

Combined antioxidant therapy reduces pain and improves quality of life in chronic pancreatitis

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Abstract

Patients with chronic pancreatitis (CP) typically suffer intractable abdominal pain that is resistant to most analgesic strategies. Recent research indicates that the pain of CP may be in part due to oxygen free radical induced pancreatic damage. Using a randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled crossover trial, we evaluated the efficacy of a combined antioxidant preparation in the management of CP. Patients with confirmed chronic pancreatitis (N = 36) were randomized to receive treatment with either Antox, which contains the antioxidants selenium, betacarotene, L-methionine, and vitamins C and E, or placebo for 10 weeks. Each group of patients then switched to receive the alternative treatment for a further 10 weeks. Markers of antioxidant status were measured by blood sampling, whereas quality of life and pain were assessed using the SF-36 questionnaire. Nineteen patients completed the full 20 weeks of treatment. Treatment with Antox was associated with significant improvements in quality of life in terms of pain (+17 antioxidant vs. -7 placebo), physical (+9 vs. -3) and social functioning (+8 vs. -7), and general health perception (+10 vs. -3). We conclude that treatment with antioxidants may **improve quality of life and reduce pain in patients suffering from chronic pancreatitis.**

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