

Pregabalin: Use, misuse and abuse

Georgios Papazisis

Department of Pharmacology, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece

Pregabalin is a prescription drug approved for the treatment of generalized anxiety disorder; partial epilepsy; peripheral and central neuropathic pain; and has been recently approved by the FDA for the treatment of fibromyalgia. It has also been studied in clinical trials for its potential as a replacement therapy for alcohol and benzodiazepine addiction. Pregabalin is an alpha-2-delta ligand, structurally related to the neurotransmitter GABA. Similar to other compounds modulating GABA-ergic neurotransmission (e.g. benzodiazepines), there is some concern about its potential to cause addiction. However, the results of premarketing trials have been conflicting in this respect and thus pregabalin has been classified as a Schedule V drug by the US Drug Enforcement Administration, indicating that it has low abuse potential. Following the rapidly increasing use of pregabalin, data signaling its abuse liability have been published recently. Currently, these data are limited to two cross-over randomized control trials, one database analysis, one analysis of anecdotal online reports and a few case reports. Aim of the presentation is to highlight the potential for abuse of pregabalin, especially in patients with a history of substance-seeking behavior. Considering that the drug has recently been proposed as a treatment for substance misuse, namely for both alcohol and benzodiazepine-dependent individuals, a better clarification of its abuse potential is essential in order to characterize its extent and nature.

Biography

Georgios Papazisis is 39 years old and has completed his Ph.D. in Neuropharmacology at the age of 31 years from Medical School, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece. He is a Medical Doctor specialized in Psychiatry. He holds a Lecturer position in Pharmacology/Clinical Pharmacology in the Department of Pharmacology, Medical School of Thessaloniki having educational and research activities in the field of Neuropsychopharmacology. He has published 24 papers in PubMed Journals and is serving as a reviewer in 9 journals. He is the treasurer of the Greek Pharmacological Society and the Secretary of the Greek Society of Evidence Based Medicine.

gpapaz@med.auth.gr