

The Prudent Prescriber

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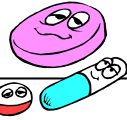
May 2009

Pharm Reps ≠ Rational Prescribing

(PR)



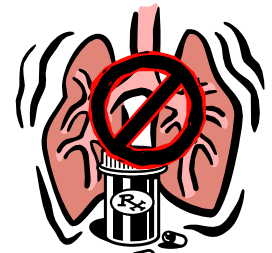
(RP)



Dear Readers,

The recession has now hit the pharmaceutical education sector. Effective August 2009, The Prudent Prescriber will only be available electronically. Mesa County readers will continue to receive a hard copy in their hospital mailboxes. Please send an email to prudent.prescriber@rmhp.org if you would like to continue your free lifetime subscription via email. *Your email address will be protected and not shared.*

Antibiotics do
NOT



help
acute bronchitis

**β-blockers in
post-MI
save
lives**



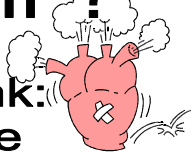
Pill splitters save
big



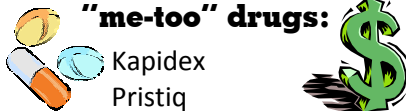
CHF?

Think:

Ace
Aldactone
B-blocker
Dig
Diuretic



**Avoid these expensive
"me-too" drugs:**



Kapidex
Pristiq
Omnaris
Soma 250
AMrix XR
Xyzal
Veramyst
Ambien CR

**Treat diabetics
BP to 130/80**



What's New?

▣ Savella (milnacipran)

Ads bill it as the only drug approved strictly for treatment of fibromyalgia, but look for Forest to seek an indication for depression as well. ☺ Savella has been prescribed as an antidepressant in Europe since 1997.

Efficacy: Several clinical trials, all vs. placebo: more effective than placebo: NNT = 12 to get a 50% reduction in symptoms over 3 months.

Safety/tolerability:

- Elevated HR, BP, hepatitis, nausea and palpitations.
- Twice as many normotensive adults in trials became hypertensive on Savella vs. placebo.
- 7% of patients have >15mmHg BP increase.
- Cumbersome dosage titration schedule:

Day 1 - 12.5mg QD
Day 2-3 - 12.5mg BID
Day 4-7 - 25mg BID
Day 8+ - 50mg BID

Cost: Savella, Lyrica and Cymbalta are all about \$130/month. Tricyclics ~ \$ 5-\$10/month

My Take: Start fibromyalgia treatment with low-impact exercise, cognitive-behavioral therapy, and improving sleep. I'm old, but I still like amitriptylene/nortriptylene, starting with low doses and close follow-up. Fibromyalgia often responds best to the drug called "Doctor." If you do prescribe Savella, remember to taper the dose when discontinuing.

More "What's New"...



now available
on the
Generic Marquee

Razadyne → galantamine
Sonata → zaleplon
Fosamax → alendronate
Norvasc → amlodipine
Ambien → zolpidem
Flonase → fluticasone nasal



What's New? (continued)

☐ **Trilipix (fenofibric acid)**

- The 6th branded version of fenofibrate!
- The FDA gave (and it seems like a real gift) the manufacturer approval to market its use with a statin, the only fibrate to enjoy this option. However, there is nothing about the pharmacology of Trilipix to assure that combining with a statin would not have the same risks for myopathy.
- Cost is \$4 for a 135mg capsule vs. \$2.20 for a 160mg fenofibrate tab

My Take: There is a Crestor/Trilipix combo in the pipeline. I'd prescribe Trilipix only if my myopathy malpractice neurosis was uncontrolled.

☐ **Uloric (febuxostat)**

- Uloric is indicated for the chronic management of hyperuricemia in patients with gout. It is not recommended for the treatment of asymptomatic hyperuricemia. It works like allopurinol by inhibiting the enzyme that catalyzes xanthine to uric acid.
- **Efficacy:** Compared to allopurinol in 3 studies: 40mg comparable to allopurinol 300mg QD and 80mg more effective than allopurinol 300mg in lowering serum uric acid to 6mg/dL. None of the trials looked at gout flares as a primary endpoint, only the serum uric acid.
- **Safety/tolerability:** No risk of rash or allopurinol hypersensitivity syndrome. Liver function test abnormalities are more common with Uloric (1.8%) vs. 0.9% with allopurinol.
- **Monitoring:** When Uloric is initiated, a baseline serum uric acid level, LFT and CBC are recommended. Follow-up of these tests should be done two and four months after starting Uloric, and then periodically. Goal serum uric acid level is <6mg/dL.
- **Cost:** \$160/month vs. \$16/month for allopurinol.

My Take: Good second line choice when allopurinol is not tolerated. Recall you can push the dose of allopurinol to as much as 800mg/day, but I have never gone beyond 300mg/day.

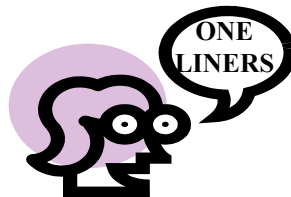


And finally, the May 2009 William Shakespeare "Much Ado about Nothing" Award goes to...

Moxatag Extended release amoxicillin (775mg)

- ☐ Approved as once a day therapy for Strep pharyngitis in patients 12 years and older.
- ☐ Costs ~\$100 for 10 days of therapy vs. \$4 for 10 days of plain old amoxicillin/penicillin.

My Take: Middlebrook Pharmaceuticals, you have stretched the boundaries of common sense. Besides the obvious usury, Moxatag's pharmacokinetics are suspect. Some experts express hesitation about giving amoxicillin, either immediate-release or Moxatag, once daily for strep throat. They point out that blood levels of either formulation given once daily are unlikely to remain above the MIC of group A strep for the majority of the dosing interval. The amount of time blood levels are above MIC with Moxatag is about 4 hours longer than with immediate-release amoxicillin. Experts say the problem with this is not only potential treatment failure, but also that the risk for acute rheumatic fever could be increased.



- **Synvisc One:** Single injection of 6cc at one visit, rather than 2cc at three weekly visits. FDA approval based on one small study (n=253) that showed it statistically worked better than placebo. No head to head studies with 3 or 5 dose regimens. The efficacy of all hyaluronidase preparations is suspect.

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