

## In brief

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### New NT-proBNP test

Roche Diagnostics has announced the launch of a new NT-proBNP+ test, which it says can give a result in under 15 minutes when tested on its cobas h232 near-patient testing meter. In addition, the test has an extended measuring range (60 – 9000pg/ml).

The test can serve as an aid in the diagnosis of suspected heart failure, in the monitoring of compensated left ventricular dysfunction and in the risk stratification of patients with acute coronary symptoms. Recent recommendations of a consensus group (*Br J Cardiol* 2010;**17**:76-80) highlight the importance of B-type natriuretic peptide (NP) testing for heart failure.

NP testing can rule out heart failure in primary care and reduce the number of referrals for heart failure, which eases waiting

lists for echocardiography. Admission and discharge testing can help identify high-risk patients and help with discharge planning and targeting resources.

### EU approvals

**Vernakalant** (Brinavess®, MSD) has been granted marketing approval in the European Union (EU), Iceland and Norway, for the conversion of recent onset atrial fibrillation (AF) to sinus rhythm in adults. The new treatment has a unique mechanism of action from other AF medicines and is the first product in a new class of pharmacologic agents for cardioversion of AF to launch in the EU. Vernakalant acts preferentially in the atria. It is expected it will be launched in the EU later this year.

**Pitavastatin** has received European Union approval for reduction of total cholesterol and

low-density lipoprotein cholesterol in adults with primary hypercholesterolaemia and mixed dyslipidaemia when response to diet and other non-pharmacological measures is inadequate. It differs from some other statins in that it is only minimally metabolised by the liver through the cytochrome P450 pathway.

### Fitness to fly report

The British Cardiovascular Society has published guidelines on passengers' fitness to fly. Over 200 million passengers fly through British airports each year and the BCS report gives evidence that there are very few heart conditions that mean that patients can't fly safely. The e report includes a summary table of various specific heart conditions with advice on any necessary guidance or restrictions that should be considered for the passenger. The report is available at [www.bcs.com](http://www.bcs.com).

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