Health And Well-Being

New Technology Breaks Through Cancer Pain

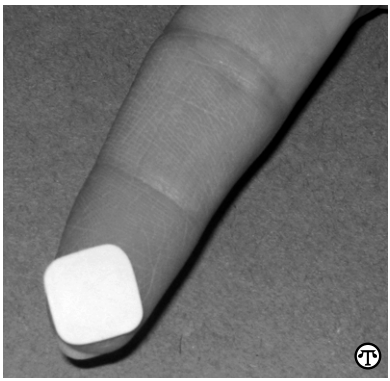
(NAPSA)—Cancer patients fraught with painful flare-ups, or breakthrough pain, may soon receive assistance in the form of a new, easy-to-use oral adhesive disc.

Chronic cancer patients frequently experience two types of pain: persistent and breakthrough. Persistent cancer pain is defined as continuous pain present for long periods of time.

Breakthrough pain is brief and often severe, and can afflict patients already taking medication for persistent pain. In fact, the American Cancer Society reports that it's common for people with persistent pain to also experience breakthrough episodes. For some patients, the pain is connected to certain activities, such as walking or dressing. For others, it occurs unexpectedly, and can be caused by the cancer itself, or the cancer treatment. It is called "breakthrough" because it "breaks through" a regular pain medicine schedule.

The best treatments for such pain flare-ups are fast-acting medicines that remain in the body for a short period of time. Taken "as needed," these medications are used at the onset of the pain breakthrough. One breakthrough pain medication is the opiate fentanyl.

The next generation of fentanyl is a patient-friendly, small oral adhesive disc from BioDelivery Sciences, known as BEMA™ Fentanyl. The small disc is composed of an adhesive layer and a nonadhesive backing layer, with both layers capable of holding the medicine. The disc adheres to the inside cheeks and delivers the dose of medication. And instead of requiring removal upon completion of the drug delivery, the BEMA™ patch disintegrates in the mouth and leaves no drug residue. This novel medication is now undergoing Phase III clinical trials.



A new oral disc delivers pain medication to help people overcome cancer pain.

In a crossover study comparing BEMA™ Fentanyl and Actiq®, the lozenge formulation of fentanyl that is the current market leader in fast-dissolving fentanyl products for breakthrough cancer pain, results showed that the BEMA™ Fentanyl formulation provided for faster absorption and greater concentration of the drug.

"The results of our study demonstrated that fentanyl could be delivered more effectively and easily using the BEMA™ technology," said BioDelivery CEO Mark Sirgo. "Besides allowing greater absorption of fentanyl, the BEMA™ disc was easier to use, as it only required seconds to apply."

According to the World Health Organization, pain is a prevalent symptom in cancer patients, affecting up to 50 percent of those undergoing active cancer treatment and up to 90 percent of those with advanced disease. For more information on BEMA™ Fentanyl, log on to www.bdsinternational.com.