

## **Chorionic gonadotropin initial doses for intractable pain**

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### **Purpose**

Human chorionic gonadotropin (HCG) has receptors throughout the central nervous system, and animal studies show that it has healing capability with spine transection. Preliminary trials in humans show that HCG may, in severe intractable pain cases, ameliorate pain, reduce opioid dosages, and produce pain free hours. This study was done to determine a starting dose from which to titrate upward.

### **Method**

Subjects were 22 adult intractable pain patients maintained on daily opioids and who claimed constant pain except when asleep. All had pain for over 5 years and were assumed to have central pain as they had all failed interventions and treatments directed at peripheral pain sites. Patients were started on 125 units per milliliter of HCG given 3 times a week by sublingual drops or subcutaneous injections. Over a 3 month period patients were instructed to progressively increase frequency and dosages until they required a lesser opioid dosage, perceived less pain, and experienced increased energy.

### **Results**

Of the 22 subjects, 16 (72.7%) reached the 3 endpoints and reported a decrease in opioid dosage, lesser pain, and more energy. The effective, minimal sublingual dosage was 250 units a day (1750 units a week) or 500 units subcutaneously 3 times a week, (1500 units a week). The minimal time to achieve the 3 endpoints was two weeks. Six (6) patients reported no effects of HCG. Maximal dosage ranged up to 3500 units a week.

### **Conclusions**

There are now large numbers of intractable pain patients who are humanely maintained on opioids for symptomatic and palliative care. They apparently have central pain as they do not respond to standard, peripheral interventions and treatments. What is needed are central pain treatment agents that will permanently reduce pain and lower the requirement for opioids. A major clinical obstacle in the use of HCG is that its effective dosage is unknown, and this investigation provides an initial starting dosage. Open trials of HCG to date, although not effective in all intractable pain patients, call for further study.