

To Your Health



May, 2010 Volume 1 : Issue 1

 **MYERS Medical Pharmacy**

In This Issue

- ◆ Health Care Reform and Medicare: The Facts
- ◆ St. John's Wort Not Effective for Anxiety
- ◆ Autism: Administration of Oxytocin Shown to Improve Social Behavior
- ◆ Researchers Find New Brain Nerve Cells Key to Stress Resilience
- ◆ MYERS Launches New Web Site

St. John's Wort Not Effective for Anxiety

A broad-based review of studies focused on drugs that treat anxiety recently found no evidence supporting the use of so-called "natural" treatments in combating the effects of anxiety.

According to Kimberly Zoberi, M.D., associate professor of family and community medicine at Saint Louis University School of Medicine, "St. John's wort, kava extract and valerian have not been proven to be effective in treating anxiety." She also raised concerns about the safety of valerian, because of the lack of any long-term studies of its use.

Continued on Pg. 2 Col. 1

Quick Links

- ◆ Visit our web site Home page
- ◆ Subscribe to our newsletter
- ◆ Learn about Custom Compounded Medications
- ◆ Order refills
- ◆ Chat Live with a Pharmacist
- ◆ Unsubscribe

Health Care Reform and Medicare: The Facts

Passage of health care legislation has many Americans in a quandary about how it will affect them. This is especially true of senior citizens, who generally are on fixed budgets and have increased medical needs. Unfortunately, the rumors swirling about this topic are as sizeable as the 1,000 pages of legislation. [Here are the facts:](#)

A Mixed Bag

Beginning next year, annual wellness visits and certain preventive services such as cancer screenings, will be free of charge. Medicare beneficiaries will no longer have to pay deductibles and co-insurance for this kind of care. Eighteen months after enactment, the law says Medicare beneficiaries will have access to a comprehensive health risk assessment and a free personalized prevention plan.

Senior advocate groups including AARP and the Medicare Rights Center, say that there will be no cuts to Medicare coverage for seniors. Additionally, next year, the law provides a 10 percent bonus through Medicare to primary care doctors and general surgeons who practice in areas where they are in short supply.

How will Medicare prescription-drug benefits change? A Win for Seniors

This year, there is a \$250 rebate for Medicare Part D enrollees who fall into the "doughnut hole" of drug coverage. Previously, seniors covered under Part D received coverage for their prescriptions up to \$2,830 a year, then paid 25% of the cost and Medicare covered the rest. But when their prescriptions exceeded \$2,830, they fell into the doughnut hole, with no coverage at all, until they spent another \$3,610 for their medications. Now they'll effectively get the first \$3,080 covered.

What will happen to Medicare Advantage? Higher Premiums

Today, Medicare pays private insurers an average of 14% more than it spends to care for those enrolled in traditional Medicare. The overpayments help lower premiums and co-insurance costs, and provide extra benefits like vision and dental coverage, even gym memberships. The law would nearly eliminate the overpayments, saving \$132 billion over the next decade.

St. John's Wort Not Effective for Anxiety (From Pg. 1 Col. 1)

Dr. Zoberi further advises, "Patients should be extremely cautious about garnering medical advice from the Internet. There is no evidence that those medications are effective. If patients wish to avoid drug therapy, they should speak to their doctor about alternatives."

In addition to the findings regarding herbal treatments, the study compared the various prescription drug regimens available for treating anxiety. It found that most physicians recommend selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) as a first-line treatment because they were safe, effective and less expensive. However, some patients suffer sexual or gastrointestinal side effects. The study also found that medications from the anticonvulsant class of drugs are among the quickest and most effective ways to provide relief.

Ultimately, the study strongly recommends that patients consult with a health care professional before beginning any drug regimen for anxiety.

Autism: Oxytocin Improves Social Behavior

Autism is a disease characterized by difficulties in communicating effectively with and developing social relationships with others. A team at the Centre de Neuroscience Cognitive (CNRS) has shown that inhalation of oxytocin, a hormone known to promote delivery, lactation, mother-infant bonds and social relationships, significantly enhanced social and emotional behavior, improving the abilities of autistic patients to interact with others.

