

Suicide attempts following Fingolimod use in patients with relapsing Multiple Sclerosis: Is there a possible link

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Fingolimod is the first oral therapy approved for reducing exacerbations in Multiple Sclerosis. It is widely accepted that different preparations of beta interferons may aggravate depression and trigger suicide in MS patients and the drugs should be stopped immediately following suicidal idea. Here, we report three patients with relapsing MS, who committed suicide while receiving Fingolimod. Although the link between suicide and Fingolimod is not clear, but practicing physicians need to be aware of this possible adverse event. It is also important to evaluate psychological status of the patients not only in patients receiving beta interferons, but also patients who are treated with newly approved drugs.

Introduction: Multiple Sclerosis (MS) is a chronic autoimmune demyelinating disease that usually affects young adults. Several parenteral and oral medications have been approved to modify the course of the disease. Fingolimod is the first approved oral medication for relapsing MS and has been available since 2010 in the market. Reducing the number of circulating lymphocyte and trapping them in the lymph nodes are the main mechanisms of action although some neuroprotective properties have also been mentioned for this drug. Although Fingolimod is generally safe, but the patients should be monitored for cardiovascular events especially in the first dose administration. These rare side effects bring clinical vigilance to the practicing physicians and prevent delayed diagnosis and management of these adverse events which could be lifesaving. Following its marketing and administrating to large numbers of patients, some new concerns and alerts have been raised such as progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathies, herpes encephalitis and malignancies.

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