

Survey Report: Comparative Colchicine Brand Response in FMF Patients

Janine Jagger, April 10, 2011

This survey assesses the quality of symptomatic relief from different brands of colchicine in FMF patients. The original reason for conducting the survey was to provide the US FDA with feedback on the impact of banning four long established brands of colchicine and replacing them with one brand that was not tested on FMF patients. Although it is a small survey, it nevertheless demonstrates a principle known to FMF patients but not recognized by the medical community – that our response to colchicine is idiosyncratic and that access to a variety of brands allows us to find by trial and error a brand that provides the best therapeutic response with the fewest side effects. So although the problem came to light in the US, the issue of access to colchicine is of concern to us all.

The survey was designed and conducted by Janine Jagger, M.P.H., Ph.D., epidemiologist, academic researcher, FMF patient, and distributed to two online FMF patient support groups. Of 30 patients responding (from various countries), 23 were selected who took at least one brand of colchicine that is or was on the US market. These 23 were analyzed separately and a report was submitted to the US FDA. The remaining 6 cases were from other countries and did not take a brand of colchicine on the US market. The first section of the analysis is of the 23 cases and the second section includes the other 6 cases.

Thanks to everyone who participated.

Part I: Twenty-three cases taking a brand of colchicine on the US market:

The **brand analysis** begins with FMF patients' experience with Colcris, the sole brand now allowed for sale in the US by the FDA. It is followed by FMF patients' experiences with the West-Ward brand – the only other brand of colchicine applying to the FDA for reentrance into the US market as an approved drug.

Colcris

Six out of 23 FMF patients (26%) reported ever taking Colcris; 1/6 patients (17%) had a satisfactory response to Colcris and continued taking it; 2/6 patients (33%) had an unsatisfactory response to Colcris but continued taking it; 3/6 patients (50%) had an unsatisfactory response to Colcris and discontinued taking it. 3/6 patients (50%) who took Colcris listed Colcris as the “worst brand” they had ever taken. 1/6 patients (17%) taking Colcris listed Watson as the “worst brand” they had ever taken. 5/6 patients (83%) who took Colcris listed West-Ward as the “best brand” they had ever taken. The verbatim comments of those reporting an unsatisfactory response to Colcris (5 out of 6 patients) follow:

#1: Best brand: West-Ward / Worst brand: Watson

Colcris: discontinued because of unsatisfactory response. Did not relieve my symptoms as well as West-Ward.

#2: Best brand: West-Ward / Worst brand: Colcris (Odan also taken with unsatisfactory response)

Colcris: I had to discontinue it because of an unsatisfactory response. Continuous cramps and stomach pain. It escalated in severity until I had to stop taking it. Also, nausea and ill feeling.

Odan: I'm taking it now because Colcris was far worse. Stomach problems aren't as severe as Colcris.

#3: Best brand: West-Ward / Worst brand: Colcris (Odan also taken and satisfactory response reported)

Colcris: I had to discontinue it because of an unsatisfactory response. Colcris was not as effective. I started to have attacks again. I felt nauseous taking the drug.

#4: Best brand: West-Ward / Worst brand: Colcrys

Colcrys: I had an unsatisfactory response but I kept taking it. I had worsening joint problems, severe fatigue.

#5: Best brand: West-Ward / Worst brand: Colcrys

Colcrys: Unsatisfactory response reported but kept taking it. The fever and joint pain seem to come back sooner with Colcrys. We keep taking it because we have no choice. It is the only one available at the pharmacy here in AZ.

West-Ward

Twenty out of 23 FMF patients (87%) reported ever taking West-Ward; 15/20 patients (75%) had a satisfactory response to West-Ward and continued taking it; 5/20 patients (25%) had an unsatisfactory response to West-Ward but continued taking it; no patients discontinued West-Ward. 15/20 patients (75%) taking West-Ward listed it as the “best brand” they had ever taken. 4/20 patients (20%) who took West-Ward listed West-Ward as the “worst brand” they had ever taken; of those, 3 listed Watson and 1 listed Odan as their “best brands.” The comments of those reporting an unsatisfactory response to West-Ward (5 out of 20 patients) follow:

#1 Best brand: Watson / Worst brand: West-Ward

West-Ward: Unsatisfactory response reported but kept taking it. I have had more episodes of FMF while on it.

