

Medications for Parkinson's Disease

To the Editor:

As a pharmacist and care partner for my wife who has Parkinson's disease (PD), I would like to offer the following comments regarding the "Pipeline Plus" feature in *P&T* (October 2014, pages 712–713) entitled "Steady Progress on Parkinson's Disease." This well-intentioned article has two errors/omissions that I would like to point out to your readers.

With regard to the dosage regimen for ropinirole (Requip) in PD: After initial titration, the typical treatment regimen for Parkinson's disease is 9–24 mg total daily dose (divided three to four times daily).¹

In addition, the monoamine oxidase-B (MAO-B) inhibitor selegiline was not included in the table of current therapies. This MAO-B inhibitor has been available for many years and is at least one-tenth the cost of rasagiline (Azilect) but is equally effective.²

I believe that this additional information is important for pharmacists working with PD patients to know.

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REFERENCES

1. Houghton D, Hurtig H, eds. *Parkinson's Disease: Medications*. 5th ed. Miami, Florida: National Parkinson Foundation; 2008:6.
2. Hoffmann RP. Selegiline and rasagiline: twins or distant cousins? (Letter). *Consult Pharm* 2011;26(5):294.

Author's Response

Regarding the first comment, for the Requip regimen provided within the article, the regimen information was created by using FDA-approved prescribing information (PI) for each product. For consistency, the recommended or maintenance dose for each drug was used.

In the case of Requip, the PI states, "The recommended starting dose for Parkinson's disease is 0.25 mg three times daily." With no additional mention of a recommended or maintenance dose due to patient variability in titration, *P&T* used 0.25 mg three times a day. Unfortunately, it is hard to estimate the typical dose for a medication in many disease states, as it is dependent on various patient-specific characteristics. Thank you for clarifying that a typical dose of Requip can be estimated as 9–24 mg/day in three or four divided doses.

Regarding the second comment, about the inclusion of selegiline: The choice of drugs included in the table (within the class of monoamine oxidase-B inhibitors) was based on the initial approval date, using only the newest medications, and was not based on drug popularity, usage, or other criteria. Selegiline is a generic medication dosed at 5 mg twice a day, which can cost as little as \$967 per year. Thank you for pointing out the lower cost of selegiline compared to rasagiline.

We admire your passion and continued advocacy for the treatment of Parkinson's disease.

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