

acute MI had an effect on outcome. On arrival to the CCU, 273 patients were randomized to either placebo or magnesium infusion. One hundred thirty-seven received placebo (of whom 74 had an acute MI), and 136 received magnesium (of whom 56 had acute MI). During the four weeks after treatment mortality was 7% in the magnesium group, and 19% in the placebo group ( $P = .045$ ). No adverse effects of magnesium were noted. Twenty-one percent of patients in the magnesium group versus 47% of patients in the placebo group had arrhythmias requiring therapy ( $P = .004$ ). The authors conclude that suspected acute MI patients should be treated with IV infusion of magnesium because it is cheap, easy to administer, and appears to be without serious side effects.

Marcus L Denson, MD

ketotifen, urticaria, antianaphylaxis, antihistamine

### Prevention of mast-cell degranulation by ketotifen in patients with physical urticarias

Huston DP, Bressler RB, Kalner M, et al  
*Ann Intern Med* 104:507-510  
Apr 1986

Ketotifen is a benzocycloheptathiophene derivative with antianaphylactic properties, an H-1 receptor antagonist, and a calcium channel blocker. Three patients with a history of physical urticaria were appropriately stimulated to develop an urticarial reaction. Blood histamine levels showed a substantial increase. The patients were then given 1 or 2 mg of ketotifen orally twice a day. After one month of treatment, each patient was appropriately stimulated again. Two of the three patients developed minimal erythema without wheals; the remaining patient was asymptomatic. Histamine levels during stimulation were markedly reduced. No side effects were reported in 12 months of treatment. The mechanism of action of ketotifen is unknown; however, in these three patients it was capable of inhibiting cutaneous mast cell degranulation and its accompanying symptoms.

Monica Hauptman, MD

acyclovir, genital herpes, treatment

### Oral acyclovir for treatment and suppression of genital herpes simplex virus infection

Guinan ME  
*JAMA* 225:1747-1749  
Apr 4, 1986

This paper reviews the use of oral acyclovir for the treat-

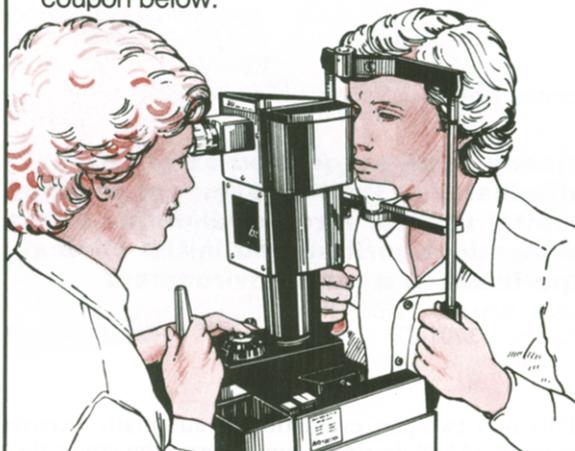
(Continued on page 1246).

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