

SPINE SAFETY WARNING:

**Information for Healthcare Professionals:
Celexa (citalopram hydrobromide):
Drug Safety Communication - Abnormal Heart Rhythms Associated With High Doses**

SOURCE: FDA MedWatch

ISSUE: FDA notified healthcare professionals and patients that the antidepressant Celexa (citalopram hydrobromide) should no longer be used at doses greater than 40 mg per day because it can cause abnormal changes in the electrical activity of the heart. Changes in the electrical activity of the heart (prolongation of the QT interval of the electrocardiogram [ECG]) can lead to an abnormal heart rhythm (including Torsade de Pointes), which can be fatal. Patients at particular risk for developing prolongation of the QT interval include those with underlying heart conditions and those who are predisposed to low levels of potassium and magnesium in the blood.

Studies did not show a benefit in the treatment of depression at doses higher than 40 mg per day. Previously, the citalopram drug label stated that certain patients may require a dose of 60 mg per day. The citalopram drug label has been revised to include the new drug dosage and usage recommendations, as well as information about the potential for QT interval prolongation and Torsade de Pointes. See the FDA Drug Safety Communication Data Summary for additional information.

BACKGROUND: Celexa (citalopram hydrobromide) is in a class of antidepressants called selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs).

RECOMMENDATION: Citalopram causes dose-dependent QT interval prolongation. Citalopram should no longer be prescribed at doses greater than 40 mg per day. Citalopram should not be used in patients with congenital long QT syndrome. Patients with congestive heart failure, bradyarrhythmias, or predisposition to hypokalemia or hypomagnesemia because of concomitant illness or drugs, are at higher risk of developing Torsade de Pointes. See the FDA Drug Safety Communication for additional recommendations for healthcare professionals and patients.

Healthcare professionals and patients are encouraged to report adverse events or side effects related to the use of these products to the FDA's MedWatch Safety Information and Adverse Event Reporting Program:

- Complete and submit the report Online: www.fda.gov/MedWatch/report.htm
- [Download form](#) or call 1-800-332-1088 to request a reporting form, then complete and return to the address on the pre-addressed form, or submit by fax to 1-800-FDA-0178

Read the MedWatch safety alert, including a link to the FDA Drug Safety Communication, at:

<http://www.fda.gov/Safety/MedWatch/SafetyInformation/SafetyAlertsforHumanMedicalProducts/ucm269481.htm>

The North American Spine Society is committed to quality patient care through promotion of patient safety and prevention of medical errors. NASS monitors a variety of government and other resources for patient safety related notices that may be useful to our members. Information from these notices is also archived on the NASS website at <http://www.spine.org/Pages/PracticePolicy/ClinicalCare/SpineSafetyAlerts/Default.aspx>. This information is provided as a service for information and education only.