



هيئة الدواء المصرية

IN THIS ISSUE

Safety Notification: Interacting safely with low-dose methotrexate	1
Safety Notification: Promethazine (oral): Do not use in children under 6 years of age due to the risk of psychiatric and central nervous system side effects	2
EPVC News	3- 4
EPVC Tips	5

Prepared by:

Reem Tarek
Rawda Negm
Nayera Elshafey
Mariam Morkos
Maysa Hussein
Asmaa Shalaby

Designed by:

Reem Tarek

Chief Editor

Walaa Ebrahim

Head of Egyptian
Pharmaceutical vigilance
centre

Under Supervision of

Dr. Sherin Abdel
Gawad

Head of the C.A for Pharmaceuti-
cal Care

Center



EPVC Mission

Pharmaceutical Vigilance administration is the way through which the processes for authorizing, regulating, monitoring and evaluating the safety of any pharmaceutical product or medical device take place, in addition to disseminating any safety information for public health programs, healthcare professionals, and the Egyptian citizen.

The Pharmaceutical vigilance administration is an integral part of the Central Administration of Pharmaceutical Care that works on the enhancement of the pharmaceutical services to guarantee safe and effective use of medications in Egypt, under the patronage of the Egyptian Drug Authority.

Newsletter

June 2024

Volume 15

Issue 6

Safety Notification ! : Interacting safely with low-dose methotrexate

The Regulatory Authority in New Zealand has published the following safety notification:

Key messages

- Low-dose methotrexate is used in the treatment of autoimmune conditions, such as psoriasis and rheumatoid arthritis, often in patients taking other medicines.
- Use of methotrexate with some medicines may increase the risk of methotrexate side effects and toxicity.
- Consider possible medicine interactions and their appropriate management when starting or changing doses of medicines in patients taking low-dose methotrexate

Low-dose methotrexate in weekly doses is used as an immunosuppressant to treat conditions such as psoriasis and rheumatoid arthritis. Patients taking low-dose methotrexate may need to take other medicines for long-term conditions or when acutely unwell. Taking methotrexate with some medicines may increase the risk of methotrexate side effects and toxicity. This article describes some of these interactions.

Characteristics of interactions

Methotrexate is a cytotoxic medicine that inhibits the enzyme dihydrofolate reductase, thereby interfering with folic acid metabolism. Additive toxicity may occur if methotrexate is used with medicines with similar pharmacological effects. Methotrexate, even at low doses, can cause bone marrow suppression and renal, hepatic, gastrointestinal or pulmonary toxicity. Elevated plasma concentrations of methotrexate may increase the risk of toxicity. Methotrexate is partly bound to serum albumin following absorption. Concomitant use with medicines competing for the same albumin binding site or inhibiting albumin binding may displace methotrexate, increasing plasma concentrations. Poisoning in children Methotrexate is almost completely excreted through the kidneys by glomerular filtration and active transport. Medicines that affect renal function or renal tubular transport may reduce the clearance of methotrexate, thereby increasing plasma concentrations.

Effect	Mechanism	Examples of medicines
Increase in methotrexate plasma levels (pharmacokinetic interactions)	Reduced renal clearance of methotrexate	Penicillins and sulfonamides (eg, co-trimoxazole), NSAIDs
	Reduced renal tubular secretion	Probenecid, loop diuretics, ciprofloxacin, NSAIDs
	Protein binding displacement	Sulfonamides, penicillins, tetracyclines, chloramphenicol, salicylates, NSAIDs, sulfonyleureas, phenytoin
Increase in methotrexate pharmacological effect (pharmacodynamic interactions)	Additive toxicity (hepatotoxicity)	Hepatotoxic medicines such as azathioprine, sulfasalazine, leflunomide, alcohol, cytotoxic medicines, retinoids
	Additive toxicity (haemotoxicity)	Myelosuppressive medicines such as co-trimoxazole, trimethoprim, leflunomide, allopurinol, ciclosporin, cytotoxic medicines.
	Additive toxicity (other)	Leflunomide (pulmonary toxicity), cytotoxic medicines (pulmonary, gastrointestinal, renal toxicity), amiodarone (ulcerative skin lesions)

Examples of interactions:

When starting a new medicine in a patient taking methotrexate, consider whether the medicine may affect the kidneys or liver or cause blood disorders. Depending on the situation, the methotrexate dose may need to be adjusted or doses withheld. An increase in monitoring may be required.

