

Over-the-Counter Oxytrol for the Treatment of Overactive Bladder in Women

On January 25, 2013, the FDA approved the first over-the-counter medication, Oxytrol, for the treatment of overactive bladder in women ages 18 and older. This medication remains prescription only for the treatment of overactive bladder in men. Oxytrol's active ingredient is oxybutynin, which belongs to a class of medications called anticholinergics or antispasmodics. Oxybutynin is used to treat neurogenic bladder (urgency, frequency, leakage, urge incontinence, and dysuria). There is also an extended release formulation of this medication that is used to treat symptoms associated with detrusor overactivity due to neurological conditions. This new over-the-counter product is a transdermal patch that is applied to the skin once every four days and delivers 3.9mg of oxybutynin each day. Common transdermal oxybutynin side effects include a reaction at the application site and pruritus. The side effects reported during clinical studies of Oxytrol were mild and included skin irritation where the patch was applied, dry mouth, and constipation, all of which are common anticholinergic side effects. Oxytrol is marketed by Merck, Whitehouse Station, NJ.

As the bladder fills, nerve signals go to the brain. In order to urinate, these nerve signals cause the pelvic floor muscles and muscles of the urethra to relax, leading to the bladder muscles tightening and releasing the urine. Overactive bladder can occur from the involuntary contraction of the bladder muscles or from any problem with kidney function or nerve signals. People with neurologic disease or advancing age are at a higher risk of developing overactive bladder. This condition can affect a person's quality of life and cause emotional distress and sleep disturbances, along with social, sexual, and professional problems. Overactive bladder with urinary incontinence is more common in women than men. About 8.7% of women between the ages of 40-44 have overactive bladder. The prevalence continues to increase and about 31.3% of women 75 years of age and older are affected. Many women have not sought prescription treatment for overactive bladder; therefore, with Oxytrol more women may get the relief they need.

References:

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