Short Communication

Hepatitis-B Treatment

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ABSTRACT

Hepatitis B is a liver infection caused by the Hepatitis B virus that can be chronic, putting people at risk of cirrhosis and liver cancer mortality. Mostly HBV therapy is now carried out according to a therapeutic guidelines programme that calls for the use of the medications Tenofovir, Entecavir, Adefovir, Lamivudine, Interferon-alpha, and Peg-interferon. The goal of this study is to demonstrate elements of chronic hepatitis B medication therapy. In the years 2011 to 2021, a bibliographic review was conducted in the databases PubMed, "Scientific Electronic Library Online" (SciELO), and Google Academics. In general, nucleoside inhibitors of reverse transcriptase and immunomodulators are suggested for the treatment of chronic hepatitis B. These medicines can cause a variety of side effects, including headaches, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, diarrhoea, and dizziness. The choice of treatment may be impacted by the fact that HBV treatment has become more successful, with less side effects, which has increased patient adherence to the medication, allowing for a higher quality of life.

Keywords: Hepatitis B; Therapy; Antiviral

Introduction

Hepatitis B is a liver infection caused by the HBV, Hepatitis B virus, that is lethal and a serious global health problem, according to the WHO, World Health Organization (2021). HVB is the most contagious, causing persistent infection and exposing the community to the severity of the disease as well as a significant risk of mortality from cirrhosis and liver cancer.

Hepatitis B can be asymptomatic or symptomatic, with oligosymptomatic hepatitis B being the most common symptom. It is therefore recognised to be imminently lethal, as it is a highly dangerous condition, and viral hepatitis is the leading cause of liver transplants worldwide. According to the WHO, 296 million people had chronic hepatitis B virus infection in 2019, and 820,000 people died in the same year [1-3]. The current treatment for chronic HBV is restricted; however, with the advancement of new drug production technologies, it can be improved. There are two types of therapy available: immunomodulators and NRTIs (Nucleoside Reverse Transcriptase Inhibitors), both of which can minimise the risk of viral resistance and hence achieve SVR (sustained virological response). As a result, in addition to resistance testing, it is critical to develop new antiretroviral treatments for chronic hepatitis B in order to achieve a reduction in the disease's progression and a final cure for hepatitis B. Thus, the goal of this study was to conduct an updated bibliographic review of the medications approved in countries like Brazil for the treatment of hepatitis B, demonstrating antiviral modes of action and identifying the most common adverse events associated with antivirals used in hepatitis B treatment [4].

Treatments

Thus, the goal of this study was to conduct an updated bibliographic review of the medications approved in countries like Brazil for the treatment of hepatitis B, demonstrating antiviral modes of action and identifying the most common adverse events associated with antivirals used in hepatitis B treatment. 288 of them were eliminated because they didn't match the research's requirements and didn't meet the

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criteria for hepatitis B drug treatment. Four nucleoside/nucleotide analogues, Lamivudine (LMV), Adefovir (ADV), Entecavir (ETV), and Tenofovir (TDF), as well as two interferon-based therapies, are currently available for the treatment of chronic hepatitis B [4,5]. Interferon treatment increases the host immune response while nucleoside/nucleotide analogues limit viral replication by blocking HBV viral polymerase. Antiviral medications must have two crucial characteristics: potency and a genetic barrier to resistance. The ideal medicine is highly powerful and has a strong genetic resistance barrier. All of these drugs can stop HBV from replicating, although SVR is uncommon, happening in less than 20% of treated individuals. SVR is the equivalent of a cure for HBV infection, lowering the risk of disease progression.

■ Nucleoside

Nucleotide/nucleoside analogues preferentially neutralise DNA, Deoxyribonucleic acid, polymerase, nullifying viral load, providing HBeAg, hepatitis B e-antigen seroconversion, achieving standardisation of ALT, alanine aminotransferases, with an increase in liver fibrosis as a result of viral clearance [4]. Seroconversion from HBeAg to anti-HBe and from HBsAg, Hepatitis B surface antigen, to anti-HBs, which can take anywhere from six months to five years, determines the length of treatment. They are generally well tolerated by patients, and serious side effects are uncommon.

The advantages of using nucleotide/nucleoside analogues include oral availability and high patient acceptability, early hepatitis control (fall of ALT), and significant improvement in liver histology, with the latter including interruption or partial reversal of fibrosis if viral suppression is maintained. Low rates of sustained post-treatment response (therefore, in most cases, longer therapy is required) and a high rate of drug resistance are disadvantages. The restoration of hepatitis activity is frequently accompanied by resistance [6,7].

■ Lamivudina

In 1998, the Food and Drug Administration of the United States of America authorised LMV as the first nucleoside analogue for the treatment of chronic hepatitis B. During reverse transcription of the first strand of DNA and synthesis of the second, LMV is integrated into the developing strand of DNA, inhibiting HBV-DNA synthesis.

In both HBeAg positive and HBeAg negative patients, LMV suppresses viral replication and is linked with histological improvement, HBeAg seroconversion, and ALT normalisation. Medicine resistance is the most serious issue with long-term treatment with this drug. LMV resistance has a low genetic barrier (the lowest among currently available medications), increasing resistance with a mutation. As a result, both in HBeAg positive and negative patients, LMV monotherapy is not indicated as a first-line treatment for chronic hepatitis B [7,8].

