

Nitazoxanide Promising Treatment for Rotavirus

BY JONATHAN GARDNER
London Bureau

An anti-infective drug now used to treat illnesses from waterborne parasites also can shorten the course of rotavirus in children, results of a small study have shown.

In a trial of 38 children treated at Cairo (Egypt) University Children’s Hospital, treatment with nitazoxanide more than halved the time spent in a hospital for

treatment of diarrhea resulting from a rotavirus infection (Lancet 2006;doi:10.1016/S0140-6736(06)68852-1).

Nitazoxanide (Alinia) is approved for treatment of *Cryptosporidium parvum* and *Giardia lamblia* in the United States. Its manufacturer, Romark Laboratories, also has filed an investigational new drug application with the Food and Drug Administration to test its effectiveness as a treatment for chronic hepatitis C.

Romark was a sponsor of this study, and

its lead investigator, Jean-Francois Rossignol, is a professor at the Romark Institute for Medical Research, Tampa, Fla., as well as a shareholder in the company.

Rotavirus kills about 500,000 children a year, mostly in underdeveloped countries where poor nutrition makes children more vulnerable.

A vaccine had been developed for the virus, but that Wyeth vaccine—RotaShield—was pulled from the market in 1999 because of a higher rate of intus-

susception linked to the vaccine.

The FDA approved a new live vaccine, RotaTeq (Merck & Co.), for the United States in February.

The study randomized 50 children younger than 12 years suffering from diarrhea into groups treated with a 3-day course of nitazoxanide in an oral suspension or a placebo to test the length of time until disease resolution.

All received routine care, including fluid replacement therapy and nutritional management of diarrhea. Twelve children were excluded because rotavirus was not found to be the cause of their diarrhea, the researchers said.

The median time from first dose to disease resolution was 31 hours among the children treated with nitazoxanide, compared with 75 hours for the children in the placebo group, Dr. Rossignol and associates reported.

The two groups were not significantly different in their demographic makeup, symptoms, nutritional status, or the length of time they had experienced diarrhea or hospitalization as a result of the diarrhea. Most of the study patients were malnourished with reduced immunity. In both groups, early responders tended to be better-nourished, had been sick longer, and had been in the hospital longer when receiving the first dose, the investigators wrote.

Dr. Rossignol and associates added that despite laboratory results indicating otherwise, they cannot rule out the possibility that hidden pathogens might have affected the results of the study, although coinfections with rotavirus are rare.

The investigators also noted that they did not take stool samples during the study to assess the relationship between the clinical response and the rotavirus excretion.

Antimicrobial Soaps: No Need, Say Canadian Doctors

Handwashing with plain soap and water—not with antibacterial soaps—is still the most important way to reduce the spread of germs, according to the Canadian Paediatric Society.

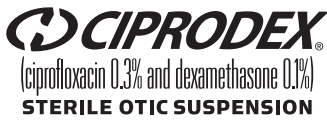
The society published a position statement in an issue of Paediatrics & Child Health stating that the use of antimicrobial products is unnecessary to keep children healthy.

“You don’t need to buy toys treated with antimicrobial products,” Dr. Joanne Embree, chair of the society’s infectious diseases and immunization committee, said in a statement.

“When children put toys in their mouths or play with them when they are sick, simply clean them with water and soap and rinse well.”

When soap and water are not available, alcohol-based solutions or gels can be used, according to the society (J. Paediatr. Child Health 2006;11:169-73).

