keep an eye on it so that it does not boil over.
4. After 10 minutes, turn off heat; let stand whilst covered for 5 minutes.
5. Stir in blueberries and cinnamon, transfer to four bowls and top with pecans or walnuts.

If there is leftover quinoa, it can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 2 days and reheated or served cold as breakfast or a snack.

## New thoughts on cellular damage caused by wireless phones

The findings of a recent study may explain some human health hazards that have been reported and raise further concerns about the how electromagnetic fields (EMFs) may affect children's capacity to learn.

The recent study conducted at the Department of Cell Biology and Biophysics at Athens University, Greece, concluded that there are important protein changes in the brain of animals that undergo whole body exposure to EMFs of wireless phones.

The objective of this study was to investigate the effects of two sources of EMFs on the brains of mice following long-term whole body irradiation.

Three equally divided groups of animals (6 animals in each group) were used. The first group was exposed to a typical mobile phone for 3 hours daily for 8 months. The second group was exposed to a wireless DECT (Digital

Enhanced Cordless Telecommunications/ Telephone) base for 8 hours per day, also for 8 months. The third group was composed of the control animals, which were contained in a similar environment without EMF exposure.

Analysis of the data attained revealed that long-term irradiation from both EMF sources altered significantly ( $p < 0.05$ ) the expression of 143 proteins in total.

Several related proteins that are the important elements of the electrical and chemical signalling process of the body were found to be affected.

The observed protein expression changes may be related to brain plasticity alterations, indicative of oxidative stress in the nervous system or involved in apoptosis (cell death) and might potentially explain human health hazards reported so far, such as headaches, sleep disturbance, fatigue, memory deficits, and brain tumour long-term induction under similar exposure conditions.



## New thoughts on how to improve sleep patterns

In an article in Issue 83 of Caduceus magazine, Dr John Kelsey (registered UK naturopath, PhD Engineering) wrote about the benefits of earthing. His article summarised some of the work of Dr William Amalu, with regard to proving that earthing technology improves sleep patterns.

Usually while we are sleeping, our body is resting and rejuvenating. Poor sleep can lead to a knock-down effect on our health. It can affect concentration, productivity, moods and energy levels, along with being linked to development of new illnesses and depression.

During 2004-5, Dr William Amalu, President of the International Academy of Clinical Thermography\*, conducted 20 studies which concluded that earthing reduced inflammation and pain, increased range of motion and restorations of function, as well as improving sleep.



One of Dr Amalu's studies shows a 49-year-old female with chronic neck and upper back pain, restless legs during sleep and stiffness and soreness upon waking. After 4 nights of sleeping on an earthing sheet, she experienced a 65% reduction in pain, a 75% reduction in restless legs during sleep and an 80% reduction in the stiffness and soreness. Steady improvements continued during the next 6 weeks.

Studies continue to try to understand and explain some of the mechanisms involved in earthing and how it may benefit those with sleeping problems and pain and those lacking vitality, as well as many other conditions.

\* Thermography, also known as infrared imaging, is analysis of skin surface temperatures as a reflection of normal or abnormal physiology.



# Notes on non-coeliac gluten intolerances



## Gluten is a protein found in wheat and other grains.

For decades, there have been sporadic surges in the number of reports that focus on the definition of non-coeliac\* gluten intolerances.

At this time, there are no globally accepted laboratory biomarkers specific for gluten-sensitivity.

For sufferers, avoidance and challenge is the most frequently used method to determine the effects of gluten on one's wellbeing. But even if the sufferer finds that they feel better if they avoid gluten, many

want to have a doctor's diagnosis that can explain the symptoms, which will be accepted by both medical professionals and society.

Early in 2011, the Breakspear Medical Bulletin reported on an Australian study that "concluded that non-coeliac intolerance may exist; however, no clues to the mechanism were revealed".

In December 2012, the British Medical Journal (BMJ) published a patient's journey article, which was written by a patient who had experienced 20 years of unexplained ill health, with multiple symptoms before his initial self-diagnosis of gluten sensitivity. He wrote, "I went to see the consultant ... and excitedly told him about my discovery that gluten and lactose were the source of all my health problems and how dramatic the results of excluding them from my diet even after a few weeks. He seemed quite uninterested."

A recent study published in the American Journal of Gastroenterology, December 2012, started with the objective statement, "Non-celiac wheat sensitivity (WS) is considered a new clinical entity. An increasing percentage of the general population avoids gluten ingestion ... Our aim was thus to demonstrate the existence of WS and define its clinical, serologic, and historical markers."

The study reviewed the clinical charts of all the

subjects with an irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)-like presentation, who had been diagnosed with WS, using a double-blind placebo-controlled challenge. Diagnosed coeliac and IBS patients served as the controls.

