People often think of things to ask but forget them when they come to clinic.

Questions to ask next time:

Useful contacts
South Devon Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust
Torbay Hospital
Lawes Bridge
Torquay
TQ2 7AA

☎ Tel. (01803) 614567

Parkinson’s Disease Nurse Specialist

Consultant’s Secretary

Drug Treatment in Parkinson’s Disease
COMT Inhibitors

23720 V2/Gen med/SDHCT/06.15/Review 06.17
Amantidine

COMT inhibitors (COMTI) are given in combination with an L-Dopa / Dopa-decarboxylase inhibitor (DDCI) (Sinemet or Madopar). They work by blocking the breakdown of L-Dopa and prolonging the duration that this drug works for. They therefore reduce the frequency that the medication needs to be taken. They have no effect on Parkinson’s disease if taken in isolation.

There are two COMTI, Entacapone (Comtess) and Tolcapone (Tasmar).

Entacapone has a relatively short half-life and usually has to be taken with each dose of L-Dopa. It works in the liver and does not cross into the brain. Entacapone can be given separately with Co-Carbidopa (Sinemet) or Co-Beneldopa (Madopar) or as a single combined tablet, Stalevo, which is a combination of Entacapone and Co-carbidopa.

Tolcapone lasts longer and only needs to be given three times a day. It crosses into the brain and can block the breakdown of dopamine there, as well as L-Dopa in the liver.

However, there have been concerns about liver damage so can now only be used under very strict monitoring arrangements with blood tests being done every 1-2 weeks. It will not be discussed further.

Preparations

Entacapone
200 mgs brown oval tablet

Stalevo 50
L-Dopa 50 mgs / Carbidopa 12.5 mgs / Entacapone 200 mgs brownish red round tablets

Stalevo 100
L-Dopa 100 mgs / Carbidopa 25 mgs / Entacapone 200 mgs brownish red oblong tablets

Stalevo 150
L-Dopa 150 mgs / Carbidopa 37.5 mgs / Entacapone 200 mgs brownish red oval tablets

Stalevo 200
L-Dopa 200 mgs / Carbidopa 50 mgs / Entacapone 200 mgs dark brownish red oval tablets.

Other strengths of Stalevo are planned.

Dosage

Entacapone 200 mgs is usually given with each dose of Levodopa.

Side effects

The side effects are mostly due to the L-Dopa and are therefore similar to Sinemet and Madopar.

The main ones are nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, dizziness, palpitations, confusion, hallucinations, agitation, abnormal dreams, insomnia and abnormal movements (dyskinesia and dystonia).

Entacapone tends to turn the urine reddish brown. This is the drug being excreted in the urine and not anything to be worried about.

Special precautions

If side effects occur you should consult your doctor or Parkinson’s Nurse Specialist.

Do not suddenly stop the medication as this can cause serious problems. It needs to be withdrawn gradually.