#2 Best brand: Watson / Worst brand: West-Ward

West-Ward: Unsatisfactory response reported but kept taking it. I had 1 attack per year with Watson or even less. Once i got to 18 months without an attack. I have been with West-Ward for more than a year now and I have had my 5th attack in around 14 months.

#3 Best brand: Watson / --

West-Ward: Unsatisfactory response reported but kept taking it. I had to take more of it to get the same response as Watson.

#4 Best brand: Odan / Worst brand: West-Ward

West-Ward: Unsatisfactory response but kept taking it. It didn't appear to protect me as well as Odan does.

#5 Best brand: Watson / Worst brand: West-Ward

West-Ward: Unsatisfactory response reported but kept taking it. My symptoms increased in frequency and strength. It was the only colchicine available at the time.

Watson

Seven out of 23 FMF patients (30%) reported ever taking Watson; 5/7 patients (71%) had a satisfactory response to Watson and continued taking it; 2/7 patients (29%) had an unsatisfactory response to Watson and discontinued taking it. 4/7 patients (57%) listed Watson as the “best brand” they had ever taken. 2/7 patients (29%) who took Watson listed Watson as the “worst brand” they had ever taken; of those, both listed West-Ward as their “best brand.” The verbatim comments of those reporting an unsatisfactory response to Watson (2 out of 7 patients) follow:

#1 Best brand West-Ward/ Worst brand Watson. Discontinued use because of an unsatisfactory response. My symptoms did not go away and when I increased the dose it caused intestinal side effects

#2 Best brand West-Ward/ Worst brand Watson. Discontinued use because of an unsatisfactory response. Attacks became worse. The medication was ineffective.

Odan

Five out of 23 FMF patients (22%) reported ever taking Odan, a Canadian brand. They are included here because respondents taking Odan had also taken a brand on the US market. 4/5 patients (80%) had a

satisfactory response and 1/5 patients (20%) had an unsatisfactory response but continued taking it. Odan was listed as the “best brand” ever taken by 2/5 patients. The unsatisfactory response of 1 patient:

#1 Odan: I'm taking it now because Colcrys was far worse. Stomach problems aren't as severe as Colcrys. The remaining four brands mentioned were:

Excellium: Taken by 5 respondents. One respondent had a satisfactory response and the remaining 4 discontinued this brand because it did not reduce their FMF symptoms. The 4 respondents “best brands” were 2 West-Ward, 2 Watson.

Israeli colchicine: Taken by 3 respondents. Two respondents has a satisfactory response and the third discontinued use because of abnormal liver function tests (the cause of which was not determined). This patient’s “best brand” was West-Ward.

Qualitest: Taken by 2 respondents. One respondent had a satisfactory response and the other discontinued use because of an apparent allergic reaction. This patient’s “best brand” was Watson.

Vision: Taken by 1 respondent and discontinued for an undisclosed reason. The respondent’s “best brand” was Watson.

Table 1: Summary of FMF Patients Responses to Various Brands of Colchicine

BRAND	Best Brand Ever	Worst Brand Ever	Satisfactory kept taking	Unsatisfactory kept taking	Unsatisfactory discontinued	Reactions reported
Colcrys	0	3/6 (50%)	1/6 (17%)	2/6 (33%)	3/6 (50%)	1,2,4,4,5,6,7,7
West-Ward	15/20(75%)	4/20(20%)	15/20 (75%)	5/20 (25%)	0	1,1,2,2,2,3,3
Watson	4/7 (57%)	2/7 (29%)	5/7 (71%)	0	2/7 (29%)	1,2,8
Odan	2/5 (40%)	0	4/5 (80%)	1/5 (20%)	0	-
Excellium	0	1/5 (20%)	1/5 (20%)	0	4/5 (80%)	1,1,1,1
Israeli	0	0	2/3 (66%)	0	1/3 (33%)	9
Qualitest	0	0	½ (50%)	0	½(50%)	10
Vision	0	0	0	0	1/1 (100%)	-

Reactions: 1= inadequate symptom control; 2= increased episodes; 3= needed increased dose 4=nausea; 5= stomach pain; 6= fatigue; 7= joint pain; 8= intestinal side effects; 9= abnormal liver function; 10=allergic reaction