Advise patients to:

- Watch out for signs of potential toxicity and what to do if these occur
- Check with a healthcare professional before taking any over-the-counter medicines, including natural products

References:

MedSafe : [\(Click Here\)](#)



Safety Notification ! : Promethazine (oral): Do not use in children under 6 years of age due to the risk of psychiatric and central nervous system side effects

The Regulatory Authority in New Zealand has published the following safety notification:

Promethazine (oral) products are now contraindicated (do not use) in children under 6 years of age .

The link between promethazine and psychiatric and central nervous system side effects in children under 6 years of age led to this new contraindication.

Promethazine is a sedating antihistamine.

Medicines containing promethazine may be used to treat allergies (including hay fever) and nausea and vomiting (including travel sickness) in children aged 6 years and older.¹

Advice for consumers and caregivers

- Do not give medicines containing promethazine to children under 6 years of age.
- In children under 6 years of age these medicines can cause mood and behavioral changes such as restlessness, unable to stay still, aggression (feeling of anger) and hallucinations (see or hear something that isn't really happening). Learning difficulties may also occur when high doses are given.
- If your child is under 6 years of age and was taking promethazine, speak with your pharmacist or doctor about alternative treatment options.
- There will be a time lag before medicines with updated package labelling will be available in pharmacies. Always check with your pharmacist or doctor if a medicine is suitable for your child.

Information for healthcare professionals

- Promethazine (oral) is now contraindicated in children under 6 years of age (previously under 2 years of age).
- A safety review identified a high risk of psychiatric and central nervous system side effects in this age group, including psychomotor hyperactivity, aggression and hallucination. Difficulties in learning and understanding, such as reversible cognitive deficit and intellectual disability, may also occur when high doses are given.
- Use alternative treatment options for children under

6 years of age requiring allergy or nausea treatment. Refer to local guidelines.

- There will be a time lag before medicines with updated package labelling are available in pharmacies.
- Remind consumers who may have this medicine at home not to use it in children under 6 years of age and to consult a pharmacist or doctor for alternative treatment options and advice.

More information

- Promethazine was already contraindicated in children under 2 years of age due to the risk of fatal respiratory depression (breathing difficulties).
- Drowsiness, paradoxical hyperexcitability (becoming overexcited instead of sleepy as expected), nightmares and disorientation have also been reported with promethazine use in children.
- A review has identified a high risk of psychiatric and central nervous system side effects related to promethazine use in children aged between 2 and 5 years. In addition to known side effects, children under 6 years of age experienced psychomotor hyperactivity, aggression and hallucinations. At high doses, promethazine caused learning and understanding difficulties. Due to these risks, these products are restricted to use in children and adults aged 6 years and older.



References:

MedSafe : [\(Click Here\)](#)

Egyptian Pharmaceutical Vigilance Center (EPVC) Vigiflow expansion project Trainings for Raising Reporting Awareness

The Egyptian Pharmaceutical Vigilance Center (EPVC) is pleased to continue offering advanced level vigiflow expansion training to several focal points regarding "Individual Case Safety Reports (ICSRs) and Completeness score in coordination with the Egyptian Ministry of Health and Population. Additionally, in coordination with a large number of university hospital coordinators and focal points, The Egyptian Pharmaceutical Vigilance Center (EPVC) held Advanced level vigiflow expansion training on "Individual Case Safety Reports (ICSRs) Completeness score & common pitfalls" for focal points. While increasing awareness of the value of completeness scores and high-quality data is the aim of both trainings, this one focuses on improving data input on the national database reporting system and improving the performance of those organizations' focal points. Alongside the continuous training, EPVC receives ICSRs through the VigiFlow Expansion project, review them, provide feedback and constructive evaluation to the coordinating organizations, and assess whether further training is required in order to guarantee that the quality of cases entered into the national database is maintained to the highest standards. This rigorous approach is expected to result in a more robust and reliable technique of ICSRs tracking and better medicines benefit risk Evaluation.

