

Family Medicine Clerkship - Plain Language Summary

Title: Pregabalin (Lyrica ®) as a medical treatment for chronic prostatitis/chronic pelvic pain syndrome

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Plain Language Summary:

The prostate is a walnut sized gland that makes up part of the male reproductive system. It is located in front of the rectum and just below the bladder.

Prostatitis means inflammation of the prostate. It is a very common condition. Between 10 and 12 percent of men report symptoms of prostatitis during their lifetime. Men with prostatitis may have pain or burning with urination, more frequent urination, or difficulty having sex. These symptoms can greatly decrease a man's quality of life. Fortunately, prostatitis is not related to prostate cancer.



There are several different types of prostatitis. Some forms of prostatitis are due to a bacterial infection and can be treated with antibiotics. Other forms of prostatitis are not caused by bacteria and do not improve with antibiotics. Chronic prostatitis/chronic pelvic pain syndrome is the most common of the prostatitis diseases. This form of prostatitis is not typically caused by bacteria. Cells that fight infection are sometimes seen in the urine of patients with chronic prostatitis/chronic pelvic pain syndrome. These cases are called inflammatory. When no infection fighting cells are present, it is called non-inflammatory.

Prostatitis can be a difficult diagnosis. It is very important to be evaluated by a medical doctor. Chronic prostatitis/chronic pelvic pain syndrome can only be diagnosed after all other possible causes have been studied. Your doctor may perform an exam of your prostate to feel if it has abnormal texture or lumps. Tests of your urine and blood will likely be done to look for signs of infection. Ultrasound and MRI can also help the doctor to make the correct diagnosis.

There is no proven treatment for men with chronic prostatitis/chronic pelvic pain syndrome. Most patients see very little improvement with antibiotic treatment. Tamsulosin (Flomax ®) can help relax the pelvic muscles. This treatment can improve the urinary problems and decrease pain. Warm baths, heating pads and massage of the prostate can also offer some relief. Unfortunately, many patients with chronic prostatitis/chronic pelvic pain syndrome do not improve with treatment. Some doctors believe that the pain is the result of overactive nerves. Pregabalin (Lyrica ®) is currently being tried as a treatment to calm the pelvic nerves. There is no conclusive evidence that pregabalin leads to improvement in pain, urination, or quality of life. However, some men report that pregabalin does improve their symptoms. Pregabalin may be tried in men who have not received benefit from the other available treatments.

Additional Resources:

For more information on chronic prostatitis:

American Urological Association:

<http://www.urologyhealth.org/urology/index.cfm?article=15>

Medline Plus:

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000524.htm>

Mayo Clinic:

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/prostatitis/DS00341>

National Institute of Health - Chronic Prostatitis Symptom Index:

<http://www.prostatitis.org/symptomindex.html>

For more information on prostate disease:

Medline Plus (prostate diseases):

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/prostatediseases.html>

Key Words:

Prostate gland

Chronic prostatitis

Chronic pelvic pain syndrome

Pregabalin (Lyrica ®)

Tamsulosin (Flomax ®)

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