The researchers administered oxytocin to 13 autistic patients with high-functioning autism (HFA) or Asperger syndrome (AS) and then observed their social behavior during sports activities and visual tests designed to identify ability to recognize faces expressing different feelings. In both these forms of autism, patients retain normal intellectual and linguistic skills but are unable to engage spontaneously in social situations. During a conversation, these patients turn their heads and avoid eye contact with other people.

First, the researchers observed the social behavior of the patients while they were interacting with three other people, with differing behavior profiles, during a ball tossing game. Under a placebo, the patients returned the ball indiscriminately to the three ...



Autism: Oxytocin Improves Social Behavior (From Col. 1)

... partners. However, patients treated with oxytocin were able to discriminate between the different profiles and returned the ball to the most cooperative partner.

The scientists also measured the patients' degree of attentiveness to social signals by asking them to look at series of photographs of faces. Under a placebo, the patients looked at the mouth or away from the photo. But after inhaling oxytocin, the patients displayed a higher level of attentiveness to facial stimuli: they looked at the faces, and it was even possible to see an increase in the number of times they looked specifically at the eyes of the faces in the photographs.

During these tests, the scientists also measured physiological plasma oxytocin levels before and after nasal inhalations. Prior to the inhalations, plasma oxytocin levels were very low, but they rose after an intake of the hormone.

The results showed that administration of oxytocin allowed autistic patients to adjust to their social context by identifying the differing behaviors displayed by those around them and then acted accordingly, demonstrating more trust in the most socially cooperative individuals. Oxytocin also reduced their fear of others and promoted closer social relations.

Researchers Find New Brain Nerve Cells

University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center researchers have found new clues that might help explain why some people are more susceptible to stress than others.

In a study of mice, researchers found that several weeks after experiencing a stressful event, mice that were more susceptible to stress exhibited enhanced neurogenesis - the birth of new nerve cells in the brain. When researchers prevented neuro-genesis in both stress-susceptible and resilient mice, the animals previously susceptible to stress became more resilient.

The researchers exposed some mice to social stress by having them live in the same cage with larger, aggressor mice for five minutes a day, and in the same cage but with a barrier in place the rest of the day. Researchers then tested the mice to see if they were susceptible to stress.

Continued on Pg. 3 Col. 2

MYERS Launches New Web Site

We've developed a new web site! It's a tool you can use.

Our new site provides the information you'd expect

- Our location
- Hours
- History
- Biographies of our Pharmacists
- Archives of Our New Quarterly Newsletter

But now, you can

- **Securely order your refills**
- **Request automatic refills for your 30- 60- or 90-day supply prescriptions**
- **Opt-in to receive automated phone calls when your refills are ready to be picked-up**
- **Get answers to complicated insurance issues**
- **See what medications your insurance covers**

A new Custom Medication section provides descriptions of the *conditions and custom-compounded medications* we can provide to treat issues associated with

- **Podiatry**
- **Hormones and Endocrinology**
- **Pediatrics**
- **Mouth Care**
- **Pain**
- **Hospice Care**
- **Dermatology**
- **Veterinary Care**

To help you manage your health, you'll find valuable links to proven web sites that have comprehensive medical and treatment information.

Take it for a spin at <http://www.myersmedicalpharmacy.com>

Researchers Find New Brain Nerve Cells From Pg. 2 Col. 2

Mice susceptible to stress exhibit long-lasting social avoidance and depressive-like behavior after experiencing a stressful event. Resilient mice behave more like unstressed control animals.

The researchers labeled the new cells of susceptible and unsusceptible mice so they could see how the cells divided. They found that the brain cells of both groups of mice responded in similar ways after a stressful event. Both produced fewer dividing cells immediately after stress. But in the weeks following, susceptible mice had more new adult cells in the hippocampus region of the brain than resilient mice and control mice, who lived in cages with non-aggressor mice.

This study is the first one to link the memory of a social experience with neurogenesis in the hippocampus, and could eventually lead to a better understanding of why, in humans, there is an enormous variety of responses to stressful situations.



Do you know we compound custom medications?

If you have a condition that's not responding to your current treatment, talk to one of our Pharmacists.

We may be able to customize a solution for you.

Learn more about custom compounded medications.

Visit our web site at www.myersmedicalpharmacy.com



Helping individual patients with individual medicines

Quarterly Patient Newsletter from MYERS Medical Pharmacy

Call us for a customized medication to help solve your problem!

