



Editorial/อนุสรณ์การ

## Editorial Comments on “The safety, tolerability, and efficacy of once-daily generic memantine hydrochloride produced in Thailand: A multicenter naturalistic study in dementia patients”

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Dementia is a syndrome decline in 2 or more cognitive capacities, causing impairment in function. Dementia must be distinguished from delirium by intact attention and alertness. The latest 5<sup>th</sup> edition of Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), has recently proposed using the phrase “neurocognitive disorder” instead of the word “dementia” to destigmatize the syndrome.<sup>(1)</sup> The most common types of dementia are Alzheimer disease (AD), vascular dementia, Lewy body dementia, and frontotemporal dementia.<sup>(2)</sup>

One of the risk factors for dementia is advanced age. Dementia has become increasingly more common in Thai older adults given the sharp rising number of older people in Thailand. Caring for patients with dementia is a heavy emotional and financial burden for families and society. The number of people living with dementia in the Asia Pacific region will triple between now and 2050. Dementia care costs in the region currently stand at US\$185 billion, with 70% of this amount occurring in the advanced economies. These figures are likely to increase as the numbers of people with dementia grow, burdening the health systems of countries in the region, especially those in low and middle income nations.<sup>(3)</sup>

To date, there are no cures for dementia.<sup>(4)</sup> Current available pharmacological treatment aims for delaying progression of the syndrome and to treat the symptoms of dementia are Cholinesterase inhibitors and Memantine. Memantine is an N-methyl-D-aspartate (NMDA) receptor antagonist and has modest benefits in patients with moderate to severe AD. It is not approved to treat early-stage Alzheimer’s disease since the studies have not shown it to be effective for such patients. Memantine is usually prescribed in combination with one of the Cholinesterase inhibitors.

With the disease prognosis and length of the disease, there is uncertainty about the most appropriate time to discontinue treatment of dementia. The socioeconomic burden of pharmacological treatment has been very high as mentioned in this paper. Prescription medicines go “generic” when a company’s patents on them lapses, usually after about 12 to 15 years. At that point, other companies can make and sell the drug. Using generic medication will decrease the price of overall pharmacological treatment. The question from consumers that has to be answered is if the generic medication has the same efficacy as



the original one. This study has shown at least improvement in CGI score in both cognitive and behavioral wise via the accepted research methodology.

In summary, generics are much less expensive than newer brand-name medicines, but they're not lesser quality drugs. Indeed, most generics remain useful even many years after first being marketed.

## References

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