

Letter to the Editor

Adverse reaction to montelukast

Mr. Editor:

It is well known that montelukast is a specific cysteinyl-leukotriene receptor antagonist; this agent was introduced into the Spanish market in April 1998 as a new antiasthmatic therapeutic drug.

We now would like to report the case of a nine-year-old child with rhinitis and bronchial asthma, who was being managed with budesonide, 200 µg q. 12 h. as sufficient control of his condition was not achieved with this medication, montelukast 5 mg/24 h was added. Four days after the institution of this therapy the patient evidenced headache, nervousness, uneasiness and a sensation of objects falling onto him. This episode remitted spontaneously, with persistence of the headaches over the following days. Twenty days later he again evidenced intense headache, sensation of falling objects, agitation and aggressivity, and similar episodes occurred along the night. The patient was seen by a child psychiatrist and, after the corresponding study, a diagnosis was established of "nocturnal terror, probably in relation to montelukast". Therapy was instituted with Tranxilium® (potassium chlorazepate), which he only required during the first 48 hours, and montelukast was withdrawn.

The symptoms described were considered to be related to montelukast as the child had never evidenced such episodes previously, the psychiatrist did not identify any other condition that may have explained them, and the child re-

mains asymptomatic one year after the withdrawal of the drug, with budesonide as the only antiasthmatic therapy.

As this drug has been in the market for only a relatively short time, its side effects have not yet been fully established. In the study by Knorr *et al.*¹ headache is reported as the most frequent side effect; in a literature review we have only found one mention of possible psychic reactions, among which agitation and uneasiness are included, in one paper in *Current Problems in Pharmacovigilance*².

We consider that the case here reported is completely exceptional, but the importance of the symptoms lends interest to its report.

**L. Zapatero Remón,
M. I. Martínez Molero,
Z. Sierra de Grado**

Infantile Allergy Section. "Gregorio Marañón"
General University Hospital. Madrid, Spain

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