



2024 INTERVIEW SUMMARY SHEET

SPEAKER**Robert P. Cowan, MD****TITLE & ORGANIZATION****Professor of Neurology & Director of
Research in Headache and Facial Pain
Stanford University School of Medicine****TOPIC****Unofficial Side Effects of CGRP Monoclonal Antibodies**

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- CGRP inhibitors are a class of drugs used to treat migraine.
- CGRP stands for calcitonin gene-related peptide, which is a molecule found throughout the body.
- CGRP is involved in inflammation, pain response, and tissue repair.
- Blocking CGRP can help reduce migraine symptoms, but it may also have unintended side effects.
- Common side effects of CGRP inhibitors include gastrointestinal issues, upper respiratory infections, and urinary tract infections.
- Side effects can vary among individuals and may be difficult to distinguish from the effects of the disease itself.
- Side effects such as anxiety, weight gain, hair loss, and constipation may be related to CGRP inhibitors, but more research is needed to confirm this.
- Theoretically, CGRP inhibitors and also triptans may be contraindicated in people with Raynaud syndrome.
- It is important to report any side effects to the FDA or other relevant authorities.
- The combination of different CGRP inhibitors or using them with other drugs may have unknown risks and should be discussed with a healthcare provider.
- If experiencing side effects, it is important to consult with a doctor and consider alternative treatment options.

TREATMENTS CITED

Atogepant (Qulipta)	Eptinezumab (Vypeti)
CGRP inhibitors	Erenumab (Aimovig)
CGRP monoclonal antibodies (mAbs)	Fremanezumab (Ajovy)
CGRP small-molecule receptor antagonists (gepants)	Galcanezumab (Emgality)
	Laxatives
	Topiramate (Topamax)
	Triptans

QUOTES

"CGRP is what we call a phase-reactant molecule. In other words, its numbers, its concentration in the blood goes up when there's a problem, and when they go up, they're serving a purpose; they're there for a reason and they have a lot to do with how the body responds to a crisis."

"I think that we do our patients a disservice when we present drugs as being side-effect-free and being specific."

"So, side effects are kind of like the most gentle form of adverse events. This is really FDA terminology, and the FDA recognizes four different classes of adverse events, the mildest of which is side effects."

"When you see information that says this medication has been tested over a course of a year or two in healthy individuals and there's been no serious adverse events, we shouldn't get too comfortable with that."

"Very often, someone will say, 'It made my headache so much worse.' But what we don't know is whether what they're really saying is the medicine didn't work and my headache got worse, or it was a consequence of the medicine. And the only way you can figure this out is by talking it through, trying to work out what else was going on, actually listening to the patient, and trying to tease these things out."

PRACTICAL STEPS

- If you experience a side effect from a CGRP inhibitor, ask your doctor about it. They can help determine if the side effect is related to the medication or not.
- Side effects can be reported to the FDA by calling (800) 438-1985, or by visiting the FDA MedWatch website.