

Siponimod Could Improve Cognition in Advanced Multiple Sclerosis

A new multiple sclerosis (MS) drug, siponimod, significantly improves cognition for patients with advanced disease, new research shows.
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/EINPresswire.com/ -- People with the advanced form of multiple sclerosis

(MS) called secondary progressive MS who took the drug [siponimod](#) for one to two years had improved cognitive processing speed compared to those who did not take the drug, according to a [new study](#) published in the December 16, 2020, online issue of Neurology, the medical journal of the American Academy of Neurology.

Ralph H.B. Benedict, Ph.D., from the University at Buffalo in New York, and colleagues conducted secondary analyses of data from a double-blind, phase 3 trial involving 1,651 SPMS patients randomly assigned to receive either siponimod or placebo in a 2:1 ratio. The Symbol Digit Modalities Test (SDMT), Paced Auditory Serial Addition Test (PASAT), and Brief Visuospatial Memory Test-Revised (BVM-T-R) were used to assess cognitive function.

One of those tests, the Symbol Digit Modalities Test, measures cognitive processing speed. It is widely recognized as a particularly sensitive and reliable test in MS studies. The person taking the test is given a key of symbols matched to numbers. They are then shown a series of symbols and must say the corresponding number for each symbol as quickly as possible. The test result is the number of items correctly answered in 90 seconds.

[Researchers](#) found that on average the group of people taking siponimod improved their scores on this test after one year, 18 months and again at two years, compared to the group of people taking placebo, in whom the score stayed the same. Siponimod-treated patients were at significantly lower risk for having a ≥ 4 point decrease in SDMT score and had a significantly higher chance for having a ≥ 4 point increase in SDMT score, a magnitude of change accepted as clinically meaningful.

"We are impressed to see that siponimod may improve cognitive processing speed in people with MS; however, more research is needed to confirm our results," Benedict said in a statement. "Because we did not see changes on two other cognitive tests, more research should further examine how siponimod affects scores on a broader array of thinking and memory tests."

Valerie Walters

VulcanChem

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