

# Ibuprofen research shows risk of ulcers

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — The widely used pain reliever ibuprofen doubles the risk of ulcers, according to Vanderbilt University researchers, and some experts say people taking it may want to consider lower doses or alternatives.

But for those suffering chronic pain and inflammation, ibuprofen may be the best choice, as it has the lowest ulcer risk in its class of analgesics, researchers said.

The Vanderbilt study confirms the increased risk of ulcers in people who use prescription pain relievers, including ibuprofen, that belong to a group called non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs or NSAIDs.

It said the overall risk increased with higher doses and was greatest in the first month of use.

Ibuprofen, available without a prescription since 1985, is sold under such brand names as Advil, Medipren, Motrin and Nuprin. It has captured about 20 percent of the \$2.5 billion non-prescription pain-reliever market.

The study, published in the Feb. 7 Annals of Internal Medicine, involved 1,415 Tennessee Medicaid enrollees hospitalized for ulcers from 1984 to 1986 and 7,063 control patients. At recommended dosages for treating rheumatoid arthritis, NSAIDs quadrupled the risk for ulcers. But of the dozen drugs studied,

ibuprofen showed the lowest risk, at 2.3 times, while meclufenamate increased the risk 8.7 times.

Ibuprofen is the only one of that group available in over-the-counter strength. Aspirin is also an NSAID but was not included in the study because it is not a prescription drug.

Ibuprofen was included because, at the beginning of the study, it was still a prescription drug and was available free under Medicaid. While ibuprofen is now available without a prescription, the maximum recommended total daily dosage is the same as with prescription forms; a person may take more but smaller pills with the over-the-counter brands.

Aspirin is at least as risky as ibuprofen, said the study's lead author, Dr. Marie Griffin, while another pain reliever, acetaminophen, is not associated with ulcers.

Of those patients hospitalized with ulcers, 34 percent were taking NSAIDs compared with 13 percent of the control group. The researchers found that 29 percent of the hospitalizations were due to the NSAIDs.

"These drugs do have side effects," Griffin said.

Griffin said higher risk for short-term use of NSAIDs may occur because people who develop ulcers do so quickly and stop taking the drug.

# Matamoros slaying Two-year search ends in murder suspect arrest

MATAMOROS, Mexico (AP) — A nearly two-year search has ended with the arrest of a man who used to work at a ranch where a group of drug traffickers in 1989 killed at least 13 people, some of them in occult rituals, Mexican authorities said.

Baudelio Chavez Lopez, 49, was arrested on suspicion of complicity in the murders and drug trafficking allegedly committed at the ranch, Mexican authorities confirmed Thursday.

Police say the late Adolfo de Jesus Constanzo headed the ring.

Chavez told authorities it has been several years since he worked at the Rancho Santa Elena, owned by the Hernandez family, said Jose Elias Gallegos Benitez, secretary for the Fourth Federal District Court in Matamoros.

Some members of the Hernandez family are charged in the case, and are accused of being principal figures in the drug ring.

Authorities allege that he worked as an employee of the drug ring at the ranch just south of the Rio Grande until bodies were discovered there in April 1989.

"He has been a fugitive since then," said Jose Gabriel Andriano Hernandez, commander of the Mexican Federal Judicial Police in Matamoros.

After a Tamaulipas State Judicial Police officer spotted him, police based in Reynosa arrested Chavez last Saturday in the border town of Rio Bravo, between Matamoros and Reynosa. Andriano said Chavez was working in an automobile body re-

pair shop when police arrested him Saturday.

Among the 13 bodies authorities unearthed at the Rancho Santa Elena was the mutilated corpse of 21-year-old University of Texas student Mark Kilroy. Two other bodies discovered at a nearby farm also are believed to be victims of the same drug ring.

Constanzo and his accomplices killed rival drug dealers and innocent victims, police say. Some of the victims allegedly were sacrificed in rituals designed to protect their smuggling operation with spirits invoked through the Afro-Caribbean religion Palo Mayombe.

Constanzo and an associate were killed by another member of the ring, purportedly at Constanzo's orders, while police were closing in on their Mexico City hideout in May 1989.

Chavez, whose nickname is "el Lelo" or the silly one, remained in the CERESO state prison in Matamoros Thursday. His attorney, Cesar Ceballos Blanco, declined comment.

Chavez was formally charged before Fourth Federal District Judge Francisco Salvador Perez on Tuesday night.

Judge Perez said Thursday that it could be months before he reaches verdicts in their cases. The judge said numerous defense motions and appeals have delayed the proceedings, stretching the case files to about 4,000 pages.

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