

Desiccated thyroid extract a safe alternative to levothyroxine in hypothyroidism

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SAN FRANCISCO — Desiccated thyroid extract could be a potential alternative treatment to standard therapy with levothyroxine in patients with hypothyroidism, **Thanh D. Hoang, DO**, staff endocrinologist of the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Md., told *Endocrine Today* here at ENDO 2013.

During a poster session, Hoang said that desiccated thyroid extract could be a viable treatment option for patients with symptoms of hypothyroidism, despite normal TSH measurements while taking levothyroxine alone. Further, the desiccated thyroid extract yielded superior weight loss compared with levothyroxine, he said.

“The current gold standard right now is synthetic levothyroxine, so we wanted to do this randomized, double blind, crossover study to look at the efficacy of both drugs,” Hoang told *Endocrine Today*.

He and colleagues included 70 patients aged 18 to 65 years with primary hypothyroidism who were prescribed levothyroxine for 6 months. Patients were randomly assigned to either desiccated thyroid extract (DTE) or levothyroxine for 16 weeks.

According to data, patients assigned to DTE lost 3 lb, compared with those assigned levothyroxine (172.9 lb vs. 175.7 lb, $P<.001$).

“We didn’t find any differences in the neurocognitive measurements between the two therapies, but at the end of the study we did ask our patients which regimen they preferred,” Hoang said.

At the end of the 16-week study, 34 patients (48.6%) preferred DTE therapy, whereas 13 (18.6%) preferred levothyroxine; 23 (32.9%) did not specify a preference, he said. Further analysis confirmed those who preferred DTE lost even more weight over a 4-month period.

“We now know that once-daily desiccated thyroid extract is a safe alternative treatment for patients with hypothyroidism who are not satisfied with levothyroxine treatment. It’s an option for them to try, and also desiccated can cause modest weight loss in these patients as well,” Hoang said. –
by Samantha Costa

For more information:

Hoang T. #MON-440. Presented at: The Endocrine Society Annual Meeting and Expo; June 15-18, 2013; San Francisco.

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