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A DOUBLE-BLIND STUDY OF THE EFFECTS OF LEVODOPA IN PARKINSON'S DISEASE

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There is considerable evidence suggesting that the symptoms of parkinsonism are related to a depletion of striatal dopamine.[1-4] Since oral dopamine does not cross the blood-brain barrier, efforts have focused on the systemic administration of L-dopa, dopamine's immediate precursor, which appears to pass through the barrier. Recent studies indicate that L-dopa is rapidly becoming the treatment of choice in parkinsonism.[5-8] In the present study, a double-blind therapeutic trial has been used in the treatment of Parkinson's syndrome. The purpose of the study is to compare L-dopa to a conventional antiparkinsonian medication (procyclidine hydrochloride) and a placebo (lactose). Additionally, this study has been designed to determine whether a two- to six-week period is an adequate length of time to see the benefits of L-dopa therapy in parkinsonian patients receiving no other medication. It was also designed so that a patient could continue to take any drug that brought about significant improvement; in such cases, he was not required to try the other drugs in the study.

References can be found in the online article.

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Comment from Ryan J. Uitti, MD, FAAN, Associate Editor: *This was a landmark study documenting the monumental effects of the best treatment for the most common movement disorder.*

A double-blind study of the effects of levodopa in Parkinson's disease

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