TOPAMAX® (topiramate)
TOPAMAX - Adverse Event - Alopecia

SUMMARY

- Alopecia has been reported during clinical trials.[1]
- Two published case reports discuss patients who experienced alopecia on adjunctive topiramate therapy with a positive rechallenge.[2,3]

PRODUCT LABELING

As described in the ADVERSE REACTIONS section of the Full Prescribing Information[1]:

In the monotherapy epilepsy trial, alopecia was reported in 1% and 4% of pediatric patients (6 to <16 years of age) receiving topiramate 50 mg/day and 400 mg/day, respectively. Alopecia was reported in 3% and 4% of adult patients (≥ 16 years of age) receiving topiramate 50 mg/day and 400 mg/day, respectively.

CLINICAL DATA

There is limited information from published literature regarding the occurrence of alopecia during treatment with topiramate. The duration and severity of this adverse event cannot be predicted for individual patients.

Case Reports

Lagrand et al (2021)[2] described a case report of a 56-year-old female patient who developed alopecia areata after treatment with three medication regimens: levodopa/benserazide, propranolol, and topiramate. The patient was initiated on levodopa 100 mg /benserazide 25 mg for tremors associated with Parkinson's disease and developed alopecia. No underlying auto-immune disease was detected. Discontinuation of medication and treatment with topical steroids, a calcineurin inhibitor and minoxidil resulted with hair regrowth after 3 months. The patient was initiated on propranolol 40 mg after experiencing worsening tremors and hair loss was again observed. After discontinuation of propranolol, regrowth of hair was observed in a few weeks. Treatment with primidone 125 mg was undertaken but discontinued due to cognitive dysfunction and hallucinations. One year later, topiramate 50 mg/day was initiated due to tremors extending to her left leg. First signs of hair loss were observed in less than 2 weeks and discontinuation of the medication resulted in hair regrowth after a few weeks.

Chuang et al (2002)[3] described a case of a 15 year-old female patient who developed alopecia while on adjunctive topiramate therapy for epilepsy.[3] The patient was initiated on carbamazepine and vigabatrin for frontal lobe epilepsy. Upon experiencing inadequate seizure control, vigabatrin was replaced with topiramate, titrated up to a dose of 200 mg/day. Two months after topiramate was added, the patient developed partial diffuse non-scarring hair loss over the frontal scalp. The color and texture of the hair was not altered and there was no family history of alopecia. Topiramate was discontinued at this point and new hair growth gradually resumed. The patient was re-initiated on topiramate when breakthrough seizures occurred. A month after adjunctive topiramate therapy was restarted, the patient experienced hair loss again. The authors concluded that alopecia was a possible adverse event since it reoccurred when the patient was re-challenged with topiramate.

LITERATURE SEARCH

A literature search of MEDLINE®, Embase®, BIOSIS Previews®, and Derwent Drug File (and/or other resources, including internal/external databases) pertaining to this topic was conducted on 16 August 2024.

REFERENCES

1. TOPAMAX (topiramate) [Prescribing Information]. Titusville, NJ: Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Inc;https://www.janssenlabels.com/package-insert/product-monograph/prescribing-information/TOPAMAX-pi.pdf.

2. Lagrand TJ, Lehn AC. Tremor drugs in the crosshairs. *Tremor Other Hyperkinet Mov (N Y)*. 2021;11:55.

3. Chuang YC, Chang WN, Chen IL, et al. Topiramate-induced hair loss: case report. *Dermatology Psychosomatics Dermatologie Und Psychosomatik*. 2002;3(4):183-184.