

Questions & Answers Session

Clonmel Information Day November 5th 2006

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Are there any theories as to why migraine is so common?

The two basic explanations as to why people suffer from migraine are: Firstly, there is a hereditary component. In about 60% of cases, people with migraine will have a near relative who suffers from migraine. If both your parents suffer from migraine, then you as an offspring will have a 75% chance of inheriting the condition. If one of your parents suffers, then you have 50% chance. There is also research being carried out on chromosome one and the detailed effects that genes have.

Secondly, environmental issues are a factor i.e. exposure to certain things. Some people may only get one or two migraine attacks in a lifetime whereas others may get much more frequent attacks.

Could you mention some of the side effects of the triptans?

Triptans work on the serotonin receptors in the brain and help reduce the swollen blood vessels in the head.. The most controversial side effect is that triptans also have effects on the blood vessels around the heart. That is why people shouldn't take them if they have had a heart attack or angina or uncontrolled hypertension. The common side effects would include chest pain, which despite what I have just said, is usually unrelated to the heart, but originating in other areas, in particular the gut. Other side effects include pins and needles and nausea.

How many Frovex tablets can you take per week?

First of all, we would need to determine whether you are getting new migraine attacks or a recurrence of the first one once the medication wears off. If you take frovex and it takes away the headache after a few hours and then it comes back again in 4 to 5 hours, it is probably a single migraine attack, what we call a recurrence.

As regards how many can you take for a single attack, you can certainly take two within 24 hours and I would say two or three a week, as long as it is in that particular week only and not every week.

I was reading the literature and it said you can take imigran up to the age of 65. What about after that?

I don't have a great concern in prescribing medication for people over the age of 65. The real issue is not age, but whether you have documented heart disease or not. A patient could have a heart attack when they are 45 and they shouldn't be prescribed Imigran. At the same time, there is no reason why a perfectly healthy patient who is in their late sixties cannot be prescribed Imigran. Obviously age would be taken into consideration and not be ignored, but it's health that counts, not just the number relating to your age.