

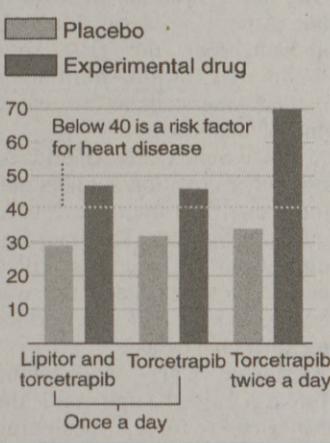
Study: New drug boosts levels of good cholesterol

By Linda A. Johnson
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

HEART HEALTH Raising HDL levels

An experimental drug can dramatically raise blood levels of heart-protecting HDL — or good cholesterol — a preliminary study of 19 patients shows. Patients who took the drug called torcetrapib twice a day for a month more than doubled their HDL level.

Levels of HDL cholesterol, measured in milligrams per deciliter



SOURCE: New England Journal of Medicine

Until now, doctors have concentrated largely on lowering bad cholesterol by giving patients statin drugs, which are used by millions of Americans and reduce heart attacks by about one-third. Many experts hope to drive down heart disease still further by boosting good cholesterol, too, and several strategies are in testing.

The latest study was small, involving just 19 patients, but its striking results suggest torcetrapib can have a powerful effect.

The drug is still a few years away from reaching the market. The next step will be to test its safety and effectiveness in much larger numbers of volunteers and show whether the higher HDL truly results in fewer heart attacks and strokes.

“One of the big questions that we do have with this drug is: Will using it to raise HDL levels from normal to high actually reduce risk in people who are at high risk?” said the study’s senior author, Dr. Daniel Rader, Penn’s director of preventive cardiovascular medicine.

Ultimately, the drug could be used in combination with statins to simultaneously lower

a patient’s bad cholesterol and boost good cholesterol.

The study, paid for in part by Pfizer Inc., torcetrapib’s maker, was published in Thursday’s New England Journal of Medicine.

Currently, the only HDL raiser in the market is the vitamin niacin, but its effects are modest and side effects, such as itching and hot flashes, bother many patients.

Whether torcetrapib will prove to be the first potent prescription drug in this category will require much more study, but some researchers said they were impressed by the initial results.

“I’m convinced that it works,” said Dr. Norman Lasser, director of preventive cardiology at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey in Newark.

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Victims

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Lippincott said that these assaults can happen with a friend, acquaintance, boyfriend or girlfriend.

“The weapon most often used is trust,” Lippincott said. Baron said 90 percent of campus rapes are alcohol-related and encouraged students to look out for each other when alcohol is involved. Baron said friends should not allow those who have been drinking to leave by themselves. Lippincott said use of date rape drugs has increased, and friends should watch each other’s drinks.

“It’s important when college kids go out to parties to keep an eye out for each other,” Lippincott said. “You don’t have to be drinking alcohol; it could be juice, water or soda, and someone can slip something into your drink.”

Lippincott said that even if someone is sexually assaulted because of a bad judgment on his or her part, it is important to remember it is not the victim’s fault.

“The responsibility lies in the hands of the perpetrator,” Lippincott said. “Even if the victim exercised poor judgment, it’s no excuse for someone else’s felony.”

Cabrina Scott, a crime analyst for the College Station Police Department, said 31 sexual assaults were reported to the CSPD in 2003 and urged victims of sexual assault to report it to the police.

“It does happen and it can happen,” Scott said. “If they have done it once, they will do it again.”

Lippincott urged Aggies to take advantage of the month to learn about sexual assaults.

“Texas A&M has a reputation of Aggies looking out for each other, and sexual assault affects Texans of all backgrounds,” Lippincott said. “Sexual Assault Awareness Month allows Aggies to come together and help each other out.”

Organ

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candidates on national waiting lists, and that every 14 minutes, someone dies waiting for a life-saving organ transplant.

“The simple act of signing an organ donor card and sharing one’s decision to donate with family members can make a world of difference for patients since becoming an organ donor, one person can save or help up to 50 other people,” Habib said.

and it featured a panel dedicated to Stephenson’s brother-in-law.

“My wife made the quilt square four years ago and the panel (in memory of his brother in law) is just now completed, and we are one of the first organizations to get to display it,” Stephenson said.

Ashley Parker said she thinks organ donation is a positive thing, and more people should consider becoming a donor.

“Why not give life to someone when you have the opportunity to help?” said Ashley, a sophomore education major.

For more information on organ donation you can go to <http://www.donorworld.com/>.

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