

## **“Around two thirds of all medicines on the market are untested for impact on breastfeeding”**

**Most medicines carry standard advice on their packaging and patient information leaflets, advising against use by pregnant or breastfeeding mothers. More often than not, this is because the effects haven't been fully researched and evaluated. Dr Tom Hale, Professor of Paediatrics and Assistance Dean of Research at Texas Tech University School of Medicine, will be presenting the latest scientific advice around breastfeeding and medication during Medela's 7<sup>th</sup> International Breastfeeding and Lactation Symposium in Vienna, Austria, from 20-21 April 2012. He suggests that whilst women should seek advice from their doctor and other reliable sources, the manufacturers' instructions should not always be taken at face value. Initial research conclusions show that not all medication should be stopped, and effective alternatives can be taken, particularly in relation to anti-depressants and anti-psychotics.**

Dr Hale and his team have been examining the transfer mechanism of drugs into milk, based on the assumption that virtually all mothers who breastfeed will use medication at some point during breastfeeding. In particular they have been examining the impact of drug entry into the milk, and the risk to the infant in relation to the choice of drug, the age of the infant (premature vs older infant) and the volume of milk (colostrum, full breastfeeding, late stage breastfeeding). The impact of birth control preparations and antibiotics has been examined as well as the transfer effects of viral diseases such as Influenza and Hepatitis versus their equivalent vaccines. Specific research has also been conducted into the effect of drugs on milk production.

*“The actual number of new drugs consistently increases every year. This makes it incredibly difficult to keep current in this field of breastfeeding, particularly when new drugs tend not to have breastfeeding information available when they are marketed. Our estimate is that breastfeeding data is available for less than 33% of drugs available on the market today. We are doing our best to develop studies for the most heavily used medications during breastfeeding, namely anti-depressant and anti-psychotic drugs, to help and reassure mothers, and look forward to the day when breastfeeding studies become a legal requirement before drugs can be marketed.”* said Dr Hale.

Dr Hale will be explaining the results of his studies and sharing practical scientific advice with attendees during Medela's 7<sup>th</sup> International Breastfeeding and Lactation Symposium. He will be providing delegates with the tools to evaluate the impact of medication during breastfeeding, and to support decision-making in this complex area. Results on the impact of specific drug groups will be shared, together with concrete recommendations as to whether they should or should not be used during breastfeeding, and what their impact might be.

Leon Mitoulas, Head of Breastfeeding Research, Medela said, *“Medela is extremely pleased that Dr Tom Hale will share the latest scientific advice around breastfeeding and medication at this year's Symposium. Mothers need to have access to clear and accurate information*

*about medication if they are to continue breastfeeding successfully and safely. This is an area of research which is of great importance to healthcare professionals and mothers alike.”*

## **ENDS**

### **Note to Editors**

Medela's 7th International Breastfeeding and Lactation Symposium to be held in Vienna Austria (20-21 April 2012) will focus on the unique components of human milk, the value of human milk in NICU, as well as latest recommendations for research based practice. Dr Tom Hale will be joined by several international experts who will share their latest findings on a number of related topics including the presence of stem cells in human milk, the value of donor milk in NICU, and the unique properties of oligosaccharides in milk. This annual event is attended by an international audience of paediatricians, neonatologists, midwives and lactation consultants, all of whom have a special interest in learning more about breastmilk composition.

This year, Medela is working to encourage greater participation from the science, research and technology community at large, aiming to create discussion and ties between lactation researchers and colleagues from other fields, as well as the press and other stakeholders.

### **Media Programme**

A specific media programme is being developed in parallel to the Symposium giving media the opportunity to meet and exchange views and information with international researchers.

A webcast will be organised for journalists on **Friday April 20<sup>th</sup> from 10:30 to 11:30 Vienna time (CET, Central European Time)**. In addition, interviews can be organised before, during and after the symposium. Embargo restrictions may be applied. Speaker profiles and abstracts for the symposium can be found on the website:

<http://www.medela.com/IW/en/breastfeeding/for-professionals/congress2012/speakers.html>

**For further information and registration, please visit [www.Medela.com/congress](http://www.Medela.com/congress) and/or contact Veronika Studer Medela Communication Manager [Tel.: +41/ (0)41 / 769 54 37 | Email: [Veronika.studer@medela.ch](mailto:Veronika.studer@medela.ch)]**

**@Medela:** Medela Twitter will be live before, during and after the event

### **Symposium Programme**

<http://www.medela.com/IW/en/breastfeeding/for-professionals/congress2012/programme.html>

#### **Friday April 20<sup>th</sup>**

##### **The Unique Components of Human Milk**

- The uniqueness of the components of human milk – Professor Peter Hartmann (UWA)
- Oligosaccharides in human milk – Dr. Lars Bode (University of California, San Diego)
- New discoveries in human milk (stem cells) – Dr. Foteini Hassiotou (UWA)

#### **Saturday April 21<sup>st</sup>**

### **Latest Recommendations for Research Based Practice**

- CMV and mothers' milk – Professor Klaus Hamprecht (University of Tübingen)
- Breastfeeding patterns – Dr. Jacqueline Kent (UWA)
- Medications and mothers' milk – Dr. Tom Hale (Texas Tech University School of Medicine)

### **The Value of Human Milk in NICU**

- Family centred care in NICU – Professor Uwe Ewald (Uppsala University, Sweden)
- Increasing the value of donor human milk in the NICU – Questions and Opportunities – Dr. Ben Hartmann (King Edward Memorial Hospital, Australia)
- Infant Gastric Physiology – Ultrasound studies of the term and preterm infant – Dr. Donna Geddes (UWA)

**Venue** : Palais Ferstel, Strauchgasse 4, A - 1010 Vienna [[www.palaisevents.at](http://www.palaisevents.at)]

### **About Medela**

Medela provides the most technologically advanced, superior-quality breastpumps and breastfeeding accessories to nursing mothers around the world. A longtime champion of breastfeeding, Medela is the only company to develop products based on research by the world's leading lactation experts. As a result, Medela's breastpumps are the number one choice of healthcare professionals and healthcare facilities worldwide.

Medela has developed an extensive line of products to meet the diverse needs of nursing mothers. These products include hospital-grade, double and single electric and manual breastpumps; breastfeeding accessories such as pump cleaning products, breast care products and specialty feeding devices; and maternity and nursing intimate apparel.

Founded in 1961 by Olle Larsson in Zug, Switzerland, Medela continues to grow under the ownership of the Larsson family. Medela serves customers through a worldwide network of distribution partners in more than 90 countries and its 15 subsidiaries in Australia, Benelux (Belgium and the Netherlands), Canada, China, France, Germany (Austria), Italy, Japan, Poland, Russia, Spain (Portugal), Sweden (Norway and Denmark), Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States.

[www.medela.com](http://www.medela.com)

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