

The Medical Letter®

On Drugs and Therapeutics

Published by The Medical Letter, Inc. • 1000 Main Street, New Rochelle, NY 10801 • A Nonprofit Publication

Volume 49 (Issue 1274)
November 19, 2007

www.medicalletter.org

IN BRIEF

Varenicline (*Chantix*) Revisited

When the nicotine receptor partial agonist varenicline (*Chantix* – Pfizer) was first marketed, *The Medical Letter* concluded that it was moderately effective in increasing smoking cessation rates.¹ More recent publications and the clinical experience of Medical Letter consultants now suggest that varenicline is the most effective drug available for this indication, more effective than nicotine replacement therapy or bupropion SR (*Zyban*).^{2,3} A word of caution: exacerbations of psychiatric illness have been reported in patients who took higher-than-recommended starting doses of varenicline.^{4,5}

1. Varenicline (*Chantix*) for tobacco dependence. *Med Lett Drugs Ther* 2006; 48:66.
2. P Wu et al. Effectiveness of smoking cessation therapies: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *BMC Public Health* 2006; 6:300.
3. K Cahill et al. Nicotine receptor partial agonists for smoking cessation. *Cochrane Database Syst Rev* 2007; (1):CD006103.
4. R Freedman. Exacerbation of schizophrenia by varenicline. *Am J Psychiatry* 2007; 164:1269.
5. I Kohen and N Kremen. Varenicline-induced manic episode in a patient with bipolar disorder. *Am J Psychiatry* 2007; 164:1269.

The Medical Letter®

On Drugs and Therapeutics

EDITOR: Mark Abramowicz, M.D.
DEPUTY EDITOR: Gianna Zuccotti, M.D., M.P.H., Weill Medical College of Cornell University
EDITOR, DRUG INFORMATION: Jean-Marie Pflomm, Pharm.D.
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR, DRUG INTERACTIONS: Philip D. Hansten, Pharm.D., University of Washington
ADVISORY BOARD:
Jules Hirsch, M.D., Rockefeller University
David N. Juurlink, BPhM, M.D., PhD, Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre
James D. Kenney, M.D., Yale University School of Medicine
Richard B. Kim, M.D., University of Western Ontario
Gerald L. Mandell, M.D., University of Virginia School of Medicine
Hans Meinertz, M.D., University Hospital, Copenhagen
Dan M. Roden, M.D., Vanderbilt University School of Medicine
F. Estelle R. Simons, M.D., University of Manitoba
Neal H. Steigbigel, M.D., New York University School of Medicine
EDITORIAL FELLOWS:
Vanessa K. Dalton, M.D., M.P.H., University of Michigan Medical School
Eric J. Epstein, M.D., Albert Einstein College of Medicine
DRUG INTERACTIONS FELLOW: Emily Ung, BScPhM, Children's Hospital of Western Ontario
SENIOR ASSOCIATE EDITORS: Donna Goodstein, Amy Faucard
ASSISTANT EDITOR: Cynthia Macapagal Covey
MANAGING EDITOR: Susie Wong
PRODUCTION COORDINATOR: Cheryl Brown
VP FINANCE & OPERATIONS: Yosef Wissner-Levy
Founded in 1959 by
Arthur Kallet and Harold Aaron, M.D.

Copyright and Disclaimer: The Medical Letter is an independent nonprofit organization that provides healthcare professionals with unbiased drug prescribing recommendations. The editorial process used for its publications relies on a review of published and unpublished literature, with an emphasis on controlled clinical trials, and on the opinions of its consultants. The Medical Letter is supported solely by subscription fees and accepts no advertising, grants or donations. The content of The Medical Letter is controlled by the Editor, who declares no conflict. The members of the Advisory Board are required to disclose any potential conflict of interest.

No part of the material may be reproduced or transmitted by any process in whole or in part without prior permission in writing. The editors do not warrant that all the material in this publication is accurate and complete in every respect. The editors shall not be held responsible for any damage resulting from any error, inaccuracy or omission.

Subscription Services

Mailing Address:

The Medical Letter, Inc.
1000 Main Street
New Rochelle, NY 10801-7537

Customer Service:

Call: 800-211-2769 or 914-235-0500
Fax: 914-632-1733
Web Site: www.medicalletter.org
E-mail: custserv@medicalletter.org

Permissions:

To reproduce any portion of this issue, please e-mail your request to: permissions@medicalletter.org

Subscriptions (US):

1 year - \$89; 2 years - \$151;
3 years - \$214. \$44.50 per year for students, interns, residents and fellows in the US and Canada.
CME: \$44 for 26 credits.

E-mail site license inquiries to:

info@medicalletter.org or call 800-211-2769 x315.
Special fees for bulk subscriptions. Special classroom rates are available. Back issues are \$12 each. Major credit cards accepted.

Copyright 2007. ISSN 1523-2859