

New Drug Delivery Options that Help the Medicine Go Down

By David Sheon | May 14, 2013



The water cooler talk for us at RWHC is frequently about improving treatment adherence (a patient's ability and willingness to take his or her medicine consistently, as directed). OK, so we don't have the most exciting water cooler discussions. But this happens to be important – for all of us because when patients stay on treatment, they get better faster. This is almost universally true, regardless of the therapeutic category.

In some cases, improving adherence not only saves the life of the patient, but it can benefit an entire community. In HIV, for example, taking antiretrovirals not only helps the patient to manage his or her viral load (the amount of HIV circulating in the blood), but it also lowers that patient's ability to transmit the virus to someone else.

Sometimes, adherence can be improved by using a different delivery system. This is the first post in a series on how drug delivery helps adherence.

Remember the first time you took a breath strip that dissolved on your tongue? The technology was invented in the 1970s, but only since July 2012 have pharmaceutical companies been able to win marketing approval to put a drug on the strip. Two products have been cleared by the FDA.

Zuplenz (ondansetron) oral soluble film is an anti-nausea and vomiting product used by cancer patients who experience nausea and vomiting as a result of receiving chemotherapy and/or radiation as well as for the prevention of postoperative nausea and vomiting.

“We know from market research that patients who are nauseated don’t necessarily like swallowing pills or using suppositories and that sometimes taking pills with water contributes to their nausea,” said John V. Aiken, M. Ed., Vice President, Corporate Operations, Marketing, and Training, Praelia Pharmaceuticals, Inc. “Since launching the product in December 2012, a number of doctors are telling us that their patients prefer the dissolving strip.”

The second drug now available on an oral dissolving strip is Suboxone (Buprenorphine and Naloxone), from Reckitt Benckiser Pharmaceuticals Inc. For [more information on this product, click here](#).

If the dosing is standardized and absorption is as good as more typical drug delivery methods, we see only an upside in terms of patient adherence to oral dissolving strips. Please tell us what you think. Also, if you know of a new drug delivery option that you’d like to see us cover, let us know!

To read this post on RWHC Blog, [click here](#).