

# Tegaserod Helps IBS Patients' Work Attendance

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HONOLULU — The use of tegaserod in women with constipation-predominant irritable bowel syndrome resulted in improved work attendance and productivity in a large, open-label, naturalistic study designed to reflect actual clinical practice, Dr. Nigel Flook reported at the annual meeting of the American College of Gastroenterology.

The findings, from the observational Zelnorm Advancing Quality of life (ZAQ) study, have important implications for both quality of life and health economics. An earlier study showed that persons with IBS miss three times as many work days as colleagues without IBS, wrote Dr. Flook of the University of Alberta, Edmonton.

He reported on 2,381 women with abdominal pain and discomfort, bloating, and constipation who participated in the Novartis-sponsored ZAQ study. Three-fourths

were at least 40 years old; one-fourth were older than 60. Overall, 78% reported at least a 2-year history of IBS symptoms, and 30% said they'd had IBS for more than 10 years.

A caveat for the ZAQ data concerns the possibility of selection bias. Only 20% of participants finished by returning the week-12 questionnaires, Dr. Flook said; data were collected at baseline and 12 weeks.

Baseline use of prescription and over-the-counter medications to treat GI symptoms was extremely common: 28% of partici-

pants were taking more than one prescription drug, and 40% were on more than one OTC drug for their IBS symptoms.

All participants were placed on 6 mg b.i.d. of tegaserod, an SSRI agonist that acts as a promotility agent and is the first drug approved for IBS.

Self-reported questionnaire data after 12 weeks' tegaserod treatment showed that 27% of patients missed fewer days at work or school, though 7% missed more days, compared with baseline. ■

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**Please see brief summary of prescribing information on adjacent pages.**

**Reference:** 1. Clarebout G, Leclercq R. Fluorescence assay for studying the ability of macrolides to induce production of ribosomal methylase. *Antimicrob Agents Chemother.* 2002;46:2269-2272.