



PREFERRED DRUG LIST UPDATES

- **Integrated (Title 19/21 SMI) and ACC:**

Additions:

- None

Removals:

- Fluoritab Dro 0.125mg
- Prenatal Without A Vit W/ Fe Fumarate-Folic

Other Updates:

- None
- **Behavioral Health (Title 19/21 Non-SMI & Non-Title 19/21)**
 - None

** Drugs that are not on the formulary may be available via PA (prior authorization) **

- For the complete preferred drug lists, please refer to the Mercy Care websites below
 - RBHA: <https://www.mercycareaz.org/providers/rbha-forproviders/pharmacy>
 - ACC: <https://www.mercycareaz.org/providers/completecure-forproviders/pharmacy>

Drug Safety Communication: Belviq, Belviq XR (lorcaserin) by Eisai - FDA Requests Withdrawal of Weight-Loss Drug

FDA has requested that the manufacturer of Belviq, Belviq XR (lorcaserin) voluntarily withdraw the weight-loss drug from the U.S. market because a safety clinical trial shows an increased occurrence of cancer. The drug manufacturer, Eisai Inc, has submitted a request to voluntarily withdraw the drug.

When FDA approved lorcaserin in 2012, they required the drug manufacturer to conduct a clinical trial to evaluate the risk of cardiovascular problems. A range of cancer types was reported, with several different types of cancers occurring more frequently in the lorcaserin group, including pancreatic, colorectal, and lung.

Cognitive benefits of Exercise in Patient with Schizophrenia

Did you know exercise can improve cognitive function in people with schizophrenia? A randomized trial conducted by Shimada and colleagues found that schizophrenia patients who participated in aerobic exercise programs play a significant role in improving overall cognition. The study conducted over a 12-week period randomized forty participants with schizophrenia aged 20 to 65 into two groups. The control group received usual treatment, which consisted of meetings with a psychiatrist, medication, case management, and rehabilitation programs¹. The intervention group participated in a 12-week aerobic exercise program in addition to receiving the usual treatment¹. The Brief Assessment of Cognition in Schizophrenia (BACS) was used to evaluate the participants' verbal memory, working memory, motor speed, verbal fluency, attention, and executive function¹. At the end of the 12-week

period, the result showed the intervention group experienced significant improvements in cognition, even months after the program ends.

Monitoring serum level of Valproate therapeutic range

Valproate is available in a range of formulations, including valproic acid, sodium valproate, divalproex sodium, and divalproex sodium extended release. Although the actual half-life for valproic acid is between 9 and 16 hours, the (Tmax) can vary from 2 to 17 hours depending on the patient and formulation used. A unique property of valproate is that its plasma protein binding varies with its serum concentration. As the serum concentration increases from 40 to 130 g/mL, the associated free fraction increases from 10% to 18.5%. It is the free fraction that is physiologically active and clinically relevant. Hence, comorbidities that impact plasma protein levels can significantly affect serum levels of free valproate.

In general, the accepted therapeutic range for valproate levels in patients with bipolar disorder is between 50 and 125 g/mL. When plasma protein levels are uncertain, it is prudent to obtain a free valproate level, in which the corresponding range is 6 to 22 g/mL. The optimal level for maintenance treatment is considered to be between 75 and 100 /mL, which provides a reasonable balance of effectiveness and tolerability. However, interpretation of the valproate level needs to be viewed in the context of the time it was drawn after the last dose, the half-life variability among individuals (because of patient-specific and drug-drug interaction factors), plasma protein variability, and the formulation used.

References:

1. <https://www.drugs.com/fda/safety-communication-belvig-belvig-xr-lorcaserin-eisai-fda-requests-weight-loss-14347.html>
2. Alert, P. (2020). Cognitive Benefits of Exercise in Patients with Schizophrenia Sustained Over One Year, Study Shows. [online] Alert.psychnews.org. Available at: http://alert.psychnews.org/2020/02/cognitive-benefits-of-exercise-in.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+PsychiatricNewsAlert+%28Psychiatric+News+Alert%29 [Accessed 27 Feb. 2020].
3. <https://www.psychiatrytimes.com/cme/serum-levels-psychiatric-drugs/page/0/3>

This newsletter is brought to you by the Mercy Care Pharmacy Team. For questions, please email Fanny A Musto (MustoF@mercycares.org), Alisha D Sellers (SellersA@mercycares.org) or Denise Volkov (VolkovD@mercycares.org)