

## Two Parkinson's drugs linked to valve risk

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Two drugs used for Parkinson's disease increase the risk of heart-valve damage, studies said, prompting a U.S. official to call for a halt in their use.

Patients who took pergolide or cabergoline are four to seven times as likely to suffer heart-valve damage as patients who did not, two studies in Thursday's New England Journal of Medicine found.

Previous reports of heart-valve disease links led to the drugs being prescribed less frequently, the Wall Street Journal said. Manufacturers said the two drugs should be prescribed with caution.

In a British study, 19 percent of patients taking pergolide or cabergoline suffered heart-valve damage, five to seven times the rate of those who didn't take the medicines.

In Milan, Italy, researchers found heart-valve damage in 23 percent of patients who took pergolide and almost 29 percent for those prescribed cabergoline.

"It's so prevalent in people taking these medications, you kind of wonder why it was missed," said Bryan Roth, director of the National Institute of Mental Health's drug-screening program.

Roth said doctors should stop prescribing the drugs and tell patients to be examined to ensure they don't have valve damage.

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