

Patient Information sheet on CGRP Antagonists (Calcium gene-related polypeptide)

This is a new group of preventative medications which have been specifically designed to block the migraine mechanism. They are not helpful in a third of people, in a third of people they are partially helpful and in a third of people, they are effective. Their use is unfortunately limited due to the high cost – approximately £400 per month.

CGRP Antagonists are currently available for people with chronic migraine, i.e. headache on 15 days, of the month at least 8 of which are migrainous. They are administered in a self-injection once every month. However, current practice is to use Botox in the first instance for chronic migraine and then these injections if Botox fails. The injections are given over an initial 3-month period to see if they are effective before continuing further.

Their side-effect profile is very low but as the medications haven't been available until quite recently, any side-effects over the longer term have not been clarified.