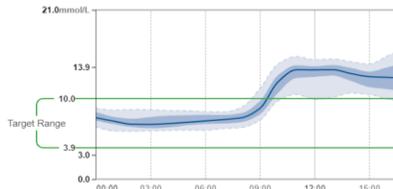


# The GeriJournal

Volume 18, Number 3

March 2023

*A publication of GeriatRx Pharmacy*



## **Old Faithful Insulins – Nice Knowing You**

Lantus®, Humalog®, and NovoRapid®...exit, stage right. The insulins we have come to know and love over the past 30 years (give or take) are being dropped from ODB coverage. They are being replaced by slightly less expensive, biosimilar alternatives whose names are just starting to enter our vernacular.

As a reminder, NovoRapid® is being replaced by Trurapi® and Kirsty®, and Humalog® is deferring to Admelog®. Lantus® has been bumped by Basaglar® and Semglee®(!?!). Tresiba® is emerging as the long-acting insulin leader, with a smattering of prescriptions for Toujeo® thrown in.

The Ministry of Health has made the following statement to assure prescribers, patients, and family members of the quality of the replacement products: “To be approved in Canada, a biosimilar must be proven to be highly similar to an originator biologic, with no clinically meaningful differences in terms of safety and efficacy between them.” In

fact, many of the biosimilar insulins are manufactured by established insulin producers. For example, Basaglar® is made by Eli Lilly, the manufacturer of Humalog®, and Admelog® and Trurapi® are from Sanofi-Aventis, the creators of Lantus®. For this reason, we have complete confidence in these biosimilar products. We will begin recommending the alternatives this April, the beginning of the nine-month transition period.

## **Glucose From Afar**

The next new technology has arrived! We are introducing new A5X Freestyle readers that allow glucose levels to be monitored remotely. Prescribers and consultant pharmacists can track numerous charts and metrics to improve dosing of insulin and oral hypoglycemics.

Spot Freestyle scans recorded in PCC and MED e-care only identify glucose levels at specific times. Freestyle sensors store much more information than that. They retain glucose data from the entire 8-hour period before each scan. That data is converted into a chart format that can be viewed on the Freestyle reader. The new A5X readers transmit the chart data to a secure Libreview site allowing for remote viewing from a computer or cellphone. Data such as average glucose, and percentage of time glucose

is either very high, high, in range, low, or very low is recorded. Even more useful are the daily charts which show glucose levels throughout the day and night. This system is allowing us to see many unrecognized episodes of nocturnal hypoglycemia. We strongly recommend that scans are done at least Q8H (QID is ideal) so pharmacists and prescribers have full 24-hour glucose profiles to review.

## **Can D Prevent Dementia?**

Vitamin D has attracted a great deal of attention for many years, so I try to restrain myself from writing about it. A recent article caught my attention, however. It was published in *Alzheimer's & Dementia* and was led by Canadian researcher Dr. Zahinoor Ismail.

The study compared older adults (average age 71 years) who took vitamin D supplements at baseline against those who did not. Subjects did not have dementia at the beginning of the study. Over ten years, prior users of vitamin D were 40% less likely to develop dementia than non-users. These results suggest that Vitamin D intake may reduce dementia risk. Dr. Ismail is initiating another study called *CAN-PROTECT* to confirm this. The application form is available online. Consider adding your name to advance our understanding of cognitive science.

*Prepared by Randy Goodman  
Board Certified Geriatric Pharmacist*