

# Secnidazole in the Treatment of Giardiasis

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Madam, Giardiasis is a common problem in Pakistan<sup>1</sup>. The prevalence of asymptomatic carriers in the industrialized countries varies between 1-7%<sup>2</sup>. Its incubation period is usually 8 days (range 3- 40 days). The clinical signs of giardiasis range from total latency to chronic diarrhoea with malabsorption and weight loss and results in various combinations of diarrhoea, anorexia, abdominal pain and flatulence. Although many drugs like Albendazole and Metronidazole have been used in the treatment of giardiasis (Unpublished work), but most patients do not take the full dose for the recommended time and therefore, become chronic carriers. Secnidazole, a long acting Nitroimidazole which is given as a single dose was used to see its efficacy in clearing giardiasis. Ten patients (males 7, females 3, age 20-62 years) were included in the study. All had abdominal pain and persistent diarrhoea for 8-10 days. Direct microscopic examination of the stool in saline and iodine showed trophozoites of giardia lamblia in all. A parasitological cure was verified by the absence -of giardia lamblia in post-treatment evaluation. Patients presenting with positive stool were considered as therapeutic failures. Secnidazole was given as a single oral dose of 2 Gram (4x500 mg tablets) and patients were observed for 2 hours for any side effects. Stool examination was repeated on days 7, 14 and 21 to check the efficacy of drug. Although all patients should have been followed till 21 days but we were able to follow only 4 patients till day 14 and day 21. Of 10 patients, giardia lamblia trophozoites were present in 7 and cysts in 3. After treatment, all showed complete recovery and clearance of the protozoa from the stool while one showed a decline in the number of giardia lamblia cysts from 25/hpf to 2/hpf on day 7 but the infection cleared by day 14. Secnidazole as a single dose is effective and safe for the treatment of intestinal amoebiasis<sup>3,4</sup>. Efficacy and tolerability of Secnidazole was compared with Metronidazole in a randomized open study of 222 adults infected with giardia lamblia. Secnidazole was administered as a single dose of 30 mg/kg body weight and Metronidazole in a dose of 250 mg for 5 days. Parasitological cure frequency of dose was achieved in 92% patients in the Secnidazole group and 88.2% in the Metronidazole group<sup>5</sup>.

Rakhshanda Baqai, Huma Qureshi and Sarwar J. Zuberi  
PMRC Research Centre, Jinnab Postgraduate Medical Centre, Karachi.

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