

Here are this week's health care news stories from AskaPatient:

- According to a recent report in *Science*, antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in chickens and pigs has almost tripled in developing countries since 2000, and the problem is getting worse as the demand for meat grows in these countries. Almost three-quarters of the world's antibiotics are now used on animals instead of humans, a trend that led to a World Health Organization (WHO) request for a reduction in veterinary antibiotic use. As of 2017, antibiotics are no longer allowed to be used in feed for growth promotion in the U.S.

<https://news.yahoo.com/antibiotic-resistance-trebled-among-animals-155323700.html>

- Antibiotics are losing their power against deadly infections. Can we fix the problem? A panel of experts live-streamed a one-hour discussion on this topic, sponsored by Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. Speakers brought up issues such as not enough research in the area of antibiotics due to lack of market incentives. Why would a company spend money to find a drug that is meant to be used very little and would not sell for very much compared with other drugs? Friday's program can be viewed here:

<https://www.nbcnews.com/mach/science/antibiotics-are-losing-their-power-against-deadly-infections-can-we-ncna1064246>

- A commonly prescribed drug for interstitial cystitis (IC) appears to be toxic to the retina, according to research presented at the American Society of Ophthalmologists meeting this weekend. Researchers found that about one-fourth of patients in the review group who had taken **Elmiron** in significant amounts had eye damage. Unfortunately, a connection with Elmiron had not been made previously because the eye damage can masquerade as other conditions, such as age-related macular degeneration.

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/10/191012141218.htm>

Overall, Elmiron receives satisfactory reviews on AskaPatient for treating IC, but there are more than 20 reports out of 230 that mention eye issues like blurry vision.

Links to patient reports of vision problems while taken Elmiron:

<https://www.askapatient.com/viewrating.asp?drug=20193&name=ELMIRON&SideEffect=vision+eyes>

- Medicare fraud has become easier for scammers, thanks to the use of telemedicine. In a recent case, an international scheme was cracked that was defrauding Medicare of more than \$1.2 billion using "teledoctors" to prescribe unneeded orthopedic braces.

<https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2019/10/07/766517003/phone-scammers-and-teledoctors-charged-with-preying-on-seniors-in-fraud-case>

- A patient who began taking the antipsychotic drug Risperdal in 2003 at age 9 for sleep problems associated with autism developed gynaecomastia, or male breasts, which did not go away after stopping use of the drug. A jury awarded him a whopping \$8 billion in punitive damages this week. For many years, Risperdal was marketed for use in children for unapproved uses such as autism and ADHD. While the damage amount will probably be reduced, this could be the tip of the iceberg for payouts by defendant Johnson and Johnson, since there are more than 13,000 additional patients with pending lawsuits over Risperdal.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/whopping-jury-award-against-johnson-and-johnson-sends-a-signal-to-drug-industry/2019/10/09/58f7a398-eeac-11e9-9c6d-436a0df4f31d_story.html

- A new migraine drug was approved by the FDA. Eli Lilly's Reyvow, formerly called lasmiditan, will be designated

as a controlled substance (schedule level is yet to be determined). Because it can cause sleepiness and dizziness, patients should not to drive for eight hours after taking it.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-lilly-fda/eli-lillys-migraine-treatment-wins-u-s-fda-approval>

- Medicare web site's "Nursing Home Compare" tool can be used to look up the quality of a specific nursing home or compare nursing homes in a geographic area. Search by zip code, city, state, or facility name. Five star ratings on criteria such as health inspections, staffing, safety, and quality of care, with backup reports are provided. Starting October 23, CMS will be adding a red hand icon "abuse indicator" to facilities that have been cited for abuse and neglect.

<https://cmscompliancegroup.com/2019/10/09/facilities-will-be-flagged-for-abuse-and-neglect-on-nursing-home-compare/>

Search the database:

<https://www.medicare.gov/nursinghomecompare/search.html>

- "Big tobacco" company Reynolds filed a 150,000 page-long application for its Vuse e-cigarette product, seven months ahead of the FDA's deadline of May 2020 for companies to apply if they want to continue to keep their vaping products on the market. Vuse accounts for about 12% of the e-cigarette market, while Juul accounts for about 67%.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/reynolds-files-for-fda-review-of-vuse-e-cigarettes-11570808409>

- A simple 40 minute monthly phone call to a caregiver from a "care team navigator" can improve the quality of life and mitigate depression for caregivers of family members with dementia, study shows.

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/09/190930180946.htm>

- The "Administration for Community Living," part of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is taking steps to establish a **National Volunteer Care Corps**. Under the program, healthy retirees and young adults will assist seniors with tasks like grocery shopping, shoveling sidewalks, rides to doctor appointments, as well as social visits. There will be 14.6 million Americans age 85 or older by 2040, up from more than 6 million in that age category now.

<https://khn.org/news/drumbeat-builds-for-a-peace-corps-of-caregivers/>

Don't forget that it is flu shot season! Check out the list of 2019-2020 flu vaccine options, with links to some patient reviews:

<https://www.askapatient.com/comparedrugs.asp?class=INFLUENZA+VACCINES+2019>

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