



Health News And Notes

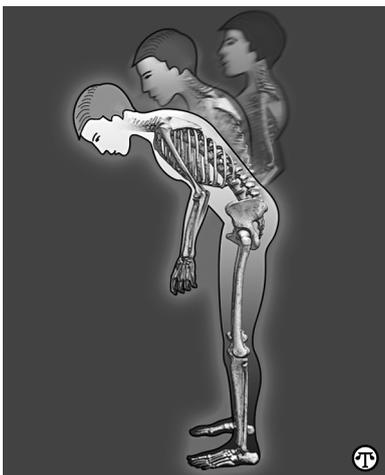
New Hope For Patients With Ankylosing Spondylitis, A Painful Inflammatory Condition Of The Spine

(NAPSA)—Ankylosing spondylitis (AS) may be difficult to pronounce, but what's even more difficult for patients living with this debilitating disease is the back pain, stiffness and fatigue associated with this little known but serious condition. AS is a chronic, inflammatory, progressive form of arthritis, which primarily affects the joints and ligaments of the spine that normally enable a person's back to move and bend. AS causes severe back pain and damages the joints of the spine.

AS may affect between 300,000 and one million people in the U.S. and often goes undiagnosed because it is mistaken for ordinary back pain. In some advanced cases, inflammation can cause the spine to fuse, sometimes creating a stooped-over posture. AS also can cause inflammation, pain and stiffness in other areas of the body, such as the shoulders, hips, ankles and jaw.

The severity of AS varies, and not all patients experience the extreme symptoms of the condition. Some patients will have only intermittent discomfort, while others will experience prolonged pain and stiffness. AS is frequently characterized by acute pain flare-ups, followed by brief periods of remission.

"Living with the pain and



fatigue of AS can be quite a challenge at times," said Brian Mackenzie, a 31-year-old with AS. "Some days I feel like I can tackle the world, while on other days it hurts just to think about getting out of bed."

Due to the pain and disability associated with AS, the condition can have a significant impact on a person's ability to work and participate in everyday activities. Basic tasks such as walking, sitting and driving a car can be challenging.

In the past, some people with AS have had difficulty finding a therapy that effectively controls their inflammation and its effects. Recently, REMICADE® (influx-

imab), a product that has been used successfully to treat patients with Crohn's disease and rheumatoid arthritis, has been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for reducing the signs and symptoms in patients with active AS.

"As a physician, it is exciting to see the approval of a therapy that has been demonstrated to improve patients' symptoms over time," said Dr. Christopher Ritchlin, Associate Professor of Medicine, University of Rochester Medical Center. "This is particularly important given the impact of pain and stiffness on daily activities and patients' health-related quality of life."

REMICADE works by inactivating a substance called TNF-alpha, a chemical normally released by the body's immune system. Excess amounts of TNF-alpha can trigger the inflammation associated with pain, stiffness and joint involvement in AS.

In clinical trials, AS patients treated with REMICADE achieved significant improvement in signs and symptoms associated with their disease, including reduced spinal pain and stiffness and increased ability to function. For more information about AS and REMICADE, visit www.remicade.com.

Important Information

Many people with heart failure should not take REMICADE; so prior to treatment you should discuss any heart condition with your doctor. Tell your doctor right away if you develop new or worsening symptoms of heart failure (such as shortness of breath or swelling of your ankles or feet).

There are reports of serious infections, including tuberculosis (TB), sepsis and pneumonia. Some of these infections have been fatal. Tell your doctor if you have had recent or past exposure to people with TB. Your doctor will evaluate you for TB and perform a skin test. If you have latent (inactive) TB, your doctor should begin TB treatment before you start REMICADE. REMICADE can lower your ability to fight infections, so if you are prone to or have a history of infections, or develop any signs of an infection such as fever, fatigue, cough, or the flu while taking REMICADE, tell your doctor right away. Also tell your doctor if you have lived in a region where histoplasmosis or coccidioidomycosis is common.

There have been rare cases of serious liver injury in people taking REMICADE, some fatal. Contact your doctor immediately if you develop symptoms such as jaundice (yellow skin and eyes), dark brown urine, right-sided abdominal pain, fever, or severe fatigue.

Blood disorders have been reported, some fatal. Tell your doctor if you develop possible signs of blood disorders such as persistent fever, bruising, bleeding, or paleness while taking REMICADE. Nervous system disorders have also been reported. Tell your doctor if you have or have had a disease that affects the nervous system, or if you experience any numbness, weakness, tingling, or visual disturbances while taking REMICADE. Reports of lymphoma (a type of cancer) in patients on REMICADE and other TNF blockers are rare but occur more often than in the general population. Tell your doctor if you have or have had cancer.

Serious infusion reactions have been reported with REMICADE, including hives, difficulty breathing, and low blood pressure. Reactions have occurred during or after infusions. In clinical studies, some people experienced the following common side effects: respiratory infections (that may include sinus infections and sore throat), coughing, and stomach pain or mild reactions to infusion such as rash or itchy skin. Please read important information about REMICADE, including full U.S. prescribing information, at www.remicade.com.