

Introducing The D-Zone Supplement

Drug Therapy Topics (DTT) is in its 36th year of publication. As the educational arm of the UW Medicine Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee, the newsletter focuses mainly on issues related to the rational and cost-effective prescribing of formulary drugs. Between 1993 and 2006, a special insert was included with each edition of *DTT*. Written by the late Milo Gibaldi, Dean Emeritus, UW School of Pharmacy, the *Drug Therapy Topics Supplement* was dedicated to a timely discussion of issues & controversies related to new drug development and evolving drug therapies. Dr. Gibaldi's vision for the *DTT Supplement* was to reach beyond an inward focus on formulary medicines and stimulate discussion among practitioners regarding evolving drug therapies.

With due credit to the original vision of Dr. Gibaldi and to the ongoing support of Danny Shen, Professor & Chairman, UW School of Pharmacy Department of Pharmacy and Shabir Somani, Director, UW Medicine Pharmacy Services & Vice Chair and Associate Professor, UW School of Pharmacy Department of Pharmacy, I am pleased to introduce *DTT* readers to the premier issue of *The D-Zone*. Beginning in June 2007, *The D-Zone* will be included as a special insert in each edition of *DTT* and will also be published on-line at <http://uw.pnrx.org/therapyTopics.asp>.

The D-Zone is a new publication written by Doug Black, Pharm.D., Associate Professor, UW School of Pharmacy & UWMC Infectious Disease specialist. Similar to the previous supplement, *The D-Zone* is aimed at providing healthcare practitioners across the spectrum of medicine with monthly updates on the most important drugs, developments, and observations from the perspective of a pharmacist with a clinical practice focus grounded in the treatment of infectious diseases. Unlike the previous supplement, *The D-Zone* will usually contain a single story and a suggestion about additional worthwhile reading. The first article, "Clinical Practice: The Story of Community-Acquired MRSA" will be followed by articles on extensively drug-resistant TB, cross-sensitivity to antibiotics, and other topics to be revealed.

In the meantime, a brief explanation of the title and graphic chosen for the new supplement is warranted. In the clinical microbiology laboratory, the D-Zone refers to the result of a simple and inexpensive agar plate test in which an erythromycin susceptibility testing disk placed in close proximity to a clindamycin disk causes blunting along the leading edge of the clindamycin zone of inhibition nearest to the erythromycin disk. The characteristic capital-letter-D shape of the resulting zone of inhibition around the clindamycin disk indicates the presence of an organism with a phenotype capable of expressing inducible (MLS_B) resistance. Thus, a positive D-zone test result suggests that clindamycin may be an unreliable choice for treatment, despite the appearance of clindamycin susceptibility. In the absence of information about the D-zone test, clindamycin susceptibility reports for erythromycin-resistant isolates of *S. aureus* lack full characterization.

Finally, an acknowledgment to Dr. James H. Jorgensen, Department of Pathology, University of Texas Health Science Center who graciously granted permission to use his photographs of actual agar plate results for the layout of *The D-Zone*. With them, the launch of this new publication is already achieving the stated goal of conveying the latest and best information on contemporary developments in infectious disease therapeutics.

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