

Sample Research Summaries Digestive Disease Week (DDW) 2016

What is the Evidence of Domperidone Causing Serious Cardiac Events?

Domperidone, a drug used to treat nausea and vomiting, has been associated with sudden cardiac death. This effect, however, has not been substantiated through medical analysis. Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso (TTUHSC El Paso) researchers reviewed multiple studies on the issue and found that while domperidone does increase cardiac abnormalities, there was no link between the drug and a serious cardiac event, like sudden death. The team recommended that patients not be denied access to domperidone, but that physicians closely monitor anyone on the drug.

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Identifying the Microbes Associated with SIBO

Small intestinal bacterial overgrowth (SIBO) is a disorder in which abnormally large amounts of bacteria are found in the small intestine. Little is known about the specific microbes in the intestine when the condition is present. TTUHSC El Paso physicians took samples of gut bacteria from patients with the disorder and compared them to those who did not have SIBO. The study revealed that those with SIBO had a 61 percent presence of gram-negative bacteria — a type of bacteria that is known to cause infections and be resistant to antibiotics — in the intestine. In patients without SIBO, only 39 percent of bacteria in the intestine were gram-negative. The team recommended further studies comparing the normal bacteria of the small intestine to those associated with SIBO to help guide future diagnosis and treatment.

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A Potential New Contributor to Diabetic Gastroparesis: Eosinophils

Gastroparesis, a disorder in which the stomach empties too slowly, is thought to be caused by abnormal neural function and loss of cells that control muscle contraction in the stomach. Patients who have both diabetes and gastroparesis have also been found to have higher numbers of eosinophilic bodies, disease-fighting blood cells, in their muscle. However, the link between these cells and the disorder has not been confirmed or well understood. TTUHSC El Paso researchers studied the differences between patients with diabetic gastroparesis and those with non-diabetic gastroparesis, and found eosinophilic bodies solely in the GI tract of patients with diabetes. In addition, stomach emptying was further delayed in those with eosinophilic bodies. The TTUHSC El Paso team suggested that the cells may result in worsening of gastroparesis and that further studies were needed.

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Does Electroacupuncture and Synchronized Breathing Improve Gastroparesis Symptoms?

Electroacupuncture is a new method of treatment for gastroparesis and its symptoms. By placing electrodes over the skin on acupuncture points, physicians can run a small electric current through the skin to stimulate the points. Combined with breathing that is synchronized with the pulsations, electroacupuncture may be even more potent. TTUHSC El Paso researchers studied the effectiveness of this combination and found that the technique did not improve nausea symptoms significantly more than electroacupuncture alone. They did, however, see an improvement in gastric electrical function and vagal activity, which helps control contractions of the digestive tract. They emphasized that further studies were needed.

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