—Joyce Frieden



DESCRIPTION
CIPRODEX® (ciprofloxacin 0.3% and dexamethasone 0.1%) Sterile Otic Suspension contains the synthetic broad-spectrum antibacterial agent, ciprofloxacin hydrochloride, combined with the anti-inflammatory corticosteroid, dexamethasone, in a sterile, preserved suspension for otic use. Each mL of CIPRODEX® Otic contains ciprofloxacin hydrochloride (equivalent to 3 mg ciprofloxacin base), 1 mg dexamethasone, and 0.1 mg benzalkonium chloride as a preservative. The inactive ingredients are boric acid, sodium chloride, hydroxyethyl cellulose, tyloxapol, acetic acid, sodium acetate, edetate disodium, and purified water. Sodium hydroxide or hydrochloric acid may be added for adjustment of pH.
Ciprofloxacin, a fluoroquinolone is available as the monohydrochloride monohydrate salt of 1-cyclopropyl-6-fluoro-1,4-dihydro-4-oxo-7-(1-piperazinyl)-3-quinolinecarboxylic acid. The empirical formula is C₁₇H₁₈FN₃O₃·HCl·H₂O. Dexamethasone, 9-fluoro-11(beta),17,21-trihydroxy-16(alpha)-methylpregna-1,4-diene-3,20-dione, is an anti-inflammatory corticosteroid. The empirical formula is C₂₂H₂₉FO₅.

CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY
Pharmacokinetics: Following a single bilateral 4-drop (total dose = 0.28 mL, 0.84 mg ciprofloxacin, 0.28 mg dexamethasone) topical otic dose of CIPRODEX® Otic to pediatric patients after tympanostomy tube insertion, measurable plasma concentrations of ciprofloxacin and dexamethasone were observed at 6 hours following administration in 2 of 9 patients and 5 of 9 patients, respectively.
Mean ± SD peak plasma concentrations of ciprofloxacin were 1.39 ± 0.880 ng/mL (n=9). Peak plasma concentrations ranged from 0.543 ng/mL to 3.45 ng/mL and were on average approximately 0.1% of peak plasma concentrations achieved with an oral dose of 250-mg^[8]. Peak plasma concentrations of ciprofloxacin were observed within 15 minutes to 2 hours post dose application. Mean ± SD peak plasma concentrations of dexamethasone were 1.14 ± 1.54 ng/mL (n=9). Peak plasma concentrations ranged from 0.135 ng/mL to 5.10 ng/mL and were on average approximately 14% of peak concentrations reported in the literature following an oral 0.5-mg tablet dose^[9]. Peak plasma concentrations of dexamethasone were observed within 15 minutes to 2 hours post dose application. Dexamethasone has been added to aid in the resolution of the inflammatory response accompanying bacterial infection (such as otorrhea in pediatric patients with AOM with tympanostomy tubes).

Microbiology: Ciprofloxacin has *in vitro* activity against a wide range of gram-positive and gram-negative microorganisms. The bactericidal action of ciprofloxacin results from interference with the enzyme, DNA gyrase, which is needed for the synthesis of bacterial DNA. Cross-resistance has been observed between ciprofloxacin and other fluoroquinolones. There is generally no cross-resistance between ciprofloxacin and other classes of antibacterial agents such as beta-lactams or aminoglycosides.

Ciprofloxacin has been shown to be active against most isolates of the following microorganisms, both *in vitro* and clinically in otic infections as described in the **INDICATIONS AND USAGE** section.

Aerobic and facultative gram-positive microorganisms: *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, *Aerobic and facultative gram-negative microorganisms:* *Haemophilus influenzae*, *Moraxella catarrhalis*, *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*.

INDICATIONS AND USAGE: CIPRODEX® Otic is indicated for the treatment of infections caused by susceptible isolates of the designated microorganisms in the specific conditions listed below: **Acute Otitis Media** in pediatric patients (age 6 months and older) with tympanostomy tubes due to *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, *Haemophilus influenzae*, *Moraxella catarrhalis*, and *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*. **Acute Otitis Externa** in pediatric (age 6 months and older), adult and elderly patients due to *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*.

CONTRAINDICATIONS
CIPRODEX® Otic is contraindicated in patients with a history of hypersensitivity to ciprofloxacin, to other quinolones, or to any of the components in this medication. Use of this product is contraindicated in viral infections of the external canal including herpes simplex infections.

WARNINGS
FOR OTIC USE ONLY (This product is not approved for ophthalmic use.) **NOT FOR INJECTION**
CIPRODEX® Otic should be discontinued at the first appearance of a skin rash or any other sign of hypersensitivity. Serious and occasionally fatal hypersensitivity (anaphylactic) reactions, some following the first dose, have been reported in patients receiving systemic quinolones. Serious acute hypersensitivity reactions may require immediate emergency treatment.

