

For patients using AndroGel 1% pump

AndroGel
(testosterone gel) 1.62% CS

Transition them to another AndroGel option >>

AndroGel 1.62% dosage and administration differs from AndroGel 1%.

Full Prescribing Information

- Monitor patients with benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH) treated with androgens due to an increased risk for worsening signs and symptoms of BPH.
- Patients treated with androgens may be at increased risk for prostate cancer and should be evaluated prior to initiating and during treatment with androgens. Monitor prostate specific antigen (PSA) levels periodically.
- Avoid unintentional exposure of women or children to AndroGel. Recreatory

852-1416672

Register / Log In

Drug Topics

Voice of the Pharmacist

ModernMedicine NETWORK

Enter your keyword Submit Query

HOME | SUBSCRIBE | ADVERTISE | ABOUT | CONTACT

Home | Publications | Business | EHR/HIT | CME | Careers | Contact

TRENDING · Immunization · Prenatal Vitamins: Nutrition Guidelines · Lipid-Lowering Potential in the Immunocompromised

- Home
- Issues & Trends
- Continuing Education
- Professional
- Products Updates / Clinical
- Health System
- Regulatory
- Technology
- Commentary & Feedback
- Resources
- Inside Drug Topics
- Contact Us

FIND MORE AT
Modern Medicine
Register | More Info
(it's free)

- Clinical Pharmacology
- Pharmacy
- [View all Topics](#)

PREV Paper Rx's are quickly becoming a thing of the past

Bilingual drug labels: Pharmacists speak out

NEXT

Pharmacy 101: "Could you patent the sun?"

AUG 10, 2014

By: David Stanley, RPh

Print



David Stanley

I'm going to show you something this month that I still can't quite wrap my mind around. It will spark memories in some readers old enough to remember fear of swimming pools or a president who had to hide the fact he governed from a wheelchair. In others a bit younger it might, as it did in me, spark a moment of disbelief. I'm going to show you how the United States has completely changed in less than the span of a human lifetime,

using only five words: "Could you patent the sun?"

For the greater good

Those words were part of the answer given by Jonas Salk on the day his polio vaccine was declared safe and effective, when he was asked on national television who owned its patent.

A patent was never issued for the vaccine that stopped the virus that paralyzed up to 20,000 children a year. Lawyers for the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis (later known as the March of Dimes) did consider the possibility of filing for one — perhaps, as *Slate* magazine suggested in April of this year, only to keep unlicensed, low-quality versions off the market, rather than with the intent of profiting from the product.

For greater profits

"Could you patent the sun?"

Compare that simple sentence to: "Sovaldi reduces total treatment costs for HCV — taking into account the cost of medications (including those for side effects or complications) and healthcare visits — and it represents a finite cure, an important point to consider when comparing the price of a pill or bottle to the lifetime costs of treating a chronic disease."

RESOURCE CENTERS | PARTNER CONTENT

- Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis
- Prenatal Genetic Testing
- Meaningful Use 2
- Aesthetic Lasers
- Allergy-Triggered Anaphalaxis
- Seasonal Allergies in the Medical Home

MORE ...

Download

Drug Topics

FREE in the App Store

DrugTopics.com/DrugTopicsApp



STAY CONNECTED

- Current Issue
- Issue Archive
- Digital Edition
- Subscribe to e-News
- Subscribe to Print
- Subscribe to Digital Edition
- Reprints
- Advertise
- Twitter & Facebook

All of that is part of a statement in which the manufacturer of Sovaldi, a breakthrough treatment for hepatitis C, endeavors to justify its cost of \$1,000 a pill.

That wasn't a typo. Every prescription written for Sovaldi will come with a price tag of around \$84,000. Setting aside the manufacturer's claims of potential savings, to treat each of the three million Americans infected with hepatitis C at that price would cost over \$250 billion dollars, almost as much as we annually spend today on all medications combined.

Like it or not, we'll all be chipping in. It is estimated that this drug alone will lead to an 8% increase in Medicare Part D premiums.

