



spotlight on health

When Treating Alzheimer's Disease, Combination Therapy May Provide The Greatest Benefit

(NAPSA)—While you may be aware that FDA-approved treatments are available for patients with Alzheimer's disease, did you know that using two classes of medications in combination may provide the greatest benefits?

In the 1990's, a class of treatments called cholinesterase inhibitors was approved for the treatment of mild to moderate Alzheimer's disease. In 2003, a new type of therapy, Namenda®, was approved for the treatment of moderate to severe Alzheimer's disease. Namenda works in a different way than previously approved treatments, by helping to regulate levels of glutamate, a messenger chemical that the brain uses to process, store, and retrieve information. The only approved treatment for moderate to severe Alzheimer's disease, Namenda may help with memory, behavior, and activities of daily living.

"Because of their different mechanisms of action, Namenda and cholinesterase inhibitors can be used successfully in combination when treating Alzheimer's disease," explained R. Malcolm Stewart, M.D., Director of the American Parkinson Disease Association Information & Referral Center at Presbyterian Hospital in Dallas, TX. "In fact, I con-



Research shows that nearly half of Alzheimer's disease patients are first diagnosed in the moderate to severe stages of the disease.

sider combination therapy to be the best overall way to treat patients with this disease."

A 2004 study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* found that combining Namenda with a stable dose of a cholinesterase inhibitor provides greater cognitive, functional, global and behavioral benefits to people with moderate to severe Alzheimer's disease than treatment with a cholinesterase inhibitor alone.

Tracy Evans cares for her longtime friend Alice Safey, who has been diagnosed with moderate Alzheimer's disease by her physician. Evans said the addition of Namenda to her friend's regimen has made an important difference.

"Alice is not only happier and less agitated since she started on Namenda," Evans noted, "but she is able to enjoy certain activities, like walking outside, like she did before she developed Alzheimer's."

Dr. Stewart encourages families who suspect a loved one may have Alzheimer's disease to seek a diagnosis right away. "Getting a diagnosis is important because it allows the patient to begin treatment, which can slow the progression of symptoms of the disease," he explained. For families with loved ones who've already been diagnosed, Dr. Stewart suggests that caregivers speak with their doctor about the potential benefits of combination therapy.

Namenda is available by prescription in the U.S. For more information, ask your doctor about Namenda or visit www.Namenda.com. Individual results may vary by patient.

Patients who are hypersensitive to memantine HCl or any ingredients used in its formulation should not take Namenda. The most common adverse events reported with Namenda vs placebo were dizziness, confusion, headache, and constipation. Patients with severe kidney disease should take a reduced dosage of Namenda.