

ID CORNER

Fluoroquinolones: More and More Warnings

Christian Rojas-Moreno¹

¹Division of Infectious Diseases, Department of Medicine, University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri

Correspondence: Christian Rojas, MD. One Hospital Dr. Columbia, MO 65212 (rojasch@health.missouri.edu)

Am J Hosp Med 2019 Jan;3(1):2019.004 <https://doi.org/10.24150/ajhm/2019.004>

Fluoroquinolones can be the drug of choice in several clinical situations due to their antibacterial spectrum, good tissue penetration, and excellent oral bioavailability. However, side effects, drug interactions and the risk of *C. difficile* infections are making us think twice before prescribing fluoroquinolones.

Below is a summary of warnings from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) over the years.

- July 2008: Boxed warning for the risk of tendon rupture/tendinitis.
- February 2011: Boxed warning for the risk of myasthenia gravis exacerbation.
- August 2013: Updated label due to the risk of peripheral neuropathy, which can be irreversible.
- May 2016: A drug safety communication advised that fluoroquinolones should be used only when there are no other options for treatment of acute sinusitis, acute bronchitis and uncomplicated urinary tract infections. This was due a safety review showing association between fluoroquinolones and significant side effects (those mentioned above).
- July 2016: Previous communication upgraded to boxed warning.

- July 2018: Updated label to warn about the risk of hypoglycemia and side effects related to mental health.
- December 2018: An FDA review found that use of fluoroquinolones can be associated with increased risk of aortic aneurysm dissection and recommended avoidance of fluoroquinolones in patients with aortic aneurysm or is at risk to develop one (peripheral vascular disease, hypertension, Marfan syndrome, Ehlers-Danlos syndrome, and elderly patients).

Therefore, providers should evaluate and discuss the risks and benefits of with each individual patient.

Notes

Financial support: Author declares that no financial assistance was taken from any source.

Potential conflicts of interest: Author declares no conflicts of interest. Author declares that he has no commercial or proprietary interest in any drug, device, or equipment mentioned in the submitted article.

Further reading:

www.fda.gov