

Reports on Scientific Meetings

Today's allergies need powerful treatment

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Venue: Marco Polo, Hong Kong Hotel
Speaker: Dr. Christine De Vos
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Several factors play important role in the development of allergy nowadays, namely pollutions, indoor life style, new allergens and stress. Different pollutants are allergens. Most people work and live in closed indoor environment, allowing persistent exposure to allergens and hence resulting in persistent symptoms. Different new materials and substances exposed in daily life are potential allergens. The neuroimmune response provoked by stressful life can increase susceptibility to allergy.

Levocetirizine is almost 100% orally absorbed. It has a high and rapid absorption and reaches peak plasma level in half to one hour after oral ingestion. It is not metabolised by the cytochrome P450 system and 86% of the drug is excreted as unchanged compound by the kidney. In a study comparing three new generation H₁ antihistamines, namely levocetirizine, fexofenadine and desloratidine, levocetirizine and fexofenadine have a higher H₁ receptor occupancy than desloratidine. Levocetirizine, in addition, has higher receptor

occupancy after 24 hours than the other two drugs. The wheal inhibition of levocetirizine and fexofenadine after 4 hours of ingestion is significantly better than desloratidine.

In the management of chronic idiopathic urticaria (CIU), levocetirizine is significantly better than placebo in decreasing the mean pruritus severity score starting from the first week of administration. In the pan-European non-interventional study of evaluating treatment satisfaction of CIU, the investigators found that CIU accounted for about one third of all types of urticaria. 50-60% of patients suffered from more severe disease with concomitant allergic rhinitis. The study found pollens and house dust mite as the most prevalent types of allergens. When compared with other second generation H₁ antihistamines, patients taking levocetirizine showed marked improvement in sleep, daily activities and patient satisfaction. The somnolence effect of levocetirizine and fexofenadine were less when compared with cetirizine and other H₁ antihistamines.

Learning points:

Pollution, indoor life style, new allergens and stress play important role in the development of allergy. Levocetirizine has higher receptor occupancy after 24 hours than other non-sedating new generation H₁ antihistamines.