Ototoxicity Not Seen With Brief Trial of Cortisporin

A three-arm study is planned to evaluate children who had ear tubes placed without postoperative topical antibiotic drops and those who received Cortisporin or Ciprodex.

The FDA label for products containing aminoglycosides such as Cortisporin indicates the potential risk when there is an open tympanic membrane, said Paul Cockrum, Pharm.D., manager of clinical market support for Alcon Inc., which manufactures Ciprodex. "So if a physician prescribes this product, then he is open to potential liability. Since Cortisporin offers no clinical benefits, any cost benefits are outweighed by the risk of ototoxicity."

He also noted that a consensus panel formed in 2004 at the request of the American Academy of Otolaryngology–Head and Neck Surgery Foundation due to rising legal claims against physicians, recommendations by British and Canadian medical organizations to limit the use of potentially ototoxic ototopical antibiotics, the availability of nonototoxic preparations, and a lack of an evidence-based review of these issues.

"It would be a shame if 10 years from now we have problems with resistance to topical fluoroquinolones, although none have been reported," he said.

An analysis showed the total cost for using Cortisporin or a generic was $15,500 at $31 a bottle. That compares with $45,000 if Floxin (ofloxacin otic solution 0.3%) had been prescribed at $90 per bottle, and $49,500 if Ciprodex (ciprofloxacin 0.3% and dexamethasone 0.1% sterile otic suspension) had been prescribed at $9 per bottle.

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