

This Blood Pressure Medication May Increase Heart Attack Risk.

Contributed by admin
Friday, 07 September 2007

Author : Gene Millen

Up to 2 million Britons could soon be "easing off" of their beta blockers. And for some very good reasons.

U.K.'s National Institute For Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) researchers have recently reported that Atenolol, the most frequently used beta blocker, increased the risk of heart attack, stroke and type 2 diabetes. The new guidelines advise patients to ease off the drugs and switch to other "therapies."

Of course the news release was couched in terms much more acceptable to the pharmaceutical companies. It stated, "The decision not to recommend beta-blockers for first-line therapy was based on evidence that suggested they performed less well than other drugs - particularly in the elderly." That's like saying that people who have heart attacks are less well than those who don't.

During the past several years several doctors have recommended that I include a beta blocker in my "preventive medicine" regimen. I have respectfully declined their well meaning advice. In most people beta blockers slow down the heart rate...which makes it more difficult for them to improve their physical fitness and to lose weight.

I'm in some very good company in believing that the beta blocker "cure" is worse than the disease.

In a recent interview with WebMD's HeartWire, Dr. Norman Kaplan, University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, Dallas voiced his concerns about beta blockers.

"Beta blockers slow you down, but we want to make our hypertensive patients more active. In addition, they have a whole panoply of adverse metabolic effects—lowering HDL (cholesterol) and insulin sensitivity."

It's important to point out that HDL cholesterol is protective against heart disease. It acts like a guardian angel to remove plaque that has been accumulating in the arteries of your heart and brain.

And lowering insulin sensitivity is the first step down the path to devastating type 2 diabetes.

The Texas Heart Institute, <http://texasheart.org>, provides an impressive list of beta blocker side effects, including cold hands and feet, weakness, dizziness, dry mouth and skin, shortness of breath, memory loss, confusion, depression and impotence.

They also provide a list of "cautions." If you have any of the following conditions you have some additional reasons to move away from beta blockers:

- Heart disease or poor circulation to your hands or feet.
- A slow heart rate or heart block.

- Asthma. Beta-blockers may make your condition worse.
- Hay fever symptoms, chronic bronchitis, or emphysema.
- Diabetes or hypoglycemia. Beta-blockers may hide these symptoms.
- Kidney or liver disease.

Dr. Franz Messerli, St Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital, New York, who has previously reported on the ineffectiveness of beta blockers, describes the new British guidelines as "dawn breaking in the UK," and he is urging the US to follow suit.

He told HeartWire, "In the US, millions of patients are still exposed to the cost, inconvenience, and side effects of beta blockers without harvesting any benefits. Beta blockers as a class have never been shown to reduce heart attacks or strokes in hypertension. This is particularly true for Atenolol, the most common beta blocker."

I don't know about you but I would be reaching for the phone to schedule an appointment with my doctor if I were taking a beta blocker. Experts tell us that it's dangerous to go "cold turkey" when going off of this drug.

The cardiologist grimly stated, "You are a walking time bomb." Two days later a heart surgeon sawed open Gene Millen's chest and stitched in bypasses to six clogged arteries. Millen explains newly discovered heart attack risks that are more dangerous than high cholesterol...and how heart supplements can send them packing! Website: <http://www.heart-health-for-life.com>