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DR. KURT WOELLER - BIOMEDICAL AUTISM INTERVENTION

SUNDAY, JANUARY 11, 2009

Autism - The Benefits of Low Dose Naltrexone

Low Dose Naltrexone (LDN) is a medication that has been used to treat immune dysfunction and auto-immune diseases. Its success has been seen in cancer, AIDS, Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, Lyme disease, Multiple Sclerosis, chronic fatigue/ fibromyalgia and any condition relating to allergy and inflammation. LDN has also been used with good results as a biomedical autism intervention for autistic children (ASD).

The primary role of naltrexone is to block opioids. At face value this may not seem to be desirable. However, the result of the opioid block is that the body compensates by producing even more of its natural endorphins. These feel-good chemicals can stay elevated for up to 18 hours.

Opioids can act as cytokines – the major signal and communication chemical that cells of the immune system use to talk to each other. By balancing cytokines we can modulate aspects of the immune system known as Th1 and Th2 – which are commonly a problem in autism. These two aspects need to exist in balance – but often, Th2 becomes dominant over Th1. Inability to mount a sufficient Th1 response can result in chronic infections, while a dominant Th2 response can trigger allergy and play a role in auto-immune disease. Therefore getting these two back in harmony can go a long way in promoting healthy immune function and preventing chronic illness. LDN has shown to be an effective biomedical autism intervention. Many parents report that their children are healthier overall, and do not get the frequency of illnesses, i.e. colds, ear infections after starting it.

Side effects of LDN appear to be minimal. There is no known toxicity associated with the medication. I have seen a few children experience earlier wakening the first few nights after starting LDN, as well as some

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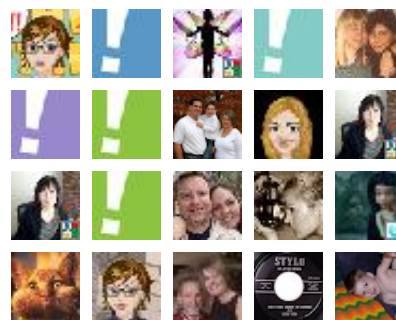


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initial hyperactivity as well. These can be avoided by starting on 1/2 dose for the first few days. LDN as a biomedical autism treatment has been compounded into a transdermal form (TD-LDN) which is easy to apply once nightly to the skin between the hours of 9 to 12 pm. The benefits I hear most frequently from adult patients are improved sleep, decreased pain, better digestion, and general resolution or improvement of symptoms. In ASD kids, parents report better mood, 'happier kids', improved sleep and behavioral gains.

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