And this is accepted now. Less than a lifetime ago, it was accepted that there were things more important than a dollar.



Drug Topics
Voice of the Pharmacist

JOIN OTHERS IN YOUR
PROFESSION. SIGN UP TODAY!



SUBSCRIBE NOW

That was then

An article posted at the website of *Forbes* magazine estimated that when Dr. Salk chose not to fight for a patent for his vaccine, he passed on a possible \$7 billion jackpot. Today, it is projected that California could end up spending more money purchasing Solvaldi for its Medicaid patients than it does running the state's entire K-12 education system.

Even if someone takes the manufacturer's arguments seriously and accepts that the projected cost savings represented by a cure for the disease justifies an astronomical price, that would mean, as Dr. Steve Miller wrote in *Forbes*, that "[f]ollowing that logic, all antibiotics have been vastly underpriced since the introduction of penicillin some 60 years ago."

Of course, penicillin, too, was a product of an era when society as a whole took pride in our nation's accomplishments, and benefits to society counted for more than maximizing returns to stockholders at the expense of everyone else. That was then.

This is now

Things are different now. And the question arises, how many children are going to try to learn in substandard classrooms because states can't afford to give them adequate schools after paying the bill for Solvaldi?

It would be ironic if the next Solvaldi-style breakthrough never happens because states struggling to pay for the last breakthrough put the next Jonas Salk in an overcrowded science class refereed by an overworked, underpaid biology teacher.

And here's another question plenty of folks can relate to: How many seniors might be tempted to pass on Part D coverage when faced with an increase in premiums they can't afford?

The prospect of older Americans, born into the world of Dr. Salk and dying because they can no longer afford the prescription coverage kicked up by Solvaldi prices, adds to the black irony here as well.

David Stanley is a pharmacy owner, blogger, and professional writer in northern California. E-mail him at drugmonkeyrph@gmail.com.

[Login or Register to post comments](#)

Tags [Chains & Business](#) [Community Practice](#) [Health System News](#) [HSE](#) [Professional Practice](#) [Jonas Salk](#) [Pharmacy News](#) [polio vaccine](#) [Solvaldi](#) [Top News](#) [Viewpoints](#)

MORE ARTICLES IN THIS ISSUE

Drug shortages continue; hospitals cope

Over the last few years, the number of drugs on shortage has remained the same. It may even have gone up. Hospitals continue to confront the issues and devise responses.

FDA approves droxidopa to treat neurogenic orthostatic hypotension

NOH is a rare, chronic, and debilitating drop in blood pressure upon standing. It is associated with Parkinson's disease, multiple system atrophy, and pure autonomic failure.

Proposed new FDA rule might allow altered labeling of generic meds

FDA's proposed new rule would allow individual generic-drug application holders to update product labeling information to temporarily reflect changes in safety information prior to FDA review.

Drug Topics Voices, August 2014

Feedback from pharmacists and other Drug Topics readers

New products for pharmacists 08-10-2014

New Rx, generics, and OTC

[READ MORE](#)

 **Anonymous**
 The way corporations/CEOs profit off of individuals healthcare in this country is absolutely obscene. Sad.
 Sep 3, 2014

Login
or Register
to post
comments

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <p>Clinical</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contemporary Ob/Gyn Contemporary Pediatrics Cosmetic Surgery Times Dermatology Times Drug Topics Formulary Healthcare Traveler Locum Life | <p>Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical Economics Health Law & Policy Health Care Information Technology Personal Finance | <p>Trending</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis HPV Vaccine Resources Daily Disposable Contact Lenses Obesity Management Prenatal Genetic Testing Contact Lenses & Lens Care Evidence based strategies for ... treatment |
|---|---|---|



Important Safety Information

WARNING: (A) PREMATURE DISCONTINUATION OF XARELTO® INCREASES THE RISK OF THROMBOTIC EVENTS. (B) SPINAL/EPIDURAL HEMATOMA

Modern Medicine is a new online resource designed to meet the evolving needs of physicians. It brings together elements from Advanstar's trusted healthcare journals along with powerful tools, resources, decision support and advisory functions.