Early Intervention of Recent Onset Mild Persistent Asthma in Children Aged Under 11 yrs: The Steroid Treatment As Regular Therapy in Early Asthma (START) Trial


PURPOSE OF THE STUDY. To determine the long-term efficacy of regular inhaled low-dose budesonide in children aged <11 years with recent-onset mild-persistent asthma.

STUDY POPULATION. Children aged 5 to 10 years with current symptoms of mild-persistent asthma during the 3 months preceding trial entry. Patients had no symptoms for >2 years before study entry and had received neither inhaled corticosteroids (ICSs) for ≥30 days nor depot corticosteroid injection in the previous year.

METHODS. Patients were randomly assigned to receive once-daily budesonide 200 μg (1000 children) or placebo (974 children). Patients were followed at weeks 6 and 12 and then subsequently every 3 months for a 3-year period. Patients and their caregivers kept a record of asthma symptoms between visits. At each visit, spirometry was performed, and data were collected on medication compliance and asthma control. The primary end point was the time to the first severe asthma-related event (SARE) or introduction of corticosteroid treatment other than the study medication.

RESULTS. There was a 40% relative-risk reduction of SAREs in the treatment group over the 3-year study visit. Fewer children in the budesonide group required treatment with other corticosteroids as compared with those in the placebo group (12.3% vs 22.7%). There was a trend toward decreased β2-agonist use, decreased systemic corticosteroid use, and improved lung function in the children in the treatment arm.

CONCLUSIONS. The early addition of once-daily budesonide treatment in young children with mild-persistent asthma improves asthma control and lung function and decreases the risk of SAREs.

INTERMITTENT INHALED CORTICOSTEROIDS IN INFANTS WITH EPISODIC WHEEZING


PURPOSE OF THE STUDY. To determine the effectiveness of inhaled corticosteroid (ICS) in the treatment of wheezing in infants and if early ICS treatment will delay or prevent progression to persistent asthma.

STUDY POPULATION. Pregnant women (N = 798) with the diagnosis of asthma were enrolled onto a cohort study in Denmark. There were 411 newborns enrolled by 1 month of age.

METHODS. The patients were randomly assigned to ICS or placebo with their first episode of wheezing at a median of 10.7 months. Treatment with budesonide 400 μg per day with a spacer or placebo with spacer was begun after
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