

What is already known on this topic

Acute gouty arthritis is an extremely painful inflammatory arthritis resulting from deposition of monosodium urate in the affected joint space

The most common treatment is a non-selective non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug, with indometacin being the standard treatment

Current treatment modalities are based on limited, small studies

What this study adds

Etoricoxib, a cyclo-oxygenase-2 selective inhibitor, has comparable efficacy to indometacin in the treatment of acute gouty arthritis

Etoricoxib provides rapid relief of pain and effectively treats the inflammation of acute gout; it is an effective treatment alternative to indometacin

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A memorable patient By any other name

An elderly lady—"old" to me at the time—was pushed into my consulting room in a wheelchair by a caring relative, whom I thanked for her help. The patient had had diabetes for many years, an amputation of one leg, and a recent cardiac infarct. Unfortunately, she also had a severe visual handicap (no patient is ever "blind," at least in their hearing) because of advanced diabetic retinopathy. At the end of the consultation, I held the patient's hand and sympathetically explained that I was very sorry not to be able to offer any treatment for her

reduced vision and that it was due to the general disease, diabetes, which she had. Whereupon she reared up as well as she could, agitated, and exclaimed, "I haven't got a disease, have I, doctor?"

Thereafter, I only ever spoke of a condition or similar word to a patient or relative. And, of course, no one should ever do double blind trials, only double masked ones.

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