PRECAUTIONS
General: As with other antibacterial preparations, use of this product may result in overgrowth of nonsusceptible organisms, including yeast and fungi. If the infection is not improved after one week of treatment, cultures should be obtained to guide further treatment. If otorrhea persists after a full course of therapy, or if two or more episodes of otorrhea occur within six months, further evaluation is recommended to exclude an underlying condition such as cholesteatoma, foreign body, or a tumor. The systemic administration of quinolones, including ciprofloxacin at doses much higher than given or absorbed by the otic route, has led to lesions or erosions of the cartilage in weight-bearing joints and other signs of arthropathy in immature animals of various species. Guinea pigs dosed in the middle ear with CIPRODEX® Otic for one month exhibited no drug-related structural or functional changes of the cochlear hair cells and no lesions in the ossicles. CIPRODEX® Otic was also shown to lack dermal sensitizing potential in the guinea pig when tested according to the method of Buehler. No signs of local irritation were found when CIPRODEX® Otic was applied topically in the rabbit eye. **Information for Patients:** For otic use only. (This product is not approved for use in the eye.) Warm the bottle in your hand for one to two minutes prior to use and shake well immediately before using. Avoid contaminating the tip with material from the ear, fingers, or other sources. Protect from light. If rash or allergic reaction occurs, discontinue use immediately and contact your physician. It is very important to use the ear drops for as long as the doctor has instructed, **even if the symptoms improve**. Discard unused portion after therapy is completed. **Acute Otitis Media in pediatric patients with tympanostomy tubes:** Prior to administration of CIPRODEX® Otic in patients (6 months and older) with acute otitis media through tympanostomy tubes, the solution should be warmed by holding the bottle in the hand for one to two minutes to avoid dizziness which may result from the instillation of a cold solution. The patient should lie with the affected ear upward, and then the drops should be instilled. The tragus should then be pumped 5 times by pushing inward to facilitate penetration of the drops into the middle ear. This position should be maintained for 60 seconds. Repeat, if necessary, for the opposite ear (see **DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION**). **Acute Otitis Externa:** Prior to administration of CIPRODEX® Otic in patients with acute otitis externa, the solution should be warmed by holding the bottle in the hand for one to two minutes to avoid dizziness which may result from the instillation of a cold solution. The patient should lie with the affected ear upward, and then the drops should be instilled. This position should be maintained for 60 seconds to facilitate penetration of the drops into the ear canal. Repeat, if necessary, for the opposite ear (see **DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION**).

Drug Interactions: Specific drug interaction studies have not been conducted with CIPRODEX® Otic. **Carcinogenesis, Mutagenesis, Impairment of Fertility:** Long-term carcinogenicity studies in mice and rats have been completed for ciprofloxacin. After daily oral doses of 750 mg/kg (mice) and 250 mg/kg (rats) were administered for up to 2 years, there was no evidence that ciprofloxacin had any carcinogenic or tumorigenic effects in these species. No long term studies of CIPRODEX® Otic have been performed to evaluate carcinogenic potential. Eight *in vitro* mutagenicity tests have been conducted with ciprofloxacin, and the test results are listed below: *Salmonella*/Microsome Test (Negative), *E. coli* DNA Repair Assay (Negative), Mouse Lymphoma Cell Forward Mutation Assay (Positive), Chinese Hamster V79 Cell HGPRT Test (Negative), Syrian Hamster Embryo Cell Transformation Assay (Negative), *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* Point Mutation Assay (Negative), *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* Mitotic Crossover and Gene Conversion Assay (Negative), Rat Hepatocyte DNA Repair Assay (Positive). Thus, 2 of the 8 tests were positive, but results of the following 3 *in vivo* test systems gave negative results: Rat Hepatocyte DNA Repair Assay, Micronucleus Test (Mice), Dominant Lethal Test (Mice). Fertility studies performed in rats at oral doses of ciprofloxacin up to 100 mg/kg/day revealed no evidence of impairment. This would be over 100 times the maximum recommended clinical dose of ototoxic ciprofloxacin based upon body surface area, assuming total absorption of ciprofloxacin from the ear of a patient treated with CIPRODEX® Otic twice per day according to label directions. Long term studies have not been performed to evaluate the carcinogenic potential of topical otic dexamethasone. Dexamethasone has been tested for *in vitro* and *in vivo* genotoxic potential and shown to be positive in the following assays: chromosomal aberrations, sister-chromatid exchange in human lymphocytes and micronuclei and sister-chromatid exchanges in mouse bone marrow. However, the Ames/Salmonella assay, both with and without S9 mix, did not show any increase in His+ revertants. The effect of dexamethasone on fertility has not been investigated following topical otic application. However, the lowest toxic dose of dexamethasone identified following topical dermal application was 1.802 mg/kg in a 26-week study in male rats and resulted in changes to the testes, epididymis, sperm duct, prostate, seminal vesicle, Cowper's gland and accessory glands. The relevance of this study for short term topical otic use is unknown.

