

Naftidrofuryl can reduce leg pain

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Patients with pain caused by narrowed arteries in their legs have 37% more pain-free walking if they take naftidrofuryl (200mg three times a day) than those taking placebos, a Cochrane Review has found. In addition, 55% of patients taking naftidrofuryl improved, while only 30% of people on placebo treatments improved. Naftidrofuryl is used to treat circulatory problems.

Cochrane Researchers came to this conclusion after identifying seven studies in which a total of 1266 patient had been treated for at least three months. They analysed the data by retrieving and pooling the original patient data.

The symptoms of intermittent claudication are pain, cramp or a sense of fatigue in leg muscles that increases on exercise such as walking, but goes away when the person rests. The condition affects less than 1% of people below the age of 49, but increases to over 5% of those aged 70 and older. The problem is that the arteries supplying the legs have hardened and narrowed due to fatty deposits. This makes it less easy for blood to carry oxygen and nutrients to the muscles or clear waste products away.

While stopping smoking and gently increasing exercise can reduce symptoms, interest has also been focused on some pharmaceutical products. Naftidrofuryl has been on the market since 1968 and has a good safety record. Its patent has expired, so there are many generic options in most countries.

“It would make sense to give naftidrofuryl alongside recommending lifestyle changes such as stopping smoking, physical exercise and also prescribing anti-platelet drugs and statins” says lead researcher Dr Tine de Backer who works at the Heymans Institute of Pharmacology in Gent, Belgium.

Source: Wiley

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