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A pen that seeks to improve diabetes care

By Charles E. Buban
 Philippine Daily Inquirer
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Filed Under: Health, Diseases

MANILA, Philippines?it looks, feels, and even clicks like an ordinary pen.

But instead of ink, the prefilled, disposable Lantus SoloStar releases a long-acting form of the hormone insulin (glargine) that lasts for 24 hours.

Indeed, the Lantus SoloStar is changing the way insulin is administered. While a diabetic individual (type 1 or type 2) will still need to inject the pen?s tip deep under the skin (in the abdomen, thigh, or upper arm), the pen promises an experience much different if one utilizes the traditional needle and syringe.

?A diagnosis of diabetes often means the beginning of a life-long struggle to manage glucose (blood sugar) levels. Lantus SoloStar provides a delivery option that may be more acceptable and more convenient to use in comparison with other delivery systems, thus it may promote patient compliance,? explained endocrinologist Sjoberg Kho of the University of Santo Tomas Hospital.

Now in RP

The Lantus SoloStar recently became available here in the Philippines in the hope of offering over 4 million Filipinos suffering from diabetes with an alternative to the traditional needle and syringe insulin therapy.

When oral medications alone no longer suffice, insulin injection is usually used to control blood sugar in people who have type 1 diabetes (the individual?s body does not make insulin and therefore cannot control the amount of sugar in the blood) or in people who have type 2 diabetes (the individual?s blood sugar is too high because his or her body does not produce or use insulin normally).

If not managed well, diabetes could lead to heart attacks, kidney failures, blindness, amputation and obesity.

Diabetes mellitus is the eighth leading cause of death in the Philippines. Ranking fourth worldwide, it is considered to become an epidemic, with the total number of affected people seen to balloon to 360 million by 2025

One single dose

Lantus SoloStar is the only prefilled insulin pen that allows patients to administer doses from one to 80 units in one single injection

The pen offers a 25 percent greater maximum dosing capacity compared to other insulin pens.

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For some individuals with diabetes?elderly or arthritic for example?self-injection can be a barrier to acceptance of insulin therapy.

However, the Lantus SoloStar operates with a low injection force?31 percent less than other insulin pens?that allows a gentle injection.

?Most doctors, when choosing what insulin regimen to prescribe, consider the patient?s insulin regimen, lifestyle and other factors that may affect the ability to use a particular device such as manual dexterity and visual acuity.? Who explained.

A recent survey of Lantus SoloStar?s use in everyday clinical practice, involving more than 2,000 people with diabetes (16 percent with manual dexterity problems and 15 percent with poor eyesight not corrected by glasses) showed that more than 95 percent of participants declared to be ?satisfied? or ?very satisfied? with using the pen to inject insulin, irrespective of diabetes type or previous device experience.

Designers of Lantus SoloStar should be very proud of their latest achievement for the pen even received a 2007 Good Design Award from the Chicago Athenaeum Museum of Architecture and Design, which praised the device?s combination of sleek, attractive design with advanced, sophisticated technology that will benefit people living with diabetes.

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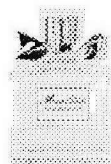
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