

VISCOSUPPLEMENTATION FOR THE TREATMENT OF OSTEOARTHRITIS OF THE KNEE

Bellamy Nicholas, Campbell Jane, Welch Vivian, Gee Travis L, Bourne Robert, Wells George A

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Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, Issue 08, 2011 (Status in this issue: EDITED (NO CHANGE TO CONCLUSIONS))

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DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD005321.pub2

This review should be cited as: Bellamy Nicholas, Campbell Jane, Welch Vivian, Gee Travis L, Bourne Robert, Wells George A.

Viscosupplementation for the treatment of osteoarthritis of the knee. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews. In: *The Cochrane Library*, Issue 08, Art. No. CD005321. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD005321.pub2

ABSTRACT

Background

Osteoarthritis (OA) is the most prevalent chronic joint disorder worldwide and is associated with significant pain and disability.

Objective

To assess the effects of viscosupplementation in the treatment of OA of the knee. The products were hyaluronan and hylan derivatives (Adant, Arthrum H, Artz (Artzal, Supartz), BioHy (Arthrease, Euflexxa, Nuflexxa), Durolane, Fermathron, Go-On, Hyalgan, Hylan G-F 20 (Synvisc Hylan G-F 20), Hyruan, NRD-101 (Suvenyl), Orthovisc, Ostenil, Replasyn, SLM-10, Suplasyn, Synject and Zeel compositum).

Criteria for considering studies for this review

MEDLINE (up to January (week 1) 2006 for update), EMBASE, PREMEDLINE, Current Contents up to July 2003, and the Cochrane Central Register of Controlled Trials (CENTRAL) were searched. Specialised journals and reference lists of identified randomised controlled trials (RCTs) and pertinent review articles up to December 2005 were handsearched.

Selection criteria

RCTs of viscosupplementation for the treatment of people with a diagnosis of OA of the knee were eligible. Single and double-blinded studies, placebo-based and comparative studies were eligible. At least one of the four OMERACT III core set outcome measures had to be reported (Bellamy 1997).

Data collection and analysis

Each trial was assessed independently by two reviewers for its methodological quality using a validated tool. All data were extracted by one reviewer and verified by a second reviewer. Continuous outcome measures were analysed as weighted mean differences (WMD) with 95% confidence intervals (CI). However, where different scales were used to measure the same outcome, standardized mean differences (SMD) were used. Dichotomous outcomes were analyzed by relative risk (RR).

Main results

Seventy-six trials with a median quality score of 3 (range 1 to 5) were identified. Follow-up periods varied between day of last injection and eighteen months. Forty trials included comparisons of hyaluronan/hylan and placebo (saline or arthrocentesis), ten trials included comparisons of intra-articular (IA) corticosteroids, six trials included comparisons of nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), three trials included comparisons of physical therapy, two trials included comparisons of exercise, two trials included comparisons of arthroscopy, two trials included comparisons of conventional treatment, and fifteen trials included comparisons of other hyaluronans/hylan. The pooled analyses of the effects of viscosupplements against 'placebo' controls

generally supported the efficacy of this class of intervention. In these same analyses, differential efficacy effects were observed for different products on different variables and at different timepoints. Of note is the 5 to 13 week post injection period which showed a percent improvement from baseline of 28 to 54% for pain and 9 to 32% for function. In general, comparable efficacy was noted against NSAIDs and longer-term benefits were noted in comparisons against IA corticosteroids. In general, few adverse events were reported in the hyaluronan/hylan trials included in these analyses.

Authors' conclusions

Based on the aforementioned analyses, viscosupplementation is an effective treatment for OA of the knee with beneficial effects: on pain, function and patient global assessment; and at different post injection periods but especially at the 5 to 13 week post injection period. It is of note that the magnitude of the clinical effect, as expressed by the WMD and standardised mean difference (SMD) from the RevMan 4.2 output, is different for different products, comparisons, timepoints, variables and trial designs. However, there are few randomised head-to-head comparisons of different viscosupplements and readers should be cautious, therefore, in drawing conclusions regarding the relative value of different products. The clinical effect for some products, against placebo, on some variables at some timepoints is in the moderate to large effect-size range. Readers should refer to relevant tables to review specific detail given the heterogeneity in effects across the product class and some discrepancies observed between the RevMan 4.2 analyses and the original publications. Overall, the analyses performed are positive for the HA class and particularly positive for some products with respect to certain variables and timepoints, such as pain on weight bearing at 5 to 13 weeks postinjection.