During the study period, 920 patients underwent the elimination diet and the double-blind placebo challenge. Of these, 276 (30%) were suffering

**Gluten may be found in a variety of foods including breads, cakes, cereals, pasta, some dairy products and alcoholic beverages.**

from WS, as they became asymptomatic on an elimination diet and showed symptoms again during the challenge.

The researchers found that there were 2 groups of WS, showing distinct clinical characteristics:

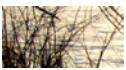
- 70 patients were diagnosed with the first group of characteristics, which are similar to coeliac disease. The symptoms generally were felt after a median time of 3 days (range: 3 hours to 9 days).
- 206 were diagnosed with multiple food hypersensitivity, including WS, and reacted after a median time of 2.5 days (range: 2 hours to 5 days). All the patients in this group reacted to the double-blind placebo cow's milk protein challenge. Additionally, many in this group also showed symptoms when eating eggs (120 cases) and tomatoes (112 cases).

The study concluded that one-third of the diagnosed IBS patients who underwent the double-blind placebo study were really suffering from WS. The WS patients were characterised by frequent self-reported wheat intolerance and food allergy in infancy.

While the scientific community may only be considering the evidence of non-coeliac gluten intolerance, many people are self-diagnosing their intolerance and benefiting from going gluten-free.

\* Coeliac is the British spelling of this condition; the American spelling is "celiac". The British spelling is used in all places except direct quotes from American journals referring to the same condition.





## Did you know...?

### Vitamin D boosts health

As reported on BBC Online 14 December 2012, it is thought that half of the UK's white population and up to 90% of the black and Asian people are affected by a vitamin D deficiency.

The lack of this nutrient is linked to a higher incidence of diabetes, tuberculosis, multiple sclerosis and rickets.

The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) says, "up to 25% of UK children are vitamin D deficient, leading to a rise in rickets cases." Rickets is a disease that causes bones to become soft and deformed.

While vitamin D is found in some foods, such as oily fish, eggs and mushrooms, only about 10% of a person's recommended daily needs are met by diet alone.

In addition to eating more oily fish and getting more direct sunshine (which is needed for the body to produce its own vitamin D), supplementation is recommended.

Many groups are advocating fortification of foods and drinks in the UK, which happens already in countries including the USA, Canada and Finland.

***"The UK has the highest prevalence of asthma in the world, death rates from asthma are among the highest in Europe, and there is a 6-fold difference in asthma-related hospital admissions across England."*** - DTB.bmj.com, Vol 50, No 11, November 2012.

In November 2012, the Drug and Therapeutics Bulletin (part of BMJ Group) reported that Primary Care Commissioning, Asthma UK, the British Thoracic Society and the Primary Care Respiratory Society have produced a guide that highlights various needs of sufferers from asthma.

The guide sets out 15 key aspects of care that characterise good asthma services that need to be reviewed and targeted for improvement. Specific highlights include: the need for patient involvement in the design and delivery of services, accurate and early diagnosis and support for self-management.

### Echinacea should not be used in children under 12 years old

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) which is the government agency responsible for ensuring that medicines and medical devices work and are acceptably safe, published a press release in August 2012 that advises parents and carers not to use oral herbal products containing echinacea for children under 12 years of age.

Report findings concluded that children under 12 could have a low risk of developing allergic reactions, such as rashes, from oral echinacea products.

This recommendation follows precautionary advice from the European Herbal Medicinal Products Committee (HMPC) and from the UK Herbal Medicines Advisory Committee (HMAC).

Children aged 12 and over and adults can continue to take products containing echinacea.



**Green tea may improve your memory**

A study published in the journal *Molecular Nutrition & Food Research* concluded that "drinking cups of green tea regularly could improve your memory".

Chinese researchers believe that the tea increases production of the brain cells involved in recollection and spatial learning. The key ingredient is thought to be the organic molecule EGCG (epigallocatechin-3 gallate), which is an antioxidant that protects against age-related degenerative illnesses by destroying harmful free radicals.

## Available at our Pharmacy



Pick up a copy of our Spring 2013 "Spring cleaning supplies" booklet which features many of the scent-free cleaning products we offer.

Visit Breakspear Pharmacy's online shop anytime of the day or night to order and pay securely for all the Pharmacy items available.

[www.breakspearmedical.com/shop](http://www.breakspearmedical.com/shop)

### Notes on the importance of quality dietary supplements

*(Continued from page 1)*

of the number of desirable bacteria present, only 7 products completely satisfied their label claims. Nine other products contained 10% or less bacteria than stated on the label. Several products contained other bacteria than those stated on the label and 1 did not contain any bacteria at all.

All of the above examples of problems with nutritional supplements arose from failures in the supply chain. At some point in the production process, a vendor, supplier or distributor was not sufficiently qualified, or failed to properly identify the material being sourced, which led to the resulting product not being what it said on the label.

