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War against munchies

In order to combat our growing epidemic of obesity, scientists are working on various hormones that will control this life-threatening problem. There is an area of the brain that stimulates people to want to eat. These cells have cannabinoid receptors. This is the same part of the brain stimulated in pot smokers to cause the "marijuana munchies." If these receptors can be down-regulated, folks will not have the desire to snack.

Sanofi-Syntholab discovered Rimonabant (AcompliaR), which is the first ever of a new class of drugs, the CB-1 antagonist. In recent studies of this, patients lose weight, the triglycerides are lowered, the HDL cholesterol is increased and those with diabetes, the blood sugar is lowered. It has been tested on more than 6,000 volunteers, is in Phase III and almost ready for FDA approval. Not only does Rimonabant work on energy balance, but it decreases the desire to smoke. It has been long known nicotine helps people lose weight and has now been documented that this is due to its effect on these cannabinoid receptors.

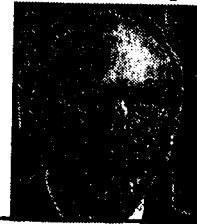
The side-effects are minimally more than taking a placebo. In a study from the Quebec Heart Institute in Canada those who took Rimonabant, the effective dose being 20mg daily, lost an average of 16 pounds a year with improvement of lipids and blood sugar as noted above. This drug will be released within the next year. The benefits are fantastic and the risk is minimal (mild and transient nausea).

The CB-1 hormone that controls the

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munchies is counteracted by Rimonabant. Other hormones that have been identified from our fat system include Angiotensin, which controls blood pressure, Ghrelin which signals the brain to eat whenever the stomach is empty and eases up when it's full, Estrogen, Leptin, Resistin and Adiponectin. As the name implies, Resistin causes insulin resistance with the metabolic syndrome, as well as diabetes. Adiponectin has the opposite effect and as a fringe benefit, quells the inflammatory action of fat. A stomach pacemaker that will cause a release of Ghrelin and give the satiety feeling is close to being brought on the market.

Although the fat cells do not secrete cortisone, it plays an important role in converting the inactive version to the active form. Among other things, cortisone encourages the deposition of abdominal fat. The well advertised product, Corti-Slim works indirectly in reducing the active form of cortisone. With many drug companies having effective products in their pipeline, that which is the most promising and forthcoming is Rimonabant.