Enbrel® for Alzheimer’s

Enbrel (etanercept), a prescription drug FDA approved to treat five lifelong inflammatory diseases, is now showing amazing results for patients with either chronic pain or dementia.

Patricia O’Konski says she and her 85-year-old husband, Paul, have been best friends for 60 years.

“About four years ago, Paul was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s,” says Patricia. Although there is no sure cure for Alzheimer’s, the disease process can be slowed by medications that alleviate symptoms and delays the progression of the disease.

“Paul’s doctors ran several tests, including imaging scans of his brain,” says Patricia. “They told me that he had Alzheimer’s and would be in a rest home or hospice within six months,” remembers Patricia. “They just said, ‘Well, he’s getting old. He’s had a good life.’”

“My doctor said he would give him something to slow down its progression and some B3a shots, but basically that was it. ‘It was just like they shut the door,’” says Patricia.

Hope for Alzheimer’s patients

Patricia says she has had her own medical issues. “I’ve had two hip replacements and my left knee will eventually need replacing,” she confides. “In the meantime, though, I’m seeing a pain management doctor for it, so I scheduled an appointment with him.”

That physician, M. L. Richardson III, MD, is a diplomate of the American Board of Anesthesiology and a diplomate of the American Academy of Pain Management. Dr. Richardson, who served as medical director and chief of staff at Indian River Memorial Hospital Ambulatory Surgery Center in Vero Beach for 15 years, is now medical director and a co-owner of Grove Place Surgery Center in Vero Beach, where he spends approximately 90% of his time with his anesthesiology practice and the other half of his time serving his pain management patients.

“I had to take Paul with me to the doctor’s,” remembers Patricia, “and I couldn’t just leave him in the waiting room because he would have felt totally lost.”

Once Patricia explained the situation to Dr. Richardson, he had just the right answer.

Enbrel® for dementia

Dr. Richardson began telling Patricia about the drug Enbrel.

“Enbrel is a prescription medicine used to treat various long-term inflammatory diseases, including rheumatoid arthritis and plaque psoriasis,” informs Dr. Richardson. “As a medication grouped within a class of medications called biologic response modifiers, it works on the immune system, blocking proteins that contribute to the disease process.”

Dr. Richardson relates that, while looking for an alternative for epidural steroid injections for his back and neck pain patients, he learned about Dr. Edward Tobinick and the Institute for Neurological Research in California. “Dr. Tobinick, an assistant clinical professor of medicine at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA, has invented patented methods for using Enbrel to treat chronic back, leg, arm, and neck pain, as well as various forms of dementia, including Alzheimer’s disease. When I read about the results he was having [see www.nrimed.com], I thought it was too good to be true, so, skeptically, I went out to California to see it with my own eyes.”

He says he was overwhelmed by what he saw: “Regarding dementia patients, I spoke with not only his patients, but also with the caregivers, who agreed that the improvements the Enbrel-based treatments were providing [see www.nrimed.com/AD/videos.html]. While this is not a cure for Alzheimer’s, the patients, caregivers, and their families were amazed at the fascinating development I’ve seen in medicine since becoming a doctor in 1980. "I have begun treating patients with Alzheimer’s disease and other forms of dementia, and it is the only medication I am aware of that prevents the progression or slows the progression of these diseases and actually improves the patient’s quality of life.”

Practically back to his old self

Patricia says that Paul got his first shot of Enbrel approximately six months ago.

“He’s practically back to his old self,” she observes with obvious joy in her voice. “He’s doing things he hasn’t done for a long time. "Paul cracks jokes and cooks our meals, and does a good job of it. We’ll have chicken and noodles one night and a roast with mashed potatoes the next. We go grocery shopping on Saturdays, and he reminds me of the things we need.”

“He’s also a wonderful housemate during the week. He cleans the floors, dusts, empties the dishwasher, and does the laundry. He also takes care of our little miniature schnauzer, Holly.”

When asked about the cost of the treatments, she says: “When Paul was initially diagnosed, I looked into the price of a rest home. This is a lot less expensive. “I saw patients coming from all over the world to be treated, and I feel very fortunate to have become one of less than a handful of physicians trained and licensed in the state of Florida to use Dr. Tobinick’s patented methods, enabling me to use these treatments in the care of my patients here in the Vero Beach area.

“I have to admit that this is the most fascinating development I’ve seen in medicine since becoming a doctor in 1980. "I have began treating patients with Alzheimer’s disease and other forms of dementia, and it is the only medication I am aware of that prevents the progression or slows the progression of these diseases and actually improves the patient’s quality of life.”