Clonidine may reduce "hyperarousal," irritability

The drug clonidine may be helpful in reducing some symptoms of autism, according to two recent studies.

Arizona researchers testing clonidine in a skin patch report that it reduces autistic individuals' "hyperarousal" behaviors and aloofness. Martha Fankhauser and colleagues conducted a double-blind, placebo-crossover study of clonidine skin patches on seven autistic males from 5 to 33 years of age, administering dosages averaging .005 mg/kg/day. They say that after four weeks on the drug, participants showed increased social interaction and significantly fewer inappropriate sensory and emotional reactions.

Fankhauser et al. add that while language improvements were not significant for the entire group, "three subjects exhibited improved communication . . . . Two subjects with more normal intelligence were noted to initiate more verbal interactions, sustain conversation on a topic, use longer sentences, and use more appropriate gestures such as shaking hands and waving goodbye." Both parents and researchers noted that the drug had a calming effect on most subjects.

While sedation and fatigue were common side effects at the outset of the study, the researchers say, they diminished with time and were severe only in one case.

Fankhauser et al. note that clonidine has been found effective in treating Tourette's syndrome, panic disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, acute mania, and attention deficit disorder with hyperactivity, although its long-term effectiveness has not been established.

Chicago researchers testing clonidine on eight autistic boys were somewhat less optimistic about the drug, saying it was "modestly effective" in reducing irritability and hyperactivity.

Catherine Jaselskis and colleagues conducted a double-blind placebo-controlled study on subjects selected because they had high levels of inattention, impulsivity and hyperactivity, and had not responded to other drug treatments. Clonidine was administered in pill form in dosages ranging from .15 to .2 mg per day.

The researchers say that parent and teacher ratings showed some reduction of hyperactivity and irritability while children were taking clonidine, and "parents rated significant behavioral changes." Evaluations by the researchers, however, showed little or no improvement. Side effects included decreased blood pressure, drowsiness, crying spells, and irritability.

Following the double-blind study, Jaselskis et al. say, six of the eight subjects continued to take clonidine. However, four stopped taking the drug after developing a tolerance to formerly effective drug levels; attempts to elevate their dosages led to irritability, drowsiness, and/or lowered blood pressure and had little beneficial effect.

Because of its side effects, the researchers say, clonidine may be of only limited use for autistic individuals.

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"A double-blind, placebo-controlled study of the efficacy of transdermal clonidine in autism," Martha Fankhauser, Veeraiah Karumanchi, Michael German, Alayne Yates, and Savitri Devi Karumanchi; *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*, 53:3, March 1992, pp. 77-82. Address: Martha Fankhauser, Dept. of Pharmacy Practice, College of Pharmacy, Rm. 312, Univ. of Arizona, Tucson, AZ 85721.

—and—

" Clonidine treatment of hyperactive and impulsive children with autistic disorder," Catherine Jaselskis, Edwin Cook, Jr., Kathlyn Fletcher, and Bennett Leventhal; *Journal of Clinical Psychopharmacology*, in press. Address: Catherine A. Jaselskis, Dept. of Psychiatry, Univ. of Chicago, Box 411, 5841 S. Maryland, Chicago, IL 60637.

Henry Turkel, M.D.
(1903-1992)

Henry Turkel, a brilliant creative scientist and humble and caring physician, died in Jerusalem on August 14 at the age of 89. Dr. Turkel was known throughout the world for the medical instruments he invented (cited in well over 1,000 scientific publications) and for his development of the "U Series" method of successfully treating children with Down syndrome. The U Series consists of a harmless combination of nutrients and other nontoxic substances individually adapted to each patient's needs. Dr. Turkel's carefully documented studies led to the adoption of the U Series for treating Down syndrome in civilized countries throughout the world—except for the U.S. In the U.S. the FDA outlawed his sending the U Series across state lines, so parents were forced to bring their Down syndrome children to Dr. Turkel's clinic in Southfield, Michigan for treatment.

The successful use of the U Series to treat Down syndrome children in Japan led to a medal being awarded to Dr. Turkel by the Japanese government in 1974.

A Down syndrome girl treated by Dr. Turkel improved so spectacularly that her "miracle" story was reported in the *Readers Digest* in March 1980. A Down syndrome boy treated by Dr. Turkel improved to the point of his completing a year at a community college, as reported in a nationally televised TV documentary. The national media did not credit Dr. Turkel in either instance, despite the protests of both sets of parents. (Dr. Turkel, after all, was contradicting orthodox dogma—so why should he expect to have his work recognized?)

The FDA that prevented Dr. Turkel's work from being used to help Down syndrome children in this country for over 30 years is the very same FDA that is today trying hard to prevent you from buying the safe and helpful vitamins and minerals that are highly beneficial to many autistic and other handicapped children.

To receive Dr. Turkel's book, *The Medical Treatment for Down Syndrome*, and a selection of relevant papers, send $15.00 to ARI and request "the Turkel package."

ARRI UPDATES:
Auditory Integration Training, FDA bills

AUDITORY INTEGRATION TRAINING (AIT): Parents of autistic children who wish to try Berard-type AIT on their children are finding a rapidly growing number of trained practitioners available throughout the U.S. who are able to provide this service, and additional practitioners are "in the pipeline." As of mid-September there were over 80 practitioners in the U.S., and at least 40 more are expected to begin to offer AIT by year's end.

As noted in ARRI 6/2, an ARI pilot study has yielded positive results and our second, more extensive study is nearing completion. For a list of practitioners, send ARI an SASE. For the list and our complete information package on AIT, send $4.00.

FDA: Public outrage at the FDA's ongoing attempts to block citizens' rights to purchase vitamins and other nutritional supplements (ARRI 6/2) has motivated Congress to try to exert better control over the FDA. So many letters and phone calls were received by Congress (Thank you, readers of ARRI!) that two very obnoxious bills, which would have given even more power to the FDA, sponsored in the House by Waxman and Dingell and in the Senate by Kennedy, have been at least temporarily tabled.

A great new development: Senator Orrin Hatch (UT) has introduced the Health Freedom Act of 1992 (S 2835), and Bill Richardson (NM) has introduced a similar bill in the House (HR 5746). These bills would prohibit the FDA from interfering with our right to purchase supplements. Please write and call your Senators and Representatives and ask them to co-sponsor S 2835 and HR 5746. Tell them you do not believe the FDA is acting in your best interests.

As of June 30, 1991, Waxman had received $360,805 and Dingell had received $208,050 in contributions from medical-industry "Political Action Committees" (PACs). No figures are available for Kennedy.

Clarification

The National Information System for Vietnam Veterans and their Families has asked us to inform our readers that the NIS does not take the position that there is a cause and effect relationship between exposure to Agent Orange and autism.