



Research Article

Treatment of patients with arthrosis of hip or knee with an aqueous extract of Devil's Claw (*Harpagophytum procumbens* DC.)

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Abstract

Preparations made from the secondary tubers of Devil's claw (*Harpagophytum procumbens*) are successfully used in patients with rheumatic diseases (arthrosis and low back pain). In order to add data on the efficacy and long-term safety of an aqueous extract (Doloteffin™; 2400 mg extract daily, corresponding to 50 mg harpagoside), which has been tested successfully in patients with low back pain, an uncontrolled multicentre drug surveillance study for about 12 weeks was conducted in 75 patients with arthrosis of the hip or knee. To standardize the assessment of treatment effects, the Western Ontario and McMaster Universities (WOMAC) osteoarthritis index (10 point scale) as well as the 10 cm VAS pain scale were used. The results of the study revealed a strong reduction of pain and the symptoms of osteoarthritis. There was a relevant improvement of each WOMAC subscale as well as of the total WOMAC index: 23.8% for the pain subscale, 22.2% for the stiffness subscale and 23.1% for the physical function subscale. The WOMAC total score was reduced by 22.9%. VAS pain scores were decreased by 25.8% for actual pain, 25.2% for average pain, 22.6% for worst pain and 24.5% for the total pain score. The physicians reported a continuous improvement in typical clinical findings such as 45.5% for pain on palpation, 35% for limitation of mobility and 25.4% for joint crepitus. Only two cases of possible adverse drug reactions were reported (dyspeptic complaints and a sensation of fullness). Although this was an open clinical study, the results suggest that this Devil's claw extract has a clinically beneficial effect in the treatment of arthrosis of the hip or knee. Copyright © 2003 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.



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