Thyroid Drug Shows Promise as Treatment for Fatty Liver Disease

Viking Therapeutics' investigational drug is called VK2809.

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People with non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) showed impressive declines in liver fat thanks to treatment with Viking Therapeutics' investigational thyroid receptor agonist, called VK2809, Healio reports.

Presenting their findings at the Annual Meeting of the American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases in San Francisco (The Liver Meeting), researchers conducted a double-blind Phase II study in which they randomly assigned people with fatty liver disease and high cholesterol to receive a placebo (15 people), 10 milligrams of VK2809 every other day (16 people) or 10 mg of VK2809 daily (16 people).

The participants were treated for 12 weeks and received four weeks of follow-up.

At the end of treatment, the every-other-day group, the daily group and the placebo group saw respective changes in LDL of a decrease of 32.3 milligrams per deciliter, a decrease of 25.2 mg/dl and an increase of 0.53 mg/dl. Overall, those in the treatment groups experienced a 21.8 percent decline in LDL.

As for changes in liver fat, the every-other-day group, the daily group and the placebo group experienced a 56.5 percent reduction, a 59.7 percent reduction and an 8.9 percent reduction. Compared with the placebo group, those in the every-other-day group experienced a 72 percent relative reduction in liver fat and those in the daily group experienced a 76 percent relative reduction.

As for those who experienced a 30 percent or greater decrease in their liver fat, 18.2 percent of the placebo group fell into this category, compared with 76.9 percent of the every-other-day group and 90.9 percent of those in the daily group.

The study authors categorized those who saw their liver fat decline by 50 percent as "super responders." A total of 18.2 percent of the placebo group were super responders, compared with 61.5 percent of the every-other-day group and 72.7 percent of those in the daily group.

VK2809 was safe and well tolerated.

To read the Healio article, click here.

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