

Leflunomide considered safe, effective for psoriatic arthritis

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(HealthDay)—Leflunomide is effective for the treatment of patients with psoriatic arthritis (PsA) in daily clinical practice, according to a study published online Oct. 6 in *Arthritis Care & Research*.

To assess the effectiveness and safety of leflunomide, Frank Behrens, M.D., from Johann Wolfgang Goethe-University in Frankfurt, Germany, and colleagues conducted a prospective, multinational 24-week observational study involving 514 adult patients (mean age, 50.7 years; mean disease duration, 6.1 years) with active PsA who began treatment with leflunomide. The [Psoriatic Arthritis](#) Response Criteria (PsARC) was used to assess response.

The researchers found that, in the primary effectiveness analysis, at 24

weeks, 380 of 440 patients (86.4 percent) achieved a PsARC response. Tender and swollen joint scores and counts improved significantly, as did patient and physician global assessments, fatigue, pain, skin disease, dactylitis, and nail lesions. The rate of treatment discontinuation was 12.3 percent. Adverse drug reactions occurred in 62 patients (12.1 percent), with three considered serious (two increased liver enzymes and one hypertensive crisis).

"On the basis of these data, we conclude that leflunomide is effective and has a favorable safety profile in the therapy of PsA in daily clinical practice," the authors write. "Its ability to alleviate joint, skin, and other disease manifestations; manageable safety profile; and relatively low price make leflunomide a valuable option for the treatment of [PsA](#)."

Several authors disclosed financial ties to sanofi-aventis, which funded the study.

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