Generic Non Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory (NSAID) Options for Pain/Arthritis: Safe, Effective, and Affordable

NSAIDs and Cox-2 Inhibitors are used widely to treat mild to moderate pain—from arthritis, bursitis, tendonitis and sprains, to headaches and osteoarthritis. While NSAIDs are proven effective in these treatments, they may have significant adverse effects including gastrointestinal (GI) bleeding, peptic ulcer disease, hypertension, edema and renal disease. Long term use may raise the risk of heart attack or stroke.

Safe and Effective

Published clinical findings on pain/arthritis management have found that in most cases, brand Cox-2s and brand NSAIDs do not provide improved efficacy compared to generic or over-the-counter NSAIDs in equivalent doses for the treatment of pain/arthritis.

- A meta-analysis that focused on efficacy in elderly patients of Celebrex® (celecoxib) 200mg and 400mg versus naproxen 1000mg determined that celecoxib and naproxen were similar in efficacy.

- In double-blind trials of Mobic® (meloxicam) 7.5mg and 15mg, vs. generic prescription strength NSAIDs, there were generally no differences in efficacy. In two trials, patients taking a generic NSAID were significantly less likely to withdraw due to lack of efficacy.

- In a six-month, prospective, randomized, double-blind, trial, extended-release diclofenac plus omeprazole was found to be as effective as Celebrex® (celecoxib) among patients with a recent history of ulcer bleeding with respect to the prevention of recurrent bleeding.

Safety: The relative gastrointestinal and cardiovascular risks associated with Cox-2s and NSAIDs (brand or generic) are still being debated. There is no substantial evidence to favor Cox-2 or brand NSAID over generic NSAID options in the vast majority of patients.

Affordable

Consumer Reports selected three generic NSAIDs as Best Buy Drugs based on effectiveness, safety, side effects and cost: ibuprofen, naproxen and salsalate.

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Tips To Help Your Patients

- For treatment of chronic pain without risk of ulcers or gastrointestinal bleeding, consider a generic NSAID. Many are available OTC and may be substantially less than a generic prescription copayment.

- For patients experiencing pain with ulcers or GI bleeding, consider a generic NSAID and a proton pump inhibitor such as Prilosec OTC. A free trial of Prilosec OTC is available through our Generic Trial Program.

If you have questions about this information, please contact the FLRx Drug Information Service number at 1-877-777-2737 or email your question to myrxconnection@flrx.com.

References

