

NSAIDs found to be of little benefit to patients with back pain

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(HealthDay)—Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) don't

help most patients with back pain, according to a review published online Feb. 2 in the *Annals of the Rheumatic Diseases*.

Gustavo Machado, a research fellow with the George Institute for Global Health in Sydney, and colleagues examined 35 studies on the use of NSAIDs to treat back pain. The studies tracked about 6,000 patients.

The researchers estimated that only one in six patients gained a benefit from taking NSAIDs. The investigators also found that participants taking the drugs were 2.5 times more likely to experience gastrointestinal side effects, compared with those who took placebos.

"NSAIDs are effective for spinal pain, but the magnitude of the difference in outcomes between the intervention and placebo groups is not clinically important," the authors write. "At present, there are no simple analgesics that provide clinically important effects for spinal pain over placebo. There is an urgent need to develop new drug therapies for this condition."

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