When asked about quality control guidelines, the UK Department of Health stated, "There are no specific guidelines for the manufacture of food supplements."

Al Czap, founder of Thorne Research (a highly respected American nutritional supplement manufacturer), believes that there are several key areas with regard to quality control. These important key areas are: regulations and guidelines, company management and personnel and their respective decisions and habits.

Many dietary supplement companies advertise that they follow Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs), but what does this actually mean? GMPs are "guidelines that provide a system of processes, procedures, and documentation to assure the product produced has the identity, strength, composition, quality, and purity that it is represented to possess".

In June 2007, the FDA published dietary

supplement guidelines for current GMPs (cGMPs). However, these cGMPs do not establish upper limits for microbial contamination, nor do they set safety levels from heavy metals contamination, such as mercury

and lead. It is the responsibility of the supplement manufacturer to identify potential microbial contaminants and to establish limits. This is why it is important to purchase dietary supplements from reputable companies, as the accepted levels of contamination may vary considerably.

Another set of guidelines, equally as important as the dietary supplement cGMPs, but which are not mandated by the FDA, are Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). These are descriptions of specific tasks undertaken by supplement manufacturers, and should include corrective actions to be taken if a particular task during the manufacture of a product is performed incorrectly. SOPs specify in great detail how to implement each procedure in the cGMPs. Dietary supplement manufacturers that adopt both cGMPs and SOPs are adhering to higher standards, and therefore are more likely to produce dietary supplements of higher quality.

If a dietary supplement does not match the claims on the label, then it is entirely possible that the specific ailment for which it is being recommended will not be adequately addressed and this will, of course, have a bearing on the patient's progression towards optimal health.

*Breakspear Medical's team of dedicated professionals work diligently to ensure that the products we offer to our patients and practitioners are obtained from companies that adopt the aforementioned guidelines or are in the process of adopting the recently established principles.*

When asked about quality control guidelines, the UK Department of Health stated, "There are no specific guidelines for the manufacture of food supplements."



## Introducing changes in our Accounts Department

With the changes in the Account's office layout at the entrance to the building (see cover article, *New look for Breakspear's ground floor*), there were also staff changes in the department.

Having started as a sales ledger clerk over 10 years ago, Murtaza Akhtar studied and achieved various qualifications and has now been promoted to full time Accounts Manager. Our former Accounts Manager, Raj Duhra, has left in order to spend more time with her young family.

Over the next few months, Murtaza



Many of you already know Murtaza Akhtar in the Accounts Department, as he's been with Breakspear for over 10 years.

will be learning about what his new role entails and will be starting to work on some of his own plans for modernisation and eco-friendly projects to improve the department.

Tracy Khan recently joined the Accounts Department as Accounts Clerk. Tracy will be working closely with Murtaza and with Sales Ledger & Administration Clerk Janis Davies, sharing various responsibilities, including credit control.

Please join us in congratulating Murtaza, welcoming Tracy and appreciating and recognising Janis's consistent, meticulous hard work.

## Bulletin board



### Easter holiday closure dates

Breakspear Medical Group will be closed for the Easter

holidays on Good Friday 29 March, Saturday 30 March and Easter Monday 1 April 2013.

### Employees of the Months and of the Year 2012

To recognise employees who 'go that extra mile', Breakspear Medical Group has continued its Employee of the Month programme.

The final Employee of the Month for 2012 was Medical Secretary Vicky McLucas.



Joe Wingfield, Employee of the Year 2012

The Employee of the Year 2012 was determined by tallying up the votes over the entire year. As it happened, there were a few employees who consistently received nominations but who had not actually received an Employee of the Month

award. Our Employee of the Year 2012 goes to one of those consistently nominated employees, Pharmacy Technician, Joe Wingfield.

The first employee of the month 2013 was nurse Anne Richfield.

### Dr Prem Bajaj lectures

At Breakspear last autumn, Dr Prem Bajaj lectured to visiting teachers and student doctors from the Mae Fah Luang University in Thailand.

The Thai students listened to Dr Bajaj explain about the history of low-dose immunotherapy and how it works.

The Mae Fah Luang University is an autonomous public university, which was established to meet the educational needs of the people of the north of Thailand.

### New voice messaging service

After many years of the same automated telephone system, we have re-programmed the system to make it easier to use. We have reduced the number of options and are giving out department extension numbers, which ring simultaneously at all the department's telephones.

If you do not know the extension number that you require, please listen carefully to the options and extension numbers given. After listening to the options, if you still do not know what to do, stay on the line and your call will be forwarded to Reception.



### Lost and found

A collection of items, including a black coat, 2 black cardigans, 2 scarves and some Land Rover keys, are currently in our lost and found.

If you suspect you might have lost any of these items at Breakspear, please email: [info@breakspearmedical.com](mailto:info@breakspearmedical.com)