Shorts
briefer by Jule Klotter

Ampligen & Chronic Fatigue

Hemispherx Biopharma, Inc. has completed a Phase III Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS) trial of Ampligen, a double-stranded RNA drug. In vitro studies indicate that Ampligen may modulate the immune system as well as act as an antiviral agent. Ampligen has been investigated as a possible therapy for HIV/AIDS and CFS since the 1980s. Osler’s Web: Inside the Labyrinth of the Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Epidemic by Hillary Johnson (1996) profiles some of the early pilot studies.

The recent Phase III trial, which took place at 12 centers in the US, was a randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled, crossover study of 234 subjects with ‘seriously debilitating CFS.’ Subjects received 400 mg of Ampligen parenterally, twice each week for 40 weeks. At the end of the 40 weeks, those receiving Ampligen showed improved treadmill exercise performance: 19.4% (Ampligen group) vs. 5.1% (placebo group). The study was presented at the 17th International Conference on Antiviral Research on 3 May 2004 (Tucson, Arizona). A company press release says “there was no significant difference in the number of serious adverse events, missed dosages or dropouts (ie leaving the study prematurely) among patients receiving Ampligen vs. those receiving placebo...” An increase in headaches and muscle pain were common complaints among the first test subjects in the 1980s, according to Osler’s Web. Being an experimental drug, Ampligen is only available to persons who take part in a FDA-approved research program.

Chlorella

Chlorella, a fresh-water, one-celled, green algae, contains nutrients that aid detoxification. Taken as a supplement, chlorella helps remove dioxin, lead, mercury, and other toxins from the body. Its polysaccharide membrane can absorb large amounts of these toxins, according to Toshihiro Kanno, PhD, a pharmacist and functional food advisor who wrote Chlorella vulgaris and Chlorella vulgaris extract. Chlorophyll in these algae contains porphyrins that bind with metals. Chlorophyll also activates the production of peroxisomes (cell organelles), which are responsible for detoxification. In addition to the chlorophyll, chlorella contains about 50% protein and 12% lipids in the form of alpha-linoleic acid and gamma-linoleic acid. It also provides minerals, beta carotene and other antioxidants, and vitamins that include B6 and methyl-cobalamin (the most absorbable form of B12). Chlorella has been used to help remove dioxin, lead, mercury, and other toxins from the intestines, and alkalize the body.

Kanno says that an extract from this strain “has been found to boost the immune system, improve metabolism, improve liver function, lower blood pressure, and lower blood sugar.” Kanno says that most people do well on a daily dose of 2 to 3 grams of chlorella, taken after meals. People with active lifestyles or who want to improve their health may gradually raise the dose to 4-10 grams/day.

In his article “A Comprehensive Review of Heavy Metal Detoxification and Clinical Pearls from 30 Years of Medical Practice” (www.neuraltherapy.com), Dr. Dietrich Klinghardt recommends taking chlorella 30 minutes before meals to aid detoxification. To remove heavy metals from the body, a maintenance dose of 1 gram, 3-4 times/day can be increased to a level of 3 grams, 3-4 times a day, for one week. During this week, cilantro, which mobilizes heavy metals held in body tissue, can also be taken. The higher dose of chlorella is also advised 2 days before and 2-5 days after the removal of amalgam fillings, but no cilantro should be taken at that time. At the end of the week of higher dosage, Klinghardt recommends returning to the maintenance dose for 2-4 weeks before repeating the cilantro and increased chlorella protocol. Klinghardt suggests taking Chlorella pyreneidosa with digestive enzymes, specifically cellulase, if there’s a problem digesting the cell membrane. If this does not help, he recommends using C. vulgaris.

Because of the digestibility question, some manufacturers began distributing chlorella products with broken cell walls. Kanno quotes a 1996 report from the National Consumer Affairs Center of Japan that found that “Cell wall breakage does not make a difference in digestibility of chlorella.” Kanno says that people taking Coumadin (warfarin sodium) should not take chlorella, which is high in vitamin K. Coumadin works by inhibiting the synthesis of vitamin K-dependent blood coagulation factor in the liver.

Fibromyalgia & Fibrosis

In an article posted on his web site, William Wong, ND, PhD, says that the pain of fibromyalgia stems from the formation of fibrous scar tissue in contractile (voluntary) muscles. Fibrosis binds the tissue and inhibits blood flow, resulting in pain. After developing fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue in 1990, Wong searched for ways to improve function and relieve pain. The treatment that he found to be most helpful addresses fibrosis, low ATP production, and low cellular oxygen levels.

Wong uses proteolytic enzymes to break down excessive fibrin, an insoluble protein that the body uses to form blood clots and scar tissue. Studies have shown that proteolytic enzymes are helpful in eliminating fibrocystic breast disease and have been used to treat deep vein thrombosis. Both conditions indicate an imbalance in fibrin production and disposition. Hormones, particularly estrogen, also have a role in fibrotic conditions. Wong says that “[e]strogen is a known fibrinogenic agent and has been found to be the spark that induces fibrotic conditions of the breast, ovaries, and uterus.” In addition to proteolytic enzymes (i.e., Vitalzym), Wong recommends natural progesterone cream and diindolylmethane, an indole found in cruciferous vegetables, to reduce estrogen dominance.

To address chronic fatigue, which usually accompanies fibromyalgia, Wong suggests Progressive Resistance Exercise (PRE) to increase the number of energy-producing mitochondria in muscle cells. PRE is not aerobic exercise, which uses up energy.