et al,² in their paper evaluating the Copper 7, reported one perforation in 1156 insertions.

These cases are presented to draw attention to the possibility of migration of copper IUCDs and to the necessity for early laparotomy in all cases of intra-abdominal copper-bearing IUCDs. Unless the operation is performed soon after the entry of the copper device into the peritoneal cavity, laparotomy, not laparoscopy, will be needed because of the tendency for dense adhesions to form.

¹ Cederqvist, L. L., and Fuchs, F, *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*, 1974, **119**, 854.

² Newton, J, et al, *British Medical Journal*, 1974, **2**, 447.

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Hallam Hospital, West Bromwich, West Midlands B71 4HJ

P J M WATNEY, MD, MRCOG, consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist

Which anti-inflammatory drugs in rheumatoid arthritis?

The choice of non-steroidal analgesic anti-inflammatory drugs for patients with rheumatoid arthritis is now bewildering. Many of these drugs differ only slightly from each other in their pharmacological properties, yet the response of individual patients to each may be very different, for both efficacy and side effects. Two approaches exist for the medical practitioner: to stick regardless to a few well-known drugs or to parade the patient through a sequence of drugs, often with a minimum of documentation, until the best is found. Faced with patients who have tried several with little apparent effect, I

have evolved a return to rational treatment: the mini-pack, multi-drug patient-assessed clinical trial.

Methods and results

Any patient with persistent inflammatory joint disease relatively unresponsive to non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs is given a single prescription. At the pharmacy four different drugs are issued, with standard instructions on each bottle, together with a combined instruction and self-assessment sheet. A five-day supply of each drug is given, and on the 21st day the patient returns to outpatients or to his general practitioner for a further prescription of the best drug. Should one be ineffective or produce side effects the patient is instructed to move on to the next drug.

Some 50 patients have now completed this procedure with no failures; both doctors and patients have found the system satisfactory.

Comment

No problems have occurred with the use of the self-assessment sheet, and remarkably, several patients have found that a previously discarded drug is in fact effective. The standard of patient recording has been high in patients of varying intelligence and education. Even those with minimal command of English have coped well. The completed assessment is filed in the hospital notes for future reference.

The choice of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs and dosage is purely personal, and others may easily be substituted. The principle is adaptable to various specialties, and may be adapted for use in general practice.

I thank the pharmacies of Northwick Park and Mount Vernon Hospitals for their co-operation.

(Accepted 10 April 1978)

Northwick Park Hospital, Harrow, and Mount Vernon Hospital, Northwood, Middlesex

J M GUMPEL, BM, MRCP, consultant physician

PATIENT OBSERVATION FORM (MOUNT VERNON)

Name COHENMAN, J. W.
Hospital No:

Date of 1st visit 29.11.77
Date of 2nd visit 20.12.77

Medication	Soluble aspirin - 300mg					Indomethacin - 25mg					Naproxen - 250mg					Ketoprofen - 50mg					None
	THREE to be taken at breakfast, lunch, tea and dinner in water EC aspirin - 325mg THREE to be taken at bedtime (with a drink and biscuit)					ONE to be taken at breakfast, lunch, and dinner, and THREE or FOUR at bedtime (with a drink and biscuit)					ONE to be taken at breakfast and ONE at night with a drink and biscuit					ONE to be taken three times a day after meals					
Day	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Duration of morning stiffness	2 HRS	2 HRS	2 HRS	2 HRS	3 HRS	2 HRS	0	1 HR	2 HRS	1/2 HR	2 HRS	2 HRS	1 HR	1 HR	1 HR	1/2 HR	1/2 HR	1/2 HR	1/2 HR	1/2 HR	
Pain during day (please tick appropriate box)																					
None																					
Mild								✓	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Moderate	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓					✓	✓						
Severe					✓						✓	✓									
Do these tablets/capsules suit you?	Yes					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
No	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						✓	✓	✓	✓							
Any comments?																					

Example of self-assessment form completed by patient.