Kafr Elsheikh University hospitals & Cairo university hospitals Awareness sessions held by EPVC:

- The Egyptian Pharmaceutical Vigilance Center (EPVC) recently conducted two informational sessions on pharmacovigilance. The first session was held for healthcare professionals at Kafr Elsheikh University Hospitals, while the second session took place at Cairo University Hospitals
- The purpose of these sessions was to educate the healthcare staff about pharmacovigilance - its roles and responsibilities. Additionally, the sessions aimed to clarify the reporting system in order to maintain the highest possible standards of quality for the cases received through this reporting process.

“Together for Safe Medicine“ Initiative News:

EPVC is extremely thankful for the participant pharmacists of the 4th wave of the EPVC initiative “Together for safe medicine” after the ending of 4th wave activities on 30 May 2024 where the shared pharmacists had done 408 different valuable activities concerning spreading pharmacovigilance science all over Egypt through making lectures to HCPs, Attending pharmacovigilance training programs organized by EDA, making posters in governmental hospitals and community pharmacies, videos about pharmacovigilance published on social media as Facebook, LinkedIn, and YouTube channels and all such valuable activities helped EPVC to detect safety signals through sending 850 Adverse drug reaction reports on our national database vigiflow from the start of the 4th wave till 3 June 2024 and shared pharmacists are continuing to send more ADR reports with improving the quality of the sent reports.



- Healthcare Professionals & patients' awareness about pharmacovigilance.



The Egyptian Pharmaceutical Vigilance center
مركز البقطة الصيدلانية المصري

THANK YOU!

- The Egyptian Pharmaceutical Vigilance Center (EPVC) would to provide the appreciation to Damanhur Oncology & Qena Oncology Center for their high quality in entering of ICSRs on vigiflow.
- * To all the organizations who Co-operated with EPVC to expand the Vigiflow system, EPVC would like to thank you for submitting cases to the national database reporting system. We hope they continue to succeed in their endeavors and appreciate their dedication and maturity in moving forward with more advanced stages for case quality as well as their monthly entry ICSRs, in the national database.

EHA “Egyptian Healthcare Authority” internal activities concerning to pharmacovigilance.

This acknowledgment is to highlight the internal activities of the Egyptian Healthcare Authority (EHA) related to pharmacovigilance.

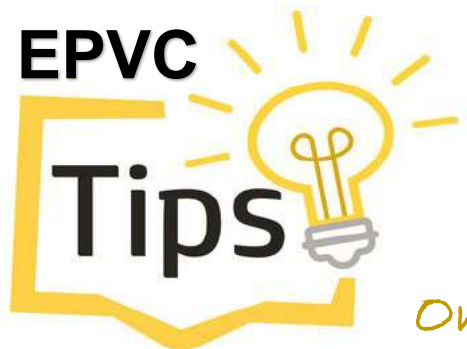
The Egyptian Pharmaceutical Vigilance Center (EPVC) expresses its gratitude to the EHA for the extensive activities they have undertaken this month.

These activities involved holding sessions to educate patients and healthcare professionals in EHA-supervised organizations about identifying pharmacovigilance, its roles, and the importance of the reporting system.

The EPVC specifically wishes to thank the following individuals for their efforts in expanding the scope of pharmacovigilance and promoting the reporting system within their respective institutions and among the public:

- Maha Saeed.... Egyptian Healthcare Authority(EHA) Central coordinator
- Dina Hassouna.... Portsaid coordinator - EHA
- Heba Benaway.... Portsaid coordinator - EHA
- Fatma Nobi.... Luxor Coordinator - EHA
- Nesma Azab... Ismailia Coordinator-EHA
- Dr. Ahmed Magdy Nor pharmacovigilance coordinator in A Qasassin hospital
- Dr. Tassnim Adal Al rafaay al ataal pharmacovigilance coordinator in Al mostakbal primary health care center
- Dr. Zainb Salama Mohamed Salama pharmacovigilance coordinator in Al Nafesha primary health care center
- Dr. Amr abd al Azim Al said Ebrahim pharmacovigilance coordinator in Al Fanaara primary health care center



