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FDA Approves Ampyra to Enhance Walking Ability in Multiple Sclerosis Patients

January 25, 2010, 3:54 pm

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved Ampyra, a new medication intended to improve walking ability in individuals with multiple sclerosis, on January 22, 2010. In clinical trials, patients who took Ampyra illustrated a marked improvement in walking speed in comparison with individuals who were given placebo.

Multiple sclerosis (MS) is a chronic disease that affects the central nervous system and inhibits the ability of the brain and spinal cord to communicate information with the rest of the body. While the symptoms of MS vary greatly among patients, many consider a decrease in walking ability one of the most widespread problems of the disease.

Ampyra is the first drug specifically approved to treat a symptom of MS, and it works by obstructing potassium channels present on the nerve fiber surface. This results in an improved ability of nerve fibers damaged by the disease to transmit impulses. Further clinical trials are needed to determine the effect Ampyra may have on other functions not addressed in initial studies.

The most common side effects reported by those taking Ampyra in clinical trials included headache, dizziness, fatigue, nausea, decreased coordination, itchy skin, indigestion and trouble sleeping. When taken in larger-than-recommended doses, Ampyra caused seizures in some patients. Ampyra is not recommended for use in patients with kidney disease, as the use of this medication in such individuals may increase the risk of seizures.

MS currently affects an estimated 2.5 million individuals worldwide and is the most commonly diagnosed neurological disorder among young adults.

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Drug News & Alerts

Multiple Sclerosis Drug Tysabri Associated with Risk of Brain Infection, FDA Warns

February 8, 2010, 2:50 pm

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced a new warning for the multiple sclerosis (MS) drug **Tysabri** on February 5, 2010.

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COPD Treatment with Corticosteroid Inhalers Offers Limited Help

February 5, 2010, 3:21 pm

A new study, published in the February 2010 issue of the journal *Chest*, suggests that the benefits of using inhaled corticosteroid medications in the prevention of COPD attacks...

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Failure to Receive Recommended Vaccinations Results in Thousands of Deaths

February 4, 2010, 3:46 pm

According to the February 2010 report *Adult Immunization: Shots to Save Lives*, 40,000 to 50,000 American adult die annually from diseases that could have been prevented by...

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Diabetes Drug Metformin XR Helps Overweight Teens Lose Weight

February 3, 2010, 9:49 am

According to a study published in the February 2010 issue of *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*, **metformin XR**, a...

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