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## Comparative Effectiveness and Safety of Analgesics for Osteoarthritis



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**Prepared for:**

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
540 Gaither Road  
Rockville, MD 20850  
[www.ahrq.gov](http://www.ahrq.gov)

**Contract No. 290-02-0024**

**Prepared by:**

Oregon Evidence-based Practice Center

*Investigators*

Roger Chou, M.D.  
Mark Helfand, M.D.  
Kim Peterson, M.S.  
Tracy Dana, M.L.S.  
Carol Roberts, B.S.

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None of the investigators has any affiliations or financial involvement that conflicts with the material presented in this report.

**Suggested citation:**

Chou R, Helfand M, Peterson K, Dana T, Roberts C. Comparative Effectiveness and Safety of Analgesics for Osteoarthritis. Comparative Effectiveness Review No. 4. (Prepared by the Oregon Evidence-based Practice Center under Contract No. 290-02-0024.) Rockville, MD: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. September 2006. Available at: [www.effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/reports/final.cfm](http://www.effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/reports/final.cfm).

## Preface

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) conducts the Effective Health Care Program as part of its mission to organize knowledge and make it available to inform decisions about health care. As part of the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003, Congress directed AHRQ to conduct and support research on the comparative outcomes, clinical effectiveness, and appropriateness of pharmaceuticals, devices, and health care services to meet the needs of Medicare, Medicaid, and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP).

AHRQ has an established network of Evidence-based Practice Centers (EPCs) that produce Evidence Reports/Technology Assessments to assist public- and private-sector organizations in their efforts to improve the quality of health care. The EPCs now lend their expertise to the Effective Health Care Program by conducting Comparative Effectiveness Reviews of medications, devices, and other relevant interventions, including strategies for how these items and services can best be organized, managed, and delivered.

Systematic reviews are the building blocks underlying evidence-based practice; they focus attention on the strength and limits of evidence from research studies about the effectiveness and safety of a clinical intervention. In the context of developing recommendations for practice, systematic reviews are useful because they define the strengths and limits of the evidence, clarifying whether assertions about the value of the intervention are based on strong evidence from clinical studies. For more information about systematic reviews, see [www.effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/reference/purpose.cfm](http://www.effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/reference/purpose.cfm).

AHRQ expects that Comparative Effectiveness Reviews will be helpful to health plans, providers, purchasers, government programs, and the health care system as a whole. In addition, AHRQ is committed to presenting information in different formats so that consumers who make decisions about their own and their family's health can benefit from the evidence.

Transparency and stakeholder input are essential to the Effective Health Care Program. Please visit the Web site ([www.effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov](http://www.effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov)) to see draft research questions and reports or to join an e-mail list to learn about new program products and opportunities for input. Comparative Effectiveness Reviews will be updated regularly.

## Acknowledgments

We would like to acknowledge with appreciation the members of the Technical Expert Panel for their advice and consultation. In addition, we would also like to acknowledge Eric Johnson, Ph.D., for reviewing this manuscript.

## Technical Expert Panel

Vibeke Strand, M.D.  
Adjunct Clinical Professor  
Division of Immunology, Stanford University  
Portola Valley, CA  
Expertise: Rheumatology

Kenneth Saag, M.D., M.Sc.  
UAB Center for Education and Research on Therapeutics  
(CERTs) of Musculoskeletal Disorders  
Birmingham, AL  
Expertise: Rheumatology

Leslie J. Crofford, M.D.  
UK Hospital, University of Kentucky  
Lexington, KY  
Expertise: Rheumatology

Michel Boucher, B.Pharm., M.Sc.  
Canadian Coordinating Office for Health Technology Assessment  
Ottawa, Ontario  
Expertise: Pharmacology

Lara Maxwell  
Coordinator, Cochrane Musculoskeletal Group  
Institute of Population Health  
University of Ottawa  
Ottawa, Ontario  
Expertise: Rheumatology

## AHRQ Contacts

Beth A. Collins Sharp, Ph.D., R.N.  
Director  
Evidence-based Practice Center Program  
Center for Outcomes and Evidence  
Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality  
Rockville, MD

Carmen Kelly, Pharm.D., R.Ph.  
Task Order Officer  
Evidence-based Practice Center Program  
Center for Outcomes and Evidence  
Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality  
Rockville, MD

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# Executive Summary

## Background

Osteoarthritis is a chronic condition involving degeneration of cartilage within the joints. It is the most common form of arthritis and is associated with pain, substantial disability, and reduced quality of life. About 6 percent of U.S. adults aged 30 years or older have symptomatic osteoarthritis of the knee, and 3 percent have symptomatic osteoarthritis of the hip. Osteoarthritis increases with age: the incidence and prevalence increase two- to tenfold from age 30 to 65 and continue to increase after age 65. The total costs for arthritis, including osteoarthritis, may be greater than 2 percent of the gross domestic product, with more than half of these costs related to work loss.

