



Lack of Attention to the Administration of Fampridine as a Symptomatic Drug in Iranian Multiple Sclerosis Patients

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Dear Editor-in-Chief

Multiple sclerosis (MS) is a disease of the immune system that can lead to a wide range of symptoms with the involvement of the central nervous system. Drugs used for the disease, either immunomodulatory or immunosuppressive, can partly prevent the progression of the disease, but do not improve the defects. This highlights the role of other therapies, including pharmaceutical and non-pharmacological treatments. Therefore, the topic of symptom therapy in MS is very important (1). Regarding this topic, a range of treatments are discussed that improve the defects of MS in patients.

One of the major defects is gait disorder. Studies show that 70% of patients report walking disorders as their most important problem (2) and 58% of patients suffer from motor disorders in the first year of the disease (3).

Fampridine is a drug that improves patients' walking. Due to the effect of this drug on the rate and speed of walking, it is widely used in different countries. According to statistics, 25 % of MS patients in Germany and Spain use fampridine. In Belgium, 10% of MS patients and in Denmark 40% use the drug (4).

Iran is one of the countries that has been facing the growing incidence of MS in recent years (5). The latest official statistics, quoted by the MS Society of Iran, show that there are 68192 cases

in Iran, which accounts for the total number of cases registered in Iran until February 2018 (6). The high number of patients with an increasing risk of incidence in Iran calls a comprehensive attention to this disease. This attention should cover various aspects of the disease, including symptomatic treatments.

As mentioned, one of the most important disorders with regard to this disease is gait disorder and fampridine is prescribed to improve it. Several domestic companies in Iran (Arvand Pharmed, Tehran Shimi, Zahravi, & Bakhtar Bio-shimi) have been producing this drug that is widely available along with the original brand (Fampyra). According to the latest report from the Statistics of the Ministry of Health and Medical Education of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the total sale of this drug between March 2017 and March 2018 was 1438775 tablets (7). If we assume that all the patients who received the medicine have consistently taken it, the total number of patients undergoing continuous therapy with fampridine is 1970, which includes 2.8 % of all patients who has registered in MS Society of Iran. However, the amount of pills sold as listed in the Statistics of the Ministry of Health and Medical Education can include patients who have taken the medication for a short time and then discontinued for any reason. Therefore, the actual



number of patients who are continuously treated with fampridine is also less than this.

Comparison of the amount of fampridine intake in Iran and the increasing incidence of MS with the statistics from other countries, which was initially quoted, indicates the lack of attention to the symptomatic treatments of walking disorders in MS patients, a topic that needs special attention. Symptomatic treatments can have a significant impact on patients' quality of life.

Conflict of interest

The author has received speaker's honoraria from Arvand Pharmed.

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