Conclusions: These results demonstrate FMF patients’ variable and idiosyncratic responses to different brands of colchicine. Twenty-three patients had tried 8 different brands of colchicine. Eight patients had tried only 1 brand, found it “satisfactory” and stayed with it. Fifteen patients tried an average of 3 brands each to find a “satisfactory brand.” There was no brand of colchicine that uniformly provided satisfactory symptom control without side effects. The highest rated brand (West-Ward) with 75% “best brand” ranking and 75% “satisfactory” rating of symptom control still did not provide satisfactory results for 25% of patients. Those 25% achieved a satisfactory result with Watson (4 patients) and Odan (1 patient). Of note was the finding that 22/23 patients (96%) by trial and error found a “satisfactory” brand of colchicine. Also of note was that among 22 patients who had found a satisfactory brand, in only 1 case (5%) was Colcrys named as the satisfactory brand. All other brands named by FMF patients as achieving a “satisfactory” response have been banned by the FDA (or are from foreign sources). These results also suggest that permitting West-Ward back on the U.S. market as an approved drug will make a significant contribution to narrowing the therapeutic gap for FMF patients left by the sole brand, Colcrys. But even 2 brands are not enough to fill the variable needs of FMF

patients, who continue to share contact information and instructions for acquiring their colchicine from foreign sources.

Part II: Six cases from non-US countries (1 case from UK was excluded from drug comparisons because of insufficient information on brands, 1 non-US case from Peru was included with US cases because brand of colchicine was from US)

Table 2. Six non-US FMF Patients' Responses to Various Brands of Colchicine

COUNTRY	Best Brand Ever	Worst Brand Ever	Total Brands Tried
Australia	Colgout	Lengout	2
Canada	Odan	-	1
Egypt	Al nasr	-	2
Netherlands	Actavis	Sandoz, PCH	3
Qatar	Colmediten	Colch. haude	3
Turkey	Kolsin	Fransa colch.	2

Six patients tried 12 brands of colchicine. One person took only one brand and had a satisfactory response and stayed with it. The remaining 5 tried an average of 2.4 different brands. All cases expressed satisfaction with current brands but the Egyptian brand was associated with "mild hair loss."

Part III: All cases combined, description of survey respondents: location of cases, age at first symptom, age at diagnosis, number of years from onset to diagnosis

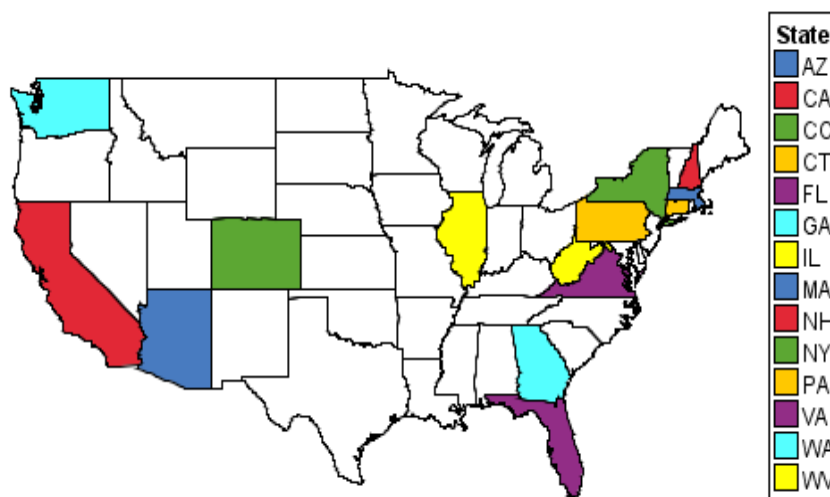


Figure 1: Location of FMF cases living in the US (non-US cases were from Australia, Canada, Egypt, Netherlands, Peru, Qatar, Turkey, UK)

