

Editorial

Foreword: Special Issue- geriatric drug therapy

Globally the demographic trend is moving towards a society with an increasing percentage of older people. The increase in life expectancy has been a major achievement. However, this brings the challenge for pharmaceutical development to meet the specific healthcare and medication needs of older people. The goal of drug therapy should be towards maintaining the quality of life in later years of life. The drug product development should not only focus on efficacy, safety and quality of drug therapy but also aim to improve patient acceptability and compliance. Hence an individualized approach should be considered at the point of pharmaceutical design, by tailoring the design according to the changes in drug delivery barriers due to advanced age and administration related needs of older patients. Correspondingly, the European Medicines Agency (EMA) has published the concept paper on the need for consideration of quality aspects of medicines for older people in order to provide an overview of aspects requiring special consideration in the pharmaceutical development. The EMA Quality Working Party is currently developing a further reflection paper which is expected to follow a similar pattern of process as that used for the EMA's guideline on the pharmaceutical development of medicines for paediatric use.

The Special Issue on Geriatric Drug Therapy begins with papers defining the older patient in terms of the independent/ safe use of pharmaceutical drug products and describing the clinical characteristics, physiology, psychology, physical functioning in this population. The Special Issue also covers the perspective of academia, the pharmaceutical industry and regulatory agencies in relation to pharmaceutical development for older people. We also present papers which focus on age-related physiological differences and associated formulation approaches for delivering drug therapies to older people via different routes of administration. In addition, the Special Issue has a viewpoint article on the pharmaceutical strategies towards optimising polypharmacy in older people. Studies on the acceptability of medicines in older adults are outlined in three research articles, two of which focus on the swallowability of oral medicine and one which investigates the ease of opening of pharmaceutical packaging by seniors. Finally, medicines optimisation in older patients is discussed in the context of dementia, an age-related disease which is fast becoming a global concern.

We would like to express our thanks to all the authors who have highlighted the key themes in the field of age-related medicines development and use. Special thanks go to Prof Sandy Florence for suggesting a Special Issue on Geriatric Drug Therapy which is very timely in view of the growing interest in this topic. Ageing research is expanding and there is potential for advancements in

pharmaceutical sciences which will be able to drive the development of drug products responding to the age-related changes on the barriers to drug delivery. The collaborative discussion between academia, pharmaceutical industry, healthcare professionals, medicinal regulatory agencies and patients` representatives will enable ongoing development of patient-centric geriatric drug therapies.

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