Do Oral Disease Modifying Agents (DMTs) Improve Adherence to MS Treatment? A Comparison of Oral and Injectable Drugs.

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OBJECTIVES

To determine if adherence and tolerability of oral DMTs is better than with injectables in our MS Center population.

METHODS

We developed the MS Treatment Adherence Questionnaire (MS-TAQ) and collected data from October-November 2014 (Fig. 1). The MS-TAQ is composed of 6 questions related to a patient's current DMT: number of missed doses in 4 weeks, reason dose was missed, perceived side effects, ease of administration, and medication satisfaction. Medication types were divided into 3 groups: subcutaneous or intramuscular (SC/IM), monthly IV injections, and oral DMTs. We analyzed the responses using Fisher's Exact Test (α=0.05) to determine if responses varied by medication type.

RESULTS

- We had 209 patients, 75.1% female and 24.9% male, mean age of 50.4 years.
- Eighty-nine patients (42.5%) were on oral medication, 90 (43%) on a SC/IM drug, and the remaining 30 (14.5%) on an IV infusion (Fig. 2).
- Fifty-five percent of patients on oral DMTs, 70.8% of patients taking SC/IM, and 93.3% on patients receiving IV infusions reported no missed doses (Fig. 3), respectively (p=0.005).
- Ease of taking medication was reported by 77%, 60% and 33% of patients on oral, IV and SC/IM injections (Fig. 4), respectively (p<0.0001).
- Reason for missed dose differed with respect to medication type (p=0.017) with forgetfulness being reported in 37.6% and 26.5% of patients receiving oral and IM/SC DMTs respectively (Table 1).
- Side effects were significantly different for each medication type (p<0.0001). Majority of those on IV did not experience side effects (74.3%), whereas only a minority of those taking orals (18.6%) and SC/IM (20.2%) responded as such (Table 2).

CONCLUSIONS

In our population, lack of adherence was significantly higher in patients receiving oral as compared to injectable DMTs, despite their reported ease of administration. Side effect profile may have been a contributing factor to this outcome. Health care providers should implement strategies to improve DMT adherence, regardless of medication route.

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Disclosures

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