Pregnancy
Teratogenic Effects. Pregnancy Category C: Reproduction studies have been performed in rats and mice using oral doses of up to 100 mg/kg and IV doses up to 30 mg/kg and have revealed no evidence of harm to the fetus as a result of ciprofloxacin. In rabbits, ciprofloxacin (30 and 100 mg/kg orally) produced gastrointestinal disturbances resulting in maternal weight loss and an increased incidence of abortion, but no teratogenicity was observed at either dose. After intravenous administration of doses up to 20 mg/kg, no maternal toxicity was produced in the rabbit, and no embryotoxicity or teratogenicity was observed. Corticosteroids are generally teratogenic in laboratory animals when administered systemically at relatively low dosage levels. The more potent corticosteroids have been shown to be teratogenic after dermal application in laboratory animals. Animal reproduction studies have not been conducted with CIPRODEX® Otic. No adequate and well controlled studies have been performed in pregnant women. Caution should be exercised when CIPRODEX® Otic is used by a pregnant woman.
Nursing Mothers: Ciprofloxacin and corticosteroids, as a class, appear in milk following oral administration. Dexamethasone in breast milk could suppress growth, interfere with endogenous corticosteroid production, or cause other untoward effects. It is not known whether topical otic administration of ciprofloxacin or dexamethasone could result in sufficient systemic absorption to produce detectable quantities in human milk. Because of the potential for unwanted effects in nursing infants, a decision should be made whether to discontinue nursing or to discontinue the drug, taking into account the importance of the drug to the mother.
Pediatric Use: The safety and efficacy of CIPRODEX® Otic have been established in pediatric patients 6 months and older (937 patients) in adequate and well-controlled clinical trials. Although no data are available on patients less than age 6 months, there are no known safety concerns or differences in the disease process in this population that would preclude use of this product. (See **DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION**.) No clinically relevant changes in hearing function were observed in 69 pediatric patients (age 4 to 12 years) treated with CIPRODEX® Otic and tested for audiometric parameters.

ADVERSE REACTIONS
In Phases II and III clinical trials, a total of 937 patients were treated with CIPRODEX® Otic. This included 400 patients with acute otitis media with tympanostomy tubes and 537 patients with acute otitis externa. The reported treatment-related adverse events are listed below:

Acute Otitis Media in pediatric patients with tympanostomy tubes: The following treatment-related adverse events occurred in 0.5% or more of the patients with non-intact tympanic membranes.

Adverse Event	Incidence (N=400)
Ear discomfort	3.0%
Ear pain	2.3%
Ear precipitate (residue)	0.5%
Irritability	0.5%
Taste perversion	0.5%

The following treatment-related adverse events were each reported in a single patient: tympanostomy tube blockage; ear pruritus; tinnitus; oral moniliasis; crying; dizziness; and erythema. **Acute Otitis Externa:** The following treatment-related adverse events occurred in 0.4% or more of the patients with intact tympanic membranes.

