

November 6, 2015

Friday Focus



Cost effective Care for Nausea & Vomiting in Pregnancy

According to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists September 2015 practice bulletin, "nausea and vomiting of pregnancy is a common condition with prevalence rates for nausea of 50-80% and for vomiting and retching of 50%." (para 2) All by itself, this is hardly news, and yet the etiology of morning sickness is still unknown. Thus, it continues to be treated symptomatically with the mother's perception of the severity being the predominant factor.

Over the years, this has sparked numerous trials of various agents to control the symptoms including:

- Prenatal vitamins
- Ginger
- Pyridoxine (vitamin B6)
- Doxylamine (a first-generation OTC antihistamine)

While each of these were found to be somewhat effective, it was not until Pyridoxine 10mg was paired with Doxylamine 10 mg that studies found significant reduction in the severity of morning sickness. For this reason, a combination medication came into being and was available from 1958 to 1983. In fact, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists estimate that during this timeframe 25-30% of all pregnant women received this medication. Unfortunately, although this combination continued to be considered a safe and effective first line pharmacotherapy, this drug fell out of favor in place of its OTC components.

Alas, after the combination Rx was removed from the market in 1983, the use of antiemetics diminished considerably resulting in increased hospitalization rates secondary to increasing rates of severe nausea and vomiting of pregnancy.

That said, the FDA recently approved Diclegis for return to the U.S. Market. Unfortunately, because suitable generic equivalents are available, Diclegis is considered to be non-formulary with the member being responsible for a 50% cost share for commercial plans. At the same time, the pharmaceutical companies, knowing the potential demand, have chosen to make this a rather expensive medication. What most patients and providers alike do not know however, is just how much of a cost differential there is between the generics and the combination Rx.

Drug	Cost per 30 day supply
Diclegis (10mg/10mg) if taken every 6 hrs. max.	\$668.40 (120 tabs)
OTC Doxylamine (20 mg tab) ½ tab po Q6H	\$7.20
OTC Pyridoxine (Vitamin B-6) 10mg po Q6H	\$2.40

As always, we appreciate your ideas and feedback. Thank you for the quality work you do. All *Friday Focus* editions may be found at the SWHP website: <https://swhp.org/about/us/news/newsletters/providers-friday-focus>.

References

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. (September 2015) *Practice Bulletin: Clinical Management Guidelines for Obstetrician-Gynecologists*. 26 (3) pgs. e12-e24.

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