



NEUROLOGY

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NEUROPSYCHOLOGY

DIAGNOSTICS

EMG / NCV
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REHABILITATION

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PSYCHODIAGNOSTIC
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EVALUATIONS
PAIN MANAGEMENT

May 23, 2001

Ms. Kimberly Topper
Center for Drug Evaluation and Research (HFD-21)
Food and Drug Administration
560 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20857

Dear Ms. Topper:

It has come to my attention that there is going to be a Federal Advisory Committee Meeting held on June 14 and June 15 in the Maryland area.

September
I will be unable to attend the meeting; however, I am a very strong advocate for the use of chronic opioid analgesics in nonmalignant pain. The literature I feel clearly supports the use of these medications. They have dramatically improved the quality of life for many of my patients. Currently, I probably maintain approximately a thousand patients on chronic opioids for nonmalignant pain. I find a very small percentage of these patients use the medications inappropriately, and, if they do so, they are quickly dismissed.

However, for the larger percentage, these medications allow them to function much more productively in their daily lives. To in any way impede these patients' ability to utilize these medications would be inhumane. The opioid medications are clearly the most effective medications for the management of chronic pain no matter what the etiology and are clearly the safest medications, as well. I hope the Advisory Committee demonstrates the appropriate understanding and compassion to continue to support the use of long-acting opioids in the treatment of chronic nonmalignant pain.

If you care to discuss these questions or issues any further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

F. Desmond Hussey, M.D.
FDH/ms