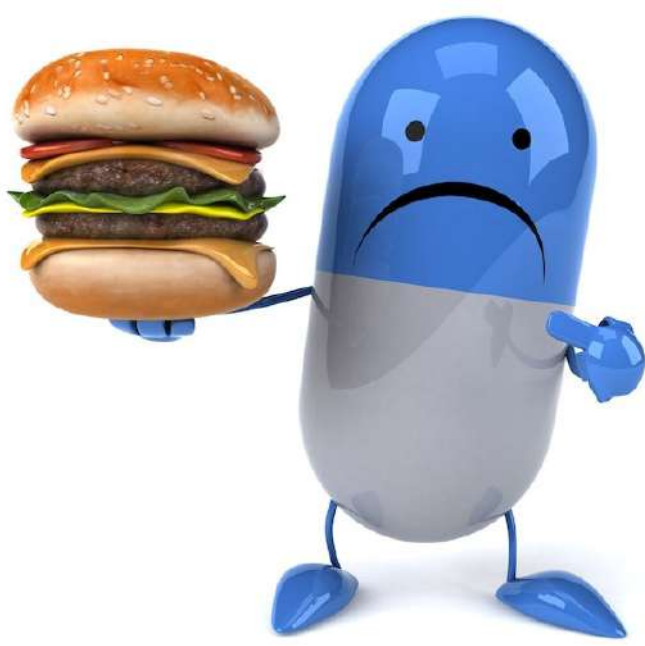


On Pharmacovigilance Drug food interaction

Drug-food interactions can result in unfavorable outcomes during the treatment of patients. Healthcare professionals (HCPs) should advise patients on drug-food interactions. Knowledge of such interactions is crucial to avoid their occurrence.

5 Dangerous Food-Drug Interactions:

- * Calcium-Rich Foods + Antibiotics,
- * Pickled, Cured, and Fermented Foods + MAIOs,
- * Vitamin K-Rich Foods + Warfarin,
- * Alcohol + Prescription Stimulants and Grapefruit
- * Grapefruit Juice + Statins.



Visit EDA website to find all medicine- related news, updates and alerts [Click here](#)
You will find all EPVC Newsletters and DHPCs [here](#)
You will also find all alerts regarding counterfeited and falsified products released by Central Administration of Operations [here](#)





One report counts

A call for reporting

Please remember that you can report safety information of medicines to EPVC using the following communication information:

What is Pharmacovigilance

Pharmacovigilance (PV) is defined as the science and activities relating to the detection, assessment, understanding and prevention of adverse effects or any other drug-related problem.

What is the Egyptian Pharmaceutical Vigilance Center?

With the increasing demand for patient's safety which is becoming more stringent, . The Egyptian Pharmaceutical Vigilance Center was established to be responsible for the safety monitoring of the pharmaceutical products throughout its lifecycle and it is the regulatory authority regarding Pharmacovigilance and its applications .

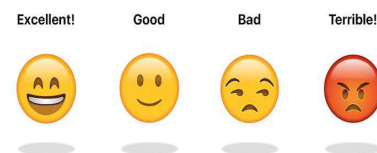
EPVC monitors the safety of all types of pharmaceutical products, including human medicines, biological products, supplements, cosmetics, veterinary medicines, medical devices, Biocides and pesticides

Participate with us

We invite you to take a quick survey on how much our communication with you is effective

We value your feedback! Help us enhance our communication by taking a quick survey. Your insights are crucial in ensuring we meet your expectations.

Survey Link: [\(Click Here\)](#)



Thank you for your valuable input

Communication information

The Egyptian Drug Authority (EDA)

Pharmaceutical Care Administration

The Egyptian Pharmaceutical Vigilance Center (EPVC)



Address: 21 Abd El Aziz AlSoud Street. El-Manial, Cairo, Egypt, PO Box: 11451

Hotline: 15301

Fax: +202 – 23610497

Email: pv.followup@edaegypt.gov.eg

Reporting link: www.edaegypt.gov.eg

<https://sites.google.com/view/epvc-reporting/healthcare-professional-public-adverse-drug-event-reporting/reporting-other-adverse-drug-event-cases>



هيئة الدواء المصرية (الرعاية الصيدلانية)