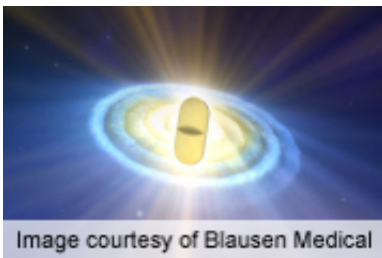


Direct-to-consumer advertising found beneficial for certain meds

November 16 2012



Direct-to-consumer advertising of aromatase inhibitors used in the treatment of breast cancer in postmenopausal women correlates with an increase in the number of appropriate prescriptions, with no effect on the number of inappropriate prescriptions, according to a study published online Nov. 6 in *Cancer*.

(HealthDay)—Direct-to-consumer advertising (DTCA) of aromatase inhibitors (AIs) used in the treatment of breast cancer in postmenopausal women correlates with an increase in the number of appropriate prescriptions, with no effect on the number of inappropriate prescriptions, according to a study published online Nov. 6 in *Cancer*.

Noting that age can serve as a surrogate marker of appropriateness of AI therapy, Gregory A. Abel, M.D., M.P.H., of the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in Boston, and colleagues examined the impact of DTCA on the number and [appropriateness](#) of prescriptions for AI therapies by comparing the number of new AI prescriptions in women 40 or under

(likely premenopausal) and those over 60 (likely postmenopausal). The association between monthly changes in DTCA spending for AIs and changes in AI prescriptions was assessed from October 2005 to September 2007.

The researchers found that there was considerable variation in the monthly spending on AI-associated DTCA, from \$118,600 to \$22,019,660. For every one million dollars spent, three months later there was an increase in the number of new AI prescriptions by 0.15 percent for all age groups (P prescriptions for women 40 years of age or younger).

"Our data thus suggest that this controversial form of medical communication may not be harmful for certain classes of drugs such as cancer medicines," the authors write. "Indeed, in some situations, such as when an appropriate use is the only option, DTCA may actually be beneficial."

More information: [Abstract](#)
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