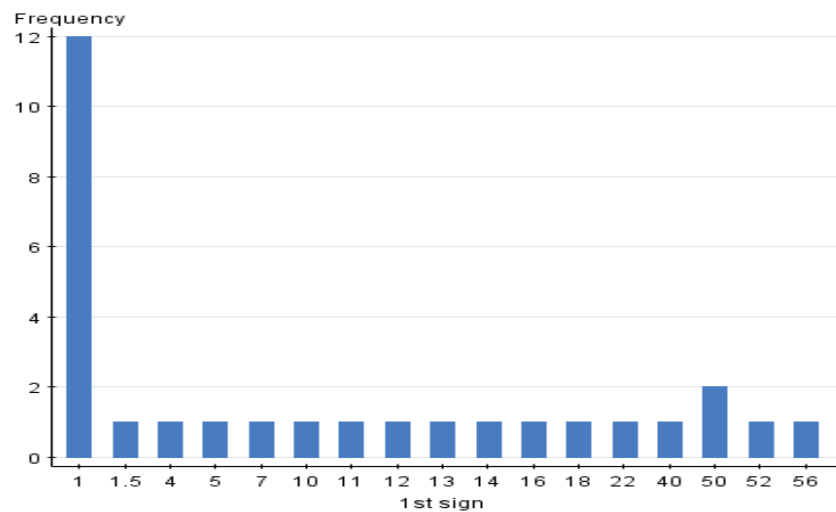


Figure 2. Age at first sign of FMF

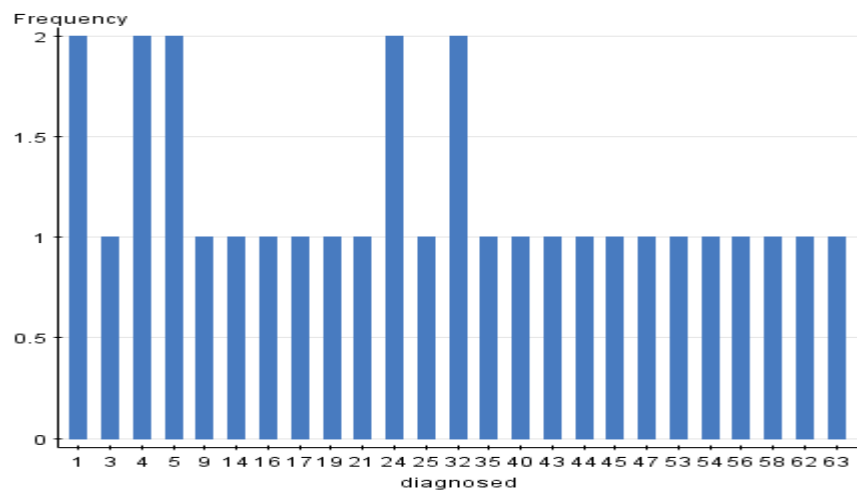


Figure 3. Age at diagnosis of FMF

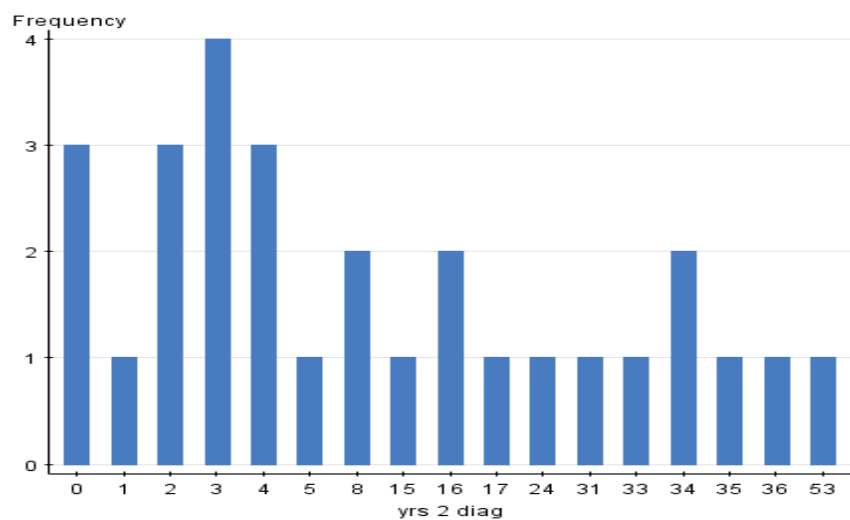


Figure 4. Years to diagnosis of FMF