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Title: Can we really relieve the withdrawal syndrome with pharmacotherapy in smoking cessation?

Dr. Zeynep 2093 Pinar Önen zponen@yahoo.com MD ¹, Dr. Elif 2094 Sen elifsen2001@yahoo.com MD ¹, Dr. Banu 2095 Eris Gülbay banugulbay@gmail.com MD ¹, Dr. Pinar 2096 Akin Kabalak pinarakinn@yahoo.com MD ¹, Prof. Dr Öznur 2097 Akkoca Yildiz akkoca@medicine.ankara.edu.tr MD ¹, Prof. Dr Turan 2098 Acican acican@medicine.ankara.edu.tr MD ¹, Prof. Dr Sevgi 2099 Saryal saryal@medicine.ankara.edu.tr MD ¹ and Prof. Dr Gülseren 2100 Karabiyikoglu kbiyikog@medicine.ankara.edu.tr MD ¹. ¹ Chest Disease, Ankara University School of Medicine, Ankara, Turkey, 06590 .

Body: Primary goal of the smoking cessation treatment protocols are to relieve the withdrawal symptoms. However the exact effectiveness at the high tobacco dependence patients considering the smoking cessation treatment is still an unknown problem. Aim: To evaluate the prevalence of withdrawal symptoms during smoking cessation treatment and compare the effectiveness between the different treatment modalities in high tobacco dependence patients. Methods: From a total number of 435 active smokers (mean age of 44±11) with high tobacco dependence rates were prospectively evaluated between 2004 and 2010. Each patient answers the same questionnaire including smoking status and medical background. Nicotine dependence and CO levels were evaluated. Smoking cessation program was administered individually according to the guidelines and all of the patients were followed at least 1 year. Results: The continuous abstinence following therapy at the end of first year was 50,5%. Withdrawal syndrome during smoking cessation treatment developed at 89% of behavioral treatment without pharmacotherapy, 80% of nicotine replacement, 88% of bupropion and 94% of varenicline treatments. Irritability is the main symptom in all treatment protocols (more than 50% in each group) and somnolence is the distinctive symptom for the bupropion treatment (p=0.001). Hunger was not the predominant withdrawal symptom in the varenicline treatment. Conclusion: According to our results, even one year smoking cessation success is high in our cohort the main goal of the smoking cessation protocols is not achieved. Pharmacotherapy is not superior to pure behavioral treatment to relieve the withdrawal syndromes.