(S49) PATIENT EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR TREATMENT WITH TYSABRI

M.H. Gottesman, S.M. Friedman-Urevich, E.M. Boylan, D.M. Cheng

Neurology, Winthrop University Hospital, Mineola, NY

Background: The risk of progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy (PML) as a result of treatment with Tysabri requires a complex risk-benefit analysis on the part of the clinician as well as the patient and any relatives or friends closely involved in their treatment decisions. Educating patients and their relatives and friends about the benefits and risks of treatment with Tysabri may lessen concerns about safety and reduce conflict arising from the decision to initiate or continue treatment. Objectives: Patients currently receiving Tysabri for the treatment of relapsing forms of multiple sclerosis (MS), or those contemplating treatment, and their relatives and friends will have fewer concerns related to its safety following an educational program designed to provide information about its benefits and potential risks. Methods: Approval for the study was obtained from the institutional review board of Winthrop University Hospital. Twenty-seven sets of patients and their respective relatives and friends attended an educational program about Tysabri and were asked to agree or disagree with a set of statements before and after the program to elicit perceptions of risks and benefits associated with Tysabri. Results: The program did not alter the patients’ concern about the safety of Tysabri or the acceptable risk of developing PML. The majority of respondents found an acceptable risk to be 1 in 400 or 1 in 1,000. The relative or friend was slightly less risk-tolerant than the patient. No statistically significant associations were found among risk tolerance, disability status, and duration of treatment. Conclusions: Following the Tysabri educational program, both patients and their relatives and friends perceived Tysabri as being beneficial and well tolerated. The relatives and friends wanted to receive more information in the future, as they still had concerns about its safety. Informing patients and their relatives and friends about the risks and benefits of Tysabri may help them to feel more comfortable with their decision to initiate or continue treatment.

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