

Commonly used drug for Alzheimer's disease doubles risk of hospitalization

September 16 2019



PET scan of a human brain with Alzheimer's disease. Credit: public domain

A drug commonly used to manage symptoms of Alzheimer disease and other dementias—donepezil—is associated with a two-fold higher risk of hospital admission for rhabdomyolysis, a painful condition of muscle

breakdown, compared with several other cholinesterase inhibitors, found a study in *CMAJ* (*Canadian Medical Association Journal*).

Dementia is a growing problem, with almost 10 million newly diagnosed cases every year around the world.

The study, led by researchers at Western University's Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry and Lawson Health Research Institute, looked at ICES data from 2002 to 2017 on 220 353 patients aged 66 years or older in Ontario, Canada, with a new prescription for donepezil, rivastigmine or galantamine, three cholinesterase inhibitors used to manage [dementia](#) and Alzheimer disease.

Researchers found that donepezil was associated with a two-fold higher risk of hospitalization for rhabdomyolysis, a serious condition that can result in kidney disease. The relative risk was small but statistically significant.

"The findings of this population-based cohort study support regulatory agency warnings about the risk of donepezil-induced rhabdomyolysis," writes Dr. Jamie Fleet, a postgraduate year 4 resident in [physical medicine](#) and rehabilitation now at McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, with coauthors. "Reassuringly, the 30-day incidence of a hospital admission with rhabdomyolysis after initiating donepezil remains low.

"Risk of rhabdomyolysis with donepezil compared with rivastigmine or galantamine: a population-based cohort study" is published September 16, 2019.

More information: *Canadian Medical Association Journal* (2019). www.cmaj.ca/lookup/doi/10.1503/cmaj.190337

Provided by Canadian Medical Association Journal

Citation: Commonly used drug for Alzheimer's disease doubles risk of hospitalization (2019, September 16) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2019-09-commonly-drug-alzheimer-disease-hospitalization.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.