It is used in short-term therapy, as protection against reactivation during chemotherapy, and in the third trimester of pregnancy in pregnant women with a high viral load (usually greater than 100 million copies/mL) or fulminant hepatitis caused by HBV, despite the fact that its efficacy in the latter situation has yet to be proven. LMV is one of the most often used NRTIs in antiretroviral therapy regimens because it is regarded safe from a pharmacological standpoint, with minimal reports of adverse events [9]. While taking the drug, you may get diarrhoea on occasion. In patients with renal insufficiency, dose reduction has been proven to be necessary.

■ Adefovir

It's adenosine, a nucleotide analogue that inhibits HBV reverse transcriptase. It has the potential to be nephrotoxic. It's an acyclic that works as a DNA chain terminator and causes endogenous INF production. After one year of treatment with this medicine, HBeAg positive patients demonstrated histological improvement, lower serum levels of HBV-DNA, and high rates of HBeAg seroconversion. The benefits of treatment with this medicine are even larger when it is given for more than a year.

ADV is a low-potency virus with a genetic barrier to resistance [9]. Only patients who have achieved HBV-DNA negative after 48 weeks of treatment should continue to use it as a monotherapy. When a patient is resistant to this medication, it might be used with LMV. ADV shows persistence, which can lead to viral load rebound, which can lead to hepatitis B aggravation and, in the case of impaired liver function, liver decompensation, with potentially deadly effects. Adefovir dipivoxil should be used in combination with lamivudine

rather than as monotherapy to reduce the possibility of resistance in patients who do not respond to lamivudine. If blood HBV DNA levels remain above 1,000 copies/ml, medication adjustment should be considered to limit the risk of resistance in patients receiving adefovir dipivoxil as monotherapy. ADV can cause viral load rebound, which can lead to hepatitis B aggravation and, in the case of impaired liver function, liver decompensation, which can be fatal. Adefovir dipivoxil should be administered in combination with lamivudine rather than as a monotherapy to reduce the possibility of resistance in patients who do not respond to lamivudine. The lack or loss of muscle strength is a very common reaction (which occurs in 10% of people who use this medicine). Common side effects (which affect between 1% and 10% of individuals who use this medicine) include abdominal pain, nausea, flatulence, intestinal discomfort/gas, diarrhoea, poor digestion, and headache.

■ Entecavir

ETV is a nucleoside analogue (guanosine) that inhibits three phases of HBV replication: the initiation of HBV DNA polymerase, the replication of HBV DNA, and the replication of HBV DNA polymerase. HBV-DNA negative strand reverse transcription from pregenomic messenger RNA; and HBV-DNA positive strand synthesis It is the most effective antiviral among the existing nucleoside/nucleotide analogues licenced for treatment in patients with chronic hepatitis B, as well as having a high genetic barrier, with medication resistance requiring three mutations.

After four years of ETV therapy, less than 1% of patients who had not previously received nucleoside/nucleotide analogues showed no resistance to treatment. ETV was active in both HBeAg positive and HBeAg negative patients, as well as in LMV resistant individuals [3,6,9].

Headache, weariness, dizziness, and nausea were the most prevalent adverse effects of any severity (3%). Entecavir was discontinued in 1% of patients due to side effects or abnormal laboratory test results.

The clinical side effects of nucleoside-naive patients were studied. 679 people have been using ETV 0.5 mg once a day for an average of 54 weeks. Insomnia; nerve system diseases such as headache, vertigo, dizziness, drowsiness; gastrointestinal disorders such as nausea, diarrhoea, dyspepsia, vomiting; and general disorders such as exhaustion are all mild or severe adverse responses that lead to ETV treatment.

■ Tenofovir

TDF was approved for the treatment of HIV infection at first. In its active state, it is phosphorylated and binds directly to HBV DNA polymerase, inhibiting viral replication. TDF is structurally similar to ADV, but it is less nephrotoxic, allowing for bigger doses to be used, enhancing its effectiveness. TDF has a fair efficacy in patients with LMV resistance, while it is less effective in patients with ADV resistance, according to many research [9]. TDF, like ETV, has a high potency and a good genetic resistance barrier.

In the body, tenofovir disoproxil fumarate is converted to tenofovir, which prevents viral polymerases from connecting to them directly. TDF uses minimum intervention in the production of human DNA, resulting in increased safety. Patients taking Tenofovir Desoproxil Fumarate with lopinavir/ritonavir, atazanavir enhanced with ritonavir, or darunavir should be watched for Tenofovir Desoproxil Fumarate-related side effects. Tenofovir Desoproxil Fumarate should be stopped in those who have developed adverse responses to it.

■ Interferons

After being activated with viruses, antigens, mitogens, double-stranded DNA, or lectins, T-lymphocytes, macrophages, fibroblasts, and other types of cells produce interferons, which are immunoregulatory proteins. They were the first drugs licenced for the treatment of HBV infection, having been synthesised for therapeutic purposes. Interferon boosts macrophages' ability to kill tumour cells, viruses, and bacteria. They inhibit viral replication, enhance natural killer cell lytic activity, raise MHC class I expression in virus-infected cells, and promote the formation of Th1 helper-T cells. They have the ability to stop viral replication, are anti-proliferative, and cause a fever. Have an immunosuppressive impact.

Conclusion

The modes of action of medications suggested

for the treatment of chronic hepatitis B might be either viral replication inhibition or immune system regulation, resulting in a variety of side effects. The development of medications used in the treatment of chronic hepatitis B is required in order to obtain a more effective therapy, taking into consideration the fact that the patient must stick to the treatment regimen more closely, always attempting to avoid disruptions. As a result, further study is needed to determine the mechanism of action and bad effects of present medications, allowing for advancement in the development of new drugs and, ultimately, an evolution in the treatment of chronic hepatitis B.

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