

The Medical Letter®

On Drugs and Therapeutics

Published by The Medical Letter, Inc. • 145 Huguenot Street, New Rochelle, NY 10801 • A Nonprofit Publication

IN THIS ISSUE (starts on next page)

In Brief: Safety of Quinine p 88

Important Copyright Message

The Medical Letter® publications are protected by US and international copyright laws. Forwarding, copying or any distribution of this material is prohibited.

Sharing a password with a non-subscriber or otherwise making the contents of this site available to third parties is strictly prohibited.

By accessing and reading the attached content I agree to comply with US and international copyright laws and these terms and conditions of The Medical Letter, Inc.

**For further information click: [Subscriptions](#), [Site Licenses](#), [Reprints](#)
or call customer service at: 800-211-2769**

FORWARDING OR COPYING IS A VIOLATION OF US AND INTERNATIONAL COPYRIGHT LAWS

The Medical Letter publications are protected by US and international copyright laws.
Forwarding, copying or any other distribution of this material is strictly prohibited.
For further information call: 800-211-2769

The Medical Letter®

On Drugs and Therapeutics

Published by The Medical Letter, Inc. • 145 Huguenot Street, New Rochelle, NY 10801 • A Nonprofit Publication

Volume 52 (Issue 1350)
November 1, 2010

www.medicalletter.org

IN BRIEF

Safety of Quinine

Qualaquin, the only formulation of quinine sulfate available in the US, is approved only for treatment of uncomplicated malaria, but most prescriptions for its use are written for treatment or prevention of nocturnal leg cramps. The FDA recently issued a warning about its safety.

Between April 2005 and October 2008, 38 cases of serious or life-threatening adverse effects of quinine were reported to the FDA. Twenty-one of these patients had thrombocytopenia and required hospitalization. Two deaths were reported: one from hemolysis and the other from thrombotic thrombocytopenic purpura (TTP). Some patients developed mucosal bleeding (gingival, gastrointestinal, epistaxis), hemoptysis, petechiae or ecchymosis. The median time to onset of adverse effects after starting quinine was about 13 days. Most patients with thrombocytopenia recovered when quinine was stopped.¹ In addition to hematologic toxicity, quinine can cause cinchonism (tinnitus, headache, disturbed vision and nausea) and QT prolongation.

1. FDA drug safety communication: new risk management plan and patient medication guide for *Qualaquin* (quinine sulfate). Available at www.fda.gov/Drugs/DrugSafety/PostmarketDrugSafetyInformationforPatientsandProviders/ucm218202.htm. Accessed October 25, 2010.

The Medical Letter®

On Drugs and Therapeutics

EDITOR IN CHIEF: Mark Abramowicz, M.D.
EXECUTIVE EDITOR: Gianna Zuccotti, M.D., M.P.H., F.A.C.P., Harvard Medical School
EDITOR: Jean-Marie Pflomm, Pharm.D.
ASSISTANT EDITORS, DRUG INFORMATION: Susan M. Daron, Pharm.D., Blaine M. Houst, Pharm.D., Corinne E. Zanoone, Pharm.D.
CONSULTING EDITOR: Brinda M. Shah, Pharm.D.
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS:
Carl W. Bazil, M.D., Ph.D., Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons
Vanessa K. Dalton, M.D., M.P.H., University of Michigan Medical School
Eric J. Epstein, M.D., Albert Einstein College of Medicine
Jules Hirsch, M.D., Rockefeller University
David N. Juurlink, BPhM, M.D., Ph.D., Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre
Richard B. Kim, M.D., University of Western Ontario
Hans Meinertz, M.D., University Hospital, Copenhagen
Sandip K. Mukherjee, M.D., F.A.C.C., Yale School of Medicine
Dan M. Roden, M.D., Vanderbilt University School of Medicine
F. Estelle R. Simons, M.D., University of Manitoba
Jordan W. Smoller, M.D., Sc.D., Harvard Medical School
Neal H. Steigbigel, M.D., New York University School of Medicine
Arthur M. F. Yee, M.D., Ph.D., F.A.C.R., Weil Medical College of Cornell University
SENIOR ASSOCIATE EDITORS: Donna Goodstein, Amy Faucard
ASSOCIATE EDITOR: Cynthia Macapagal Covey
EDITORIAL FELLOW: Esperance A.K. Schaefer, M.D., M.P.H., Massachusetts General Hospital, Harvard Medical School
MANAGING EDITOR: Susie Wong
ASSISTANT MANAGING EDITOR: Liz Donohue
PRODUCTION COORDINATOR: Cheryl Brown
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF SALES: Gene Carbona
FULFILLMENT & SYSTEMS MANAGER: Cristine Romatowski
DIRECTOR OF MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS: Joanne F. Valentino
VICE PRESIDENT AND PUBLISHER: Yosef Wissner-Levy
Founded in 1959 by
Arthur Kallet and Harold Aaron, M.D.

Copyright and Disclaimer: The Medical Letter is an independent nonprofit organization that provides health care professionals with unbiased drug prescribing recommendations. The editorial process used for its publications relies on a review of published and unpublished literature, with an emphasis on controlled clinical trials, and on the opinions of its consultants. The Medical Letter is supported solely by subscription fees and accepts no advertising, grants or donations.

No part of the material may be reproduced or transmitted by any process in whole or in part without prior permission in writing. The editors do not warrant that all the material in this publication is accurate and complete in every respect. The editors shall not be held responsible for any damage resulting from any error, inaccuracy or omission.

Subscription Services

Mailing Address:
The Medical Letter, Inc.
145 Huguenot St. Ste. 312
New Rochelle, NY 10801-7537

Subscriptions (US):
1 year - \$98; 2 years - \$189;
3 years - \$279. \$49.00 per year for students, interns, residents and fellows in the US and Canada.

Customer Service:
Call: 800-211-2769 or 914-235-0500
Fax: 914-632-1733
Web Site: www.medicalletter.org
E-mail: custserv@medicalletter.org

E-mail site license inquiries to:
info@medicalletter.org or call 800-211-2769 x315.
Special fees for bulk subscriptions. Special classroom rates are available. Back issues are \$12 each. Major credit cards accepted.

Permissions:
To reproduce any portion of this issue, please e-mail your request to: permissions@medicalletter.org

Copyright 2010. ISSN 1523-2859