EFFICACY AND SIDE-EFFECTS PROFILE OF PROPRANOLOL VS. PRIMIDONE IN THE TREATMENT OF ESSENTIAL TREMOR: A REPORT OF 23 CASES

G. Vyshka¹, J. Kruja²

¹Human Physiology, Faculty of Medicine, University of Tirana, ²Neurology, UHC Mother Theresa, Tirana, Albania

Introduction: The study was performed with 23 patients (15 females, 8 males) suffering from essential tremor (ET). All patients entered the study being not independent in at least two of the items composing the Katz Basic Activities of Daily Living (ADL). The medium age was 57 year 8 months.

Aims: Testing the efficacy and side-effects profile of Propranolol versus Primidone in ET.

Methods: Tremor analysis was performed with superficial electrodes. 11 of the patients were treated with Propranolol during four months (minimum dosage 20 mg/daily; maximum 120 mg/daily). 12 of the patients were treated with Primidone during the same period (minimum dosage was 62.5 mg; maximum dosage 250 mg daily). Three patients dropped-out due to nausea and confusion. The patients were evaluated with subjective questionnaires, tremor analysis, and ADL.

Results: A significant improvement in the ADL was found in the group treated with Propranolol: 7 patients resulted independent in all ADL items. None of the patients stopped the treatment. None of the patients treated with Primidone resulted independent in all ADL items; 8 showed fewer time lapses of tremor and decreased tremor amplitude. Three patients stopped the drug due to side-effects.

Conclusion: Propranolol is effective in improving tremor-related invalidity. The annual cost for the average dose of Propranolol is 11 USD, achieving 33 USD for the maximum dose used in the treatment of ET. Primidone has more important figures (respectively 285 USD and 1425 USD); the cost being another important disadvantage, apart the side-effects profile.