

## **Voriconazole: A highly potent treatment for fungal infections**

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The effectiveness of voriconazole in combating fungal infections has been confirmed by a new study to be featured in the *International Journal of Antimicrobial Agents*, published by Elsevier. Fungal infections can kill people with weakened immune systems, which can be caused by AIDS, cancer treatment or organ replacement, and the research reinforces earlier findings that this drug is a potent treatment for a wide range of these infections.

Voriconazole is an antifungal agent which has been approved for treatment of a broad range of fungal infections, including those caused by *Candida* species. The authors, from the United Kingdom, the United States of America and New Zealand, analyzed susceptibility data for the yeasts isolated from patients taking part in the voriconazole phase III clinical trials. The aim was to compare the effectiveness of voriconazole with other agents, by studying the yeasts' response to these antifungal agents in vitro, and also to check for resistance to voriconazole.

The researchers analyzed the effect of itraconazole, fluconazole, amphotericin B and voriconazole versus 1763 yeasts isolated from samples obtained from 472 patients. The yeast cultures obtained were predominantly *Candida spp*. (97.1%), although there were seven genera and 22 species of yeasts in all. The infections the patients were suffering from arose most commonly from surgery/trauma/burns (37% of patients), haematological malignancy (13%) or bacteria (11%).

The authors conclude that "Voriconazole exhibits high potency in vitro



against a wide range of yeast species. It is notably more active than fluconazole in terms of both potency and spectrum, but shows similar activity to itraconazole against most yeasts." They also note that the activity of the agent in vitro may help predict the response of patients to treatment.

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