

PRESS RELEASE

OSTEOARTHRITIS: GLUCOSAMINE SULFATE IS PROVED AS THE FIRST DRUG ABLE TO STOP THE DISEASE

Venice, 22 October 2002 – (EMBARGOED AT 24:00 OF OCTOBER 22, 2002) - Glucosamine sulfate is among the most potent agents which have been studied for the treatment osteoarthritis, and new data show that it is one of the main substances that are necessary to renovate worn-out joints. This novel finding from a study done by prof. Pavelka from Prague University in collaboration with the Rottapharm laboratories located in Monza, was reported in a study published on October 14, 2002 in the prestigious journal Archives of Internal Medicine.

Until today the treatment of osteoarthritis has utilized anti-inflammatory drugs and pain relievers to control the symptoms, but this therapy was not able to influence the progression of the disease. On the contrary, treatment with glucosamine sulfate (1500 mg once daily, protracted for 3 years) has been able to slow disease progression and improve symptoms of the disease in 202 patients who participated in the study.

During the 3 years of study follow-up, patients treated with glucosamine sulfate did not show any significant reduction of tibiofemoral joint space width compared with patients receiving placebo.

Furthermore, the drug showed long term benefits on symptoms, pain and joint mobility, without any significant side effect. “Anti-inflammatory drugs, including the new *cox 2* – says dr. Lucio Rovati, professor of Clinical Pharmacology at the University of Napoli, scientific director of Rottapharm and co-author of the study – have been associated with adverse events including gastrointestinal and cardiovascular problems, this molecule allows us to control the patient’s symptoms on the long term without the need to use any other drug, except when required by an acute inflammatory relapse”.

In conclusion, it is now possible to stop osteoarthritis from its progression and reach the crucial goal of improving the patient’s quality of life and relieving or eliminating his symptoms.

“With two studies published in international peer-reviewed journals – adds Dr Rovati – there are no more doubts that the long-term utilization of glucosamine sulfate is able to control long-term symptoms, therefore reducing drastically the pain and improving articular functionality, at any age. Above all, it is the second time that a slower progression is obtained, and over 3 years the disease is even stopped, with no progression of structural joint damage. This is the primary objective of the fight against arthritis, because once the joint is deteriorated, the disease inevitably progresses leading to invalidity. If we can contain the worsening of structural damage, we should be able to slow or even abolish the

progression of disability. Even in those patients who already have a severe structural compromise, and in whom the benefit on symptoms prevails, this can in any case delay the onset of invalidity.”