

Pyritinol

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First report of pancreatitis: case report

A 23-year-old student experienced 3 episodes of pancreatitis following the ingestion of pyritinol for better performance on examinations.

Initially, the man was hospitalised with acute upper abdominal pain. His serum amylase and lipase levels were 7796 U/L (upper limit of normal 115) and 24 300 U/L (< 190) and an ultrasound showed slight enlargement of the head of his pancreas. He was discharged after 12 days.

Seventeen months later, the man presented with upper abdominal pain, nausea and vomiting; his serum amylase and lipase levels were 222 and 1106 U/L, respectively. Following treatment with an H₂ receptor antagonist and an analgesic, his symptoms resolved. Ten days after this second episode, he presented with the same symptoms as before. His serum amylase and lipase levels were 353 and 1629 U/L, respectively, and CT scans were consistent with oedematous pancreatitis.

Questioning revealed that the man had taken pyritinol 600 mg/day during the 3 months prior to the first episode of pancreatitis and, he had taken the agent [*dosage not stated*] during the 6 and 4 days before the second and third episodes, respectively. He was rechallenged with a single dose of pyritinol 400mg. He developed nausea, radiating upper abdominal pain and increased serum amylase and lipase levels, that later resolved.

During 2.5 years of follow-up, the man did not take pyritinol again and he did not experience any further symptoms of pancreatitis.

Author comment: *'We report this observation for three reasons: first, because the reexposition makes a causal relationship between the intake of pyritinol and the occurrence of acute pancreatitis very likely; second, because this side effect of pyritinol has not been described previously; and third, because the immunologic investigations point to a probable T cell-mediated hypersensitivity reaction.'*

Straumann A, et al. Acute pancreatitis due to pyritinol: an immune mediated phenomenon. *Gastroenterology* 115: 452-454, Aug 1998 - Switzerland 800696548