

HEALTH Matters

A RESOURCE TO HELP KEEP YOU INFORMED

September 2009

What About Anti-depressants?

There are now three serotonin norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors (SNRI) on the Canadian market.

Cymbalta, (duloxetine) now covered on ODB, available in 30 and 60 mg strengths, is an antidepressant also approved for the treatment of neuropathic pain associated with diabetic peripheral neuropathy. It will be good for patients who don't tolerate tricyclics...or for those who also have depression. In the U.S, Cymbalta is an FDA approved drug for the management of fibromyalgia. It will not be a surprise if Cymbalta is used as an off-label use for fibromyalgia in Canada.

Pristiq (desvenlafaxine) an active metabolite of venlafaxine (Effexor XR) is now available in Canada. Pristiq is a SNRI indicated for the treatment of major depression and is available in 50 mg and 100 mg extended-release matrix tablet. Unlike venlafaxine (Effexor XR), desvenlafaxine and duloxetine may not require titrating the initial dose up but still require to taper dose down.



	Initial Dose	Maintenance Dose	Tapering Dose	Dosage in renal impairment
Desvenlafaxine (Pristiq)	50 mg once a day	50 – 100 mg once a day (1)	From 50mg to 50 mg every other day before discontinuation	50 mg every other day if CrCl <30mL/min
Duloxetine (Cymbalta)	60 mg once a day (2)	60 mg once a day	Required	Not recommended when CrCl <30mL/min
Venlafaxine (Effexor XR)	75mg once a day (May be started at 37.5 mg once a day especially in the elderly population)	Increase by up to 75mg/day approximately every 2 weeks or more up to a maximum dose of 225mg (3)	Required (4)	No dosage consideration needed

(1) 100 mg per day of desvenlafaxine have not shown additional benefits, but produces more side effects.

(2) A lower dose of 30 mg daily may be used for the first seven to 14 days to improve tolerability

(3) Dose of venlafaxine may be up to 300 mg in severely depressed patients

(4) If venlafaxine has been used for more than 6 weeks, tapering over at least a two-week period is recommended.

Side effects with Cymbalta and Pristiq are similar to Effexor XR...dry mouth, nausea, insomnia, fatigue, sexual dysfunction. Once more, since they are SNRI, blood pressure should be monitored.

Drug Interactions:

Cymbalta should not be administered with ciprofloxacin. Cymbalta is eliminated primarily through hepatic metabolism. Therefore, ciprofloxacin would be expected to increase Cymbalta concentrations.

Can I crush or cut?

Cymbalta capsules should be swallowed whole. Cymbalta should not be chewed or crushed, nor should the contents be sprinkled on food or mixed with liquids. All of these might affect the enteric coating.

Pristiq tablet should be swallowed whole. Pristiq should not be chewed or crushed.

Venlafaxine XR capsules can be opened and sprinkled on soft food. Do not crush beads.

Drug Interaction Watch!

Watch for an interaction between tamoxifen and some SSRIs (selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor) including fluoxetine, paroxetine and sertraline. These specific three SSRIs inhibit CYP2D6 (Cytochrome P450 2D6), an enzyme in the liver required to convert tamoxifen to an active metabolite. This interaction may affect women who are genetically slow metabolizers of CYP2D6 and result in decreased tamoxifen's benefits. When treating depression or hot flashes in tamoxifen treated women it is best to use citalopram, escitalopram or even venlafaxine a SNRI.

THIS PACKAGE INCLUDES :

- 1) Insomnia in the Elderly
- 2) H1N1 Info

Cipralex vs. Celexa

Cipralex (escitalopram) is very similar to Celexa (citalopram) Cipralex is more potent and might cause fewer side effects than Celexa. Cipralex 10mg/day works as well as Celexa 40mg/day...and might be better tolerated by some patients.

Where initial sensitivity to adverse events may be a concern (like in the geriatric population) escitalopram could be started at 5mg daily and titrated upwards as tolerated. The usual effective dose is 10mg/day. A maximum of 20mg/day is rarely required.

Cipralex is covered on ODB.

To prepare for the Flu Season, inquire about our In-service on Influenza at

josee@medicalartsparmacy.ca

or

suzie@medicalartsparmacy.ca

If you have requests, suggestions or comments for future issues, your feedback may be directed to

suzie@medicalartsparmacy.ca

Suzie Pilon B.Sc.Ph.,

Certified Geriatric Pharmacist

Medical Arts Pharmacy

173 Montreal Road &

30 13th Street East,

Cornwall, Ontario

Phone: 613-932-6501

or 613-933-0670

Written by Suzie Pilon B.Sc.Ph.,

Certified Geriatric Pharmacist

Reviewed by Hilary Blackburn
Consultant Pharmacist