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NEWSLETTER



VOLUME 3

NUMBER 8

## Glucosamine, Chondroitin Ineffective for Mild OA Pain

A recent study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* studied the effectiveness of the popular dietary supplements glucosamine hydrochloride and chondroitin sulfate in relieving pain in patients with mild to moderate osteoarthritis (OA) of the knee. *New England Journal of Medicine* (2006;354:795-808).

Neither glucosamine nor chondroitin alone proved better than placebo in the majority of patients with OA of the knee. A small subgroup of patients with severe OA knee pain did respond, however, when the two supplements were used in combination.

The primary outcome measure was 20% decrease in OA knee pain from baseline to 24 weeks according to the Western Ontario and McMaster University Index (WOMAC; Table). The study found a high overall rate of response to placebo (60.1%). Compared with placebo, however, the rate of response to glucosamine alone was only 3.9% higher, not a significant difference ( $P=3.0$ ). Similarly, the rate of patients' response to chondroitin sulfate was not significantly different from that of placebo (5.3% higher;  $P=0.17$ ).

In contrast, patients responded very well to 200 mg/day celecoxib with 10% more patients reporting relief. Celecoxib was most effective for providing pain relief with a (70.1%) response rate ( $P<0.008$ ), compared to 64.0% for glucosamine, 65.4% for chondroitin sulfate, 66.6% for glucosamine/chondroitin and 60.1% for placebo.

Based upon the result of this study is the policy of our office to inform patients who wish to utilize these dietary supplements for OA pain that they should be taken in combination and are less likely to be as effective as celecoxib.



For Information and Referrals:

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