Adverse Event	Incidence (N=537)
Ear pruritus	1.5%
Ear debris	0.6%
Superimposed ear infection	0.6%
Ear congestion	0.4%
Ear pain	0.4%
Erythema	0.4%

The following treatment-related adverse events were each reported in a single patient: ear discomfort; decreased hearing; and ear disorder (tingling).

DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION
CIPRODEX® OTIC SHOULD BE SHAKEN WELL IMMEDIATELY BEFORE USE
CIPRODEX® Otic contains 3 mg/mL (3000 µg/mL) ciprofloxacin and 1 mg/mL dexamethasone.

Acute Otitis Media in pediatric patients with tympanostomy tubes: The recommended dosage regimen for the treatment of acute otitis media in pediatric patients (age 6 months and older) through tympanostomy tubes is: Four drops (0.14 mL, 0.42 mg ciprofloxacin, 0.14 mg dexamethasone) instilled into the affected ear twice daily for seven days. The solution should be warmed by holding the bottle in the hand for one or two minutes to avoid dizziness, which may result from the instillation of a cold solution. The patient should lie with the affected ear upward, and then the drops should be pumped 5 times by pushing inward to facilitate penetration of the drops into the middle ear. This position should be maintained for 60 seconds. Repeat, if necessary, for the opposite ear. Discard unused portion after therapy is completed. **Acute Otitis Externa:** The recommended dosage regimen for the treatment of acute otitis externa is: For patients (age 6 months and older): Four drops (0.14 mL, 0.42 mg ciprofloxacin, 0.14 mg dexamethasone) instilled into the affected ear twice daily for seven days. The solution should be warmed by holding the bottle in the hand for one or two minutes to avoid dizziness, which may result from the instillation of a cold solution. The patient should lie with the affected ear upward, and then the drops should be instilled. This position should be maintained for 60 seconds to facilitate penetration of the drops into the ear canal. Repeat, if necessary, for the opposite ear. Discard unused portion after therapy is completed.

HOW SUPPLIED
CIPRODEX® (ciprofloxacin 0.3% and dexamethasone 0.1%) Sterile Otic Suspension is supplied as follows: 5 mL fill and 7.5 mL fill in a DROP-TAINER® system. The DROP-TAINER® system consists of a natural polyethylene bottle and natural plug, with a white polypropylene closure. Tamper evidence is provided with a shrink band around the closure and neck area of the package. NDC 0065-8533-01, 5 mL fill; NDC 0065-8533-02, 7.5 mL fill. **Storage:** Store at controlled room temperature, 15°C to 30°C (59°F to 86°F). Avoid freezing. Protect from light.

Clinical Studies: In a randomized, multicenter, controlled clinical trial, CIPRODEX® Otic dosed 2 times per day for 7 days demonstrated clinical cures in the per protocol analysis in 86% of AOMT patients compared to 79% for ofloxacin solution, 0.3%, dosed 2 times per day for 10 days. Among culture positive patients, clinical cures were 90% for CIPRODEX® Otic compared to 79% for ofloxacin solution, 0.3%. Microbiological eradication rates for these patients in the same clinical trial were 91% for CIPRODEX® Otic compared to 82% for ofloxacin solution, 0.3%. In 2 randomized multicenter, controlled clinical trials, CIPRODEX® Otic dosed 2 times per day for 7 days demonstrated clinical cures in 87% and 94% of per protocol evaluable AOE patients, respectively, compared to 84% and 89%, respectively, for otic suspension containing neomycin 0.35%, polymyxin B 10,000 IU/mL, and hydrocortisone 1.0% (neo/poly/Hc). Among culture positive patients clinical cures were 86% and 92% for CIPRODEX® Otic compared to 84% and 89%, respectively, for neo/poly/Hc. Microbiological eradication rates for these patients in the same clinical trials were 86% and 92% for CIPRODEX® Otic compared to 85% and 85%, respectively, for neo/poly/Hc.

References:
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