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NEWSLETTER



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Lyrica: New Treatment Available for Diabetic Peripheral Neuropathy and Postherpetic Neuralgia

Diabetic Peripheral Neuropathy (DPN) and Postherpetic Neuralgia (PHN) can be refractory to treatment. A new medication, Lyrica® (pregabalin) manufactured by Pfizer is available and indicated for treatment of both conditions. Pregabalin can also be used as adjunctive therapy for partial onset seizures in adults.

Numerous therapies are available for DPN and PHN including anticonvulsants, antidepressants, topical analgesics and analgesics such as opioids. For patients who have found minimal success with other medications, pregabalin may provide better pain relief with minimal side effects. Side effects commonly described include dizziness, somnolence and peripheral edema and slight weight gain.

In studies conducted by Pfizer Pharma, pregabalin demonstrated few pharmacokinetic drug interactions. Additive effects on cognitive and motor functioning were seen when pregabalin was co-administered with lorazepam, ethanol or oxycodone.

Patients with a chronic painful condition of any type often experience anxiety and sleep disturbances. It was reported that patients treated with pregabalin reported less incidence of sleep interference or mood disturbance along with reduced pain levels.

DPN may be exacerbated by elevated glucose levels. In the controlled studies that were performed, the participants were on a stable antihyperglycemic regimen with controlled glucose levels. Pregabalin had no effect on the hemoglobin A_{1c} concentrations.

Unlike many other DPN treatments, pregabalin did not have to be titrated. Therapy could be initiated at 100 mg three times a day without titration. When discontinuing pregabalin, it should be tapered over a minimum of at least 1 week. Patients with impaired renal function need to have their dose adjusted based on their CL_{cr}. For PHN, the recommended dose is 75 to 150 mg two times a day or 50 to 100 mg three times a day.

When used alone or in conjunction with other therapies, pregabalin was found to reduce pain with minimal side effects. It does appear to be a promising new medication to assist patients suffering from painful DPN or PHN.

For Information and Referrals:

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