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# NEWS RELEASE



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SOUTHWESTERN MEDICAL SCHOOL AT DALLAS

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DALLAS -- The Department of Neurology of The University of Texas Southwestern Medical School at Dallas has been selected to participate in an evaluation of a new drug, L-Dopa (Levodopa), which has shown promise in the treatment of Parkinsonism.

The study, to be directed by Richard R. North, M.D., Assistant Professor of Neurology, will admit 50 patients to treatment with L-Dopa over a period of some four months, beginning March 15. The study is planned in concurrence with the Dallas County Medical Society.

In a letter this week to Dallas physicians advising them of the study, Dr. North pointed out that "L-Dopa is still a highly experimental drug but early indications suggest that many patients with Parkinsonism show moderate to marked improvement."

The treatments will be carried out at Parkland Hospital Neurology Clinic and at a special Parkinsonism Clinic to be established at Presbyterian Hospital.

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first add L-Dopa

Patients will be admitted to the study solely on referral from their personal physician, Dr. North emphasized. Southwestern is one of 24 research centers selected to participate in the study in connection with Hoffman-LaRoche, Inc., a pharmaceutical manufacturer. Hoffman-LaRoche will supply the drug.

Parkinsonism, a disease named for an English physician who first described it, is a disorder characterized by shaking palsy rigidity, and other symptoms. Some success in controlling the disorder has been achieved by delicate brain surgery in which the area of the brain causing the palsy is destroyed by intense cold induced directly into the affected area. The beneficial effects of the "cold knife" brain surgery have often proved to be of limited duration, and additional treatment to control the palsy, facial distortion, speech problems and other symptoms of the disorder is being sought.

Dr. David Daly, Chairman of the Neurology Department at Southwestern, estimated that there are at least 200 Parkinsonism patients in Dallas County. Because of a limited supply of the drug at the outset, only 50 patients can be admitted to the study. Out-of-county patients also will be considered, Dr. Daly said.

second add L-Dopa

Dr. North, in his letter to Dallas physicians, listed seven criteria that patients should meet to be eligible for the study: (1) Patients who have undergone surgical treatment for Parkinsonism must have had this operation at least six months ago and have no residual complications such as aphasia, (a speech disorder), hemiplegia, (paralysis), or seizures. (2) Patients who have had a myocardial infarction (heart attack) in the past two years or who have symptomatic (heart) disease at this time will not be accepted. (3) Patients with poorly controlled or complicated diabetes mellitus will be excluded. (4) Any patient with a blood disorder, including anemia, will not be accepted. (5) For the present, any patient with drug-induced Parkinsonism will not be accepted to the study. (6) Any patient with narrow angle glaucoma (an eye disorder) cannot be accepted, but those with chronic wide angle glaucoma will be accepted if the intra-ocular pressure is well controlled. (7) Until studies of the effects on reproductive function are completed, women of childbearing potential cannot be accepted.

Patients who meet the criteria must agree to weekly physical examinations for the first six weeks, then bi-weekly for the following month, and then monthly examinations for an indefinite period.

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