

Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Dr. Sharon Harris

516- 676-2008

safeglencove@yahoo.com

SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: FDA Approves New Non-Opioid Painkiller

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration recently approved Journavx™ (suzetrigine) 50mg oral tablets for use in the treatment of moderate to severe acute pain. This is the first non-opioid analgesic of its class to receive federal approval in over two decades. It is the first FDA-approved drug in this new class of pain management medicines.

The medication, Journavx, is approved for short-term pain that often follows surgery or injuries. Journavx works differently than opioids. It blocks proteins that trigger pain signals that are later sent to the brain. When electrical signals flow through the nerve cells, Journavx "opens" and "closes" sodium channels to allow sodium ions to pass through. This then prompts nerve impulses to transmit pain signals to the brain. Although procaine (Novocain) is an effective and reliable anesthetic (and sodium-channel-targeting drug), it must be administered locally through injections, creams, or gels.

The drug was tested in more than 870 patients with acute pain from foot or abdominal surgeries. The medication provided more relief than a placebo but did not outperform a common opioid-acetaminophen combination pill, the article notes.

Pain medicine researchers at the Mayo Clinic, who did not participate in the study, feel the drug has promise. It takes a very different pathway and mechanism of action to treat moderate to severe pain because it is a sodium-channel-targeting drug that can provide pain relief without the risk of addiction, overdose, or sedation.

The FDA maintains this drug is safer and comes with fewer side effects than other available painkillers. Opioids are not only addictive but can be dangerous for those who take them to alleviate post-surgery pain. There is a serious opioid epidemic in the United States due to inadequate regulation, overprescribing by the medical profession, and a push from pharmaceutical companies. In 2019, opioids were responsible for 15.8 deaths per 100,000 people in the US. Thus, the introduction of a sodium-channel-targeting drug like Journavx may be a game-changer for post-op pain management.

The success of this drug, and its ability to supersede opioids, depends on the cost. As of right now, the wholesale price is around \$15.50 per pill, which is more expensive than most opioids-but it may be more cost-effective in the long run due to the lengthy health-care costs caused by opioid addiction.

SAFE, Inc. is the only alcohol and substance abuse prevention, intervention and education agency in the City of Glen Cove. Its Coalition is conducting an opioid prevention awareness campaign entitled, "Keeping Glen Cove SAFE," to educate and update the community regarding opioid use and its consequences. To learn more about the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition please follow us on www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition or visit SAFE's website to learn more about the Opioid Epidemic at www.safeglencove.org.