

A Potential Role of Ethosuximide and Pentoxifylline in Relieving Abdominal Pain in Irritable Bowel Syndrome Patients Treated with Mebeverine: A Randomized, Double-Blind, Placebo-Controlled Trial [Retraction]

El-Haggar SM, Hegazy SK, Abd-Elsalam SM, Elkaeed EB, Al-Karmalawy AA, Bahaa MM. *J Inflamm Res*. 2022;15:1159–1172.

The Editor and Publisher of *Journal of Inflammation Research* wish to retract the published article. Following publication, concerns were raised that the results reported appeared to have been published previously in similar articles from the same authors.

- El-Haggar et al, Open-label pilot study of ethosuximide as adjunctive therapy for relieving abdominal pain related to Irritable Bowel Syndrome, 2021, *Journal of Clinical Pharmacy and Therapeutics* (<https://doi.org/10.1111/jcpt.13556>)
- El-Haggar et al, Pentoxifylline, a nonselective phosphodiesterase inhibitor, in adjunctive therapy in patients with irritable bowel syndrome treated with mebeverine, 2022, *Biomedicine & Pharmacotherapy* (<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biopha.2021.112399>)

The *Journal of Inflammation Research* study reported three study groups. Group 1 (n=50) received 135mg of mebeverine hydrochloride capsules three times daily for 6 months; Group 2 (n=50) received 135mg of mebeverine capsules three times daily plus 250mg of ethosuximide capsules two times daily for 6 months; Group 3 (n=50) received 135mg of mebeverine capsules three times daily plus 400mg of pentoxifylline (PTX) tablets two times daily for 6 months. The results reported for these three groups were identical to the results reported for groups one and two in the previous publications. Yet, both these studies reported n=25 for each group, with each group only receiving treatment for 3 months, instead of 6 months and Group 2 in the *Journal of Clinical Pharmacy and Therapeutics* article received capsules containing 500mg of ethosuximide. In addition, all three studies reported the same clinical trial number (NCT04217733).

The authors responded to our queries and explained each study was performed independently and it was a coincidence that the results reported were identical. The Editor did not find this response to be satisfactory and determined the findings of the article to be unreliable and requested that the article be retracted.

Our decision-making was informed by our policy on publishing ethics and integrity and the COPE guidelines on retraction.

The retracted article will remain online to maintain the scholarly record, but it will be digitally watermarked on each page as “Retracted”.