Benelux Study finds new trends in use of insulin pen needles

Short needles are becoming the standard and start to be recognized as the optimal “one size fits all” solution

Location. (Date) - A recent survey was conducted by BD (Becton, Dickinson and Company), a leading global medical technology company, between January and April 2012 amongst 263 healthcare practitioners in hospitals in Belgium and the Netherlands with the purpose to gather more insights concerning the type of pen needles advised for patients with diabetes.

The research shows that, fully in line with national Belgian recommendations\(^1\) and only two years after the introduction of the BD Micro-Fine™+ 4mm pen needle, the shortest, thinnest 4mm BD pen needles to date, the market is shifting and short needles are becoming the standard and are starting to be recognized as the optimal ‘one size fits all’ solution.

Short needles are proven to be as effective as longer needles for patients of all body types and ages, and offer a less painful injection experience\(^2\). The survey has shown that already 27% of healthcare professionals in the Netherlands prescribe 4 mm needles when starting up a patient, with 21% doing so in Belgium.

The comfort of 4 mm x32G pen needles helps significantly with the key barrier of injection anxiety in insulin therapy. The presence of injection related anxiety and phobia may influence compliance, glycaemic control and quality of life in

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\(^1\) Belgium: Nieuwe aanbevelingen voor injecties bij mensen met diabetes, BD 2010

patients with injection-treated diabetes\textsuperscript{3}. Clinical trials demonstrate that insulin injections with 32G x 4mm pen needles provide equivalent glucose control to longer insulin pen needles\textsuperscript{4}. Short needles effectively deliver an insulin dose to subcutaneous tissue (the layer of fat below the skin) which is the recommended site for insulin injections\textsuperscript{3}, while reducing the risk of injecting into muscle. Intramuscular injection can accelerate absorption and increase the risk of hypoglycemia (abnormally low blood sugar)\textsuperscript{5}. Subcutaneous injection allows the insulin to be absorbed at an appropriate rate, resulting in increased reliability and better glycaemic control\textsuperscript{3}. Therefore, body mass index (BMI) and age should not limit prescriptions of short needles.

In addition the study in Benelux found that 73\% of healthcare professionals change the needle length during therapy and this mainly based on patient requests, the needle being too long and bruising after injection.

BD’s focus on latest technology for maximum patient comfort and outcomes is clearly recognized as 60\% of interviewed healthcare professionals in Belgium, and 50\% of those in the Netherlands actively recommend BD pen needles.

Matter experts who conducted the study expected healthcare professionals to acknowledge the importance of needle diameter for patients, however this was found only moderately to be the case, with only 56\% of professionals in the Netherlands and 44\% in Belgium considering needle diameter to be important.

The BD study can conclude that the BD Micro-Fine\textsuperscript{TM}+ 4mm x32G needle technology is being acknowledged by diabetes nurse specialists as the most advanced compared to other needles lengths. It delivers the most reliable, straightforward injection requiring no pinching up of the skin prior to injecting in most case, offering great comfort to the person with diabetes injecting. However, continuous education needs to be put in place to extend the use of short needles for patients of all body types.

About BD
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