

DANGERS OF PHARMACEUTICAL SUBSTITUTES FOR NICOTINE

Pharmacotherapy

Bupropion (aka Wellbutrin, Zyban) have been approved for treatment of tobacco addiction. Used alone or in combination with other drugs it has been shown to increase quit rates when compared to placebo, however research results tend to have been primarily provided by the drug manufacturers and the overall health costs of quitting this way are not addressed, nor is the definition of 'quitting'.

Wellbutrin is prescribed as an Anti-Depressant, which suggests they realize there is an underlying emotional reason for the addiction....something hypnotherapists have claimed all along is the reason for the addiction in the first place! Thus the drug *suppresses* the symptoms of sadness and depression which reduces the smoker's need to cope with the negative emotional feelings through nicotine. In effect, the smoker trades the nicotine for this more expensive drug in order to cope with his emotional issues. The drug must be continued for up to 6 months to maintain abstinence. Studies do not report on what substitute habits emerged in those who stopped smoking nor how long abstinence is. <http://www.side-effects.ca/wellbutrin-side-effects.php> provides an endless list of serious side-effects .

Nortriptyline and Clonidine have also been found to be beneficial (*not clear by whom other than the drug manufacturer*), but have not been approved by the FDA for the indication of smoking cessation. Catalogue of side effects for the tricyclic antidepressant Nortriptyline - sold under the brand names Pamelor, Aventyl and others - which is sometimes used in the treatment of bipolar disorder and other mood disorders and mental illnesses can be accessed at http://bipolar.about.com/cs/sfx/a/sfx_nortriptyl.htm Withdrawing from this drug sounds worse by far than withdrawing from nicotine.

Clonidine, a high blood pressure medication is no picnic either, with a long list of side-effects including depression and weight-gain. Very careful withdrawal from this drug is necessary. In other words, you trade one drug dependency for another. For more vital information on this drug 'therapy' see:

http://chealth.canoe.ca/drug_info_details.asp?channel_id=0&relation_id=0&brand_name_id=701&page_no=1#Indication

The point is that the 'pharmaceutical therapies' appear to be far worse for the individual than the nicotine!

Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT)

Nicotine is the substance in tobacco known to cause dependence. Nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) can reduce the severity of withdrawal symptoms and cravings in patients abstaining from tobacco and has been shown to double quit rates compared to placebo (again, self-reporting by the drug manufacturers and with no indication that the quit rates are any more than temporary after NRT). NRT can potentially reduce exposure to carbon monoxide, carcinogens, and the more than 4000 other compounds found in tobacco smoke.

Pure nicotine delivered in proper doses is considered safe (?) and effective in treating patients with tobacco addiction and in patients with stable cardiovascular diseases. However when you read the damages and harmful effects of nicotine in the body, you wonder how pure doses of the stuff can possibly be deemed safe. It is unclear how this can be called therapy when one is removing nicotine with one hand and giving it back in more pure and potent form with the other.

Bottom line is that you remain addicted to nicotine which is what you were enslaved by in the first place! And instead of spending your hard-earned dollars on cigarettes you spend it on a drug, patch or gum, all of which have immediate side-effects and potentially very damaging long-term side-effects.

Five delivery systems are available for NRT:

- Nicotine transdermal patches - Nicoderm CQ Patch, Habitrol Transdermal System, Nicotrol Patch
- Nicotine chewing gum - Nicotine Polacrilex, Nicorette Gum
- Nicotine inhalers - Nicotrol Inhaler
- Nicotine nasal spray - Nicotrol Nasal Spray
- Nicotine lozenge - Nicotine Polacrilex

Transdermal Nicotine Systems (patch):

Transdermal nicotine systems are available over the counter and deliver a fixed dose of the drug nicotine over 16 to 24 hours. Side effects include: Headache, Insomnia, Nightmares, Nausea, Dizziness, Blurred vision, Redness and pruritus at the site of the patch. The dose is usually reduced every 4 to 6 weeks. You are trading nicotine for nicotine without smoke.

Nicotine Polacrilex (nicotine gum)

Nicotine gum was the first NRT product approved by the FDA and is available over the counter. It is basically a type of chewing gum, but instead of sweeteners, it delivers nicotine to the body. The higher dose of nicotine is usually required initially, so if you were only smoking half a cigarette or a cigarette once a day, you are increasing instead of decreasing the dose of nicotine your body is getting. When nicotine cravings are felt, the gum is chewed until a tingling sensation in the mouth is noted, after which the gum is "parked" between the cheek and gum until the cravings return, then the process is repeated.

The nicotine is absorbed by the tissues in the mouth and from there, it enters the bloodstream. It has been found that in many cases, the users of the gum end up getting addicted to it. Apart from the usual harmful effects of nicotine, the gum has also been found to cause frequent hiccups in its users. It has been related to an apparent

constriction of the throat muscles. If that wasn't enough, prolonged use of nicotine gum might result in gum diseases. This is because nicotine constricts blood vessels of the gums, thus resulting in inadequate blood flow and susceptibility to gum disease.

We are still not clear on how substituting one addiction for another is therapy....

Nicotine Nasal Spray

Nicotine nasal spray (Nicotrol NS®) is an aqueous solution of nicotine delivering approximately 0.5 mg of nicotine to the nasal mucosa with each spray. Nasal irritation is common, affecting 80% to 90% of users. Other side effects include sneezing, lacrimation (tearing) and cough. Clinical trials have shown favorable quit rates, but the dependence and abuse potential is greater when compared to other NRT products (but still lower than cigarettes). Thus, you are still getting your nicotine fix, but at the higher cost because drugs are more expensive than cigarettes and you are still hooked! Furthermore the harmful effects of nicotine on the body continue.

Nicotine Inhaler

The Nicotrol® Inhaler (nicotine inhalation system) consists of a mouthpiece and plastic cartridges, each containing 10 mg of nicotine. One cartridge is inserted into the mouthpiece, and nicotine is released by inhaling. The majority of the nicotine is deposited in the oral mucosa, and maximum blood levels are achieved more slowly when compared to the nasal spray or cigarettes. The most common side effects are cough and irritation of the mouth and throat. Of course the harmful effects of nicotine on the body are still evident and maximized.

Combining NRT Systems

Apparently none of the NRT systems are as effective as the cigarette in delivering nicotine to the brain. Heavily addicted patients may not achieve adequate blood levels using a single NRT system. Combining NRT products has been shown to be effective and safe (by drug manufacturers). The combination of trans-dermal nicotine patches with nicotine gum provides steady state levels of nicotine and a jolt of nicotine to treat break-through cravings. Compliance with NRT products is highest with the nicotine patch and lowest with the nicotine inhaler. Combining systems really only means you are combining the harmful effects of the 'drug therapy'.