Common oral medications for osteoarthritis include nonsteroidal antiinflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) and acetaminophen. Patients with osteoarthritis also use over-the-counter supplements not regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as pharmaceuticals, including glucosamine and chondroitin, as well as topical agents. Opioid medications are also used for selected patients with refractory, chronic pain but are not recommended for first-line treatment of osteoarthritis and therefore not included in this review. Each class of medication or supplement is associated with a unique balance of risks and benefits. In addition, efficacy and safety may vary for individual drugs within a class. Nonpharmacologic interventions (such as physical therapy, weight reduction, and exercise) also help improve pain and functional status in patients with osteoarthritis.

A challenge in treating osteoarthritis is deciding which medications will provide the greatest symptom relief with the fewest serious adverse effects. NSAIDs decrease pain, inflammation, and fever by blocking cyclo-oxygenase (COX) enzymes. Understanding of the pharmacology of NSAIDs continues to evolve, but it is now thought that most NSAIDs block three different COX isoenzymes, known as COX-1, COX-2, and COX-3. COX-1 protects the lining of the stomach from acid. COX-2 is found in joint and muscle, and mediates effects on pain and inflammation. By blocking COX-2, NSAIDs reduce pain compared to placebo in patients with arthritis, low back pain, minor injuries, and soft tissue rheumatism. However, NSAIDs that also block the COX-1 enzyme (also called “nonselective NSAIDs”) can cause gastrointestinal bleeding. In the United States, there are an estimated 16,500 annual deaths due to NSAID-induced gastrointestinal complications, a higher death rate than that for cervical cancer or malignant melanoma. Theoretically, NSAIDs that block only the COX-2 enzyme (also called “coxibs,” “COX-2 selective NSAIDs,” or “selective NSAIDs”) should be safer with regard to gastrointestinal bleeding, but they also appear to be associated with increased rates of serious cardiovascular and other adverse effects. Less is known about COX-3, which is found in the cerebral cortex and cardiac tissue and appears to be involved in centrally mediated pain.

For this report, we defined the terms “selective NSAIDs” or “COX-2 selective NSAIDs” as drugs in the “coxib” class (celecoxib, rofecoxib, valdecoxib, etoricoxib, lumiracoxib). We defined “partially selective NSAIDs” as other drugs shown to have partial in vitro COX-2 selectivity (etodolac, nabumetone, meloxicam). Aspirin differs from other NSAIDs because it irreversibly inhibits platelet aggregation, and the salicylic acid derivatives (aspirin and salsalate)

were considered a separate subgroup. We defined “nonaspirin, nonselective NSAIDs” or simply “nonselective NSAIDs” as “all other NSAIDs.”

This report summarizes the available evidence comparing the benefits and harms of analgesics in the treatment of osteoarthritis.

**Oral agents include:**

- Aspirin
- Acetaminophen
- Celecoxib
- Choline magnesium trisalicylate
- Chondroitin
- Diclofenac
- Diflunisal
- Etodolac
- Etoricoxib<sup>1</sup>
- Fenoprofen
- Flurbiprofen
- Glucosamine
- Ibuprofen
- Indomethacin
- Ketoprofen
- Ketoprofen ER
- Ketorolac
- Lumiracoxib<sup>1</sup>
- Meclofenamate sodium
- Mefenamic acid
- Meloxicam
- Nabumetone
- Naproxen
- Oxaprozin
- Piroxicam
- Rofecoxib<sup>1</sup>
- Salsalate
- Sulindac
- Tenoxicam<sup>1</sup>
- Tiaprofenic acid<sup>1</sup>
- Tolmetin
- Valdecoxib<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> These drugs are currently not approved by the FDA for use in the United States (etoricoxib, lumiracoxib, tenoxicam, tiaprofenic acid) or have been withdrawn from the market (rofecoxib and valdecoxib).

Questions addressed in this report are:

1. What are the comparative benefits and harms of treating osteoarthritis with oral medications or supplements? How do these benefits and harms change with dosage and duration of treatment, and what is the evidence that alternative dosage strategies, such as intermittent dosing and drug holidays, affect the benefits and harms of oral medication use? (*Note: The only benefits considered under this question are improvements in osteoarthritis symptoms from long-term use. Evidence of harms associated with NSAID use include long-term studies of these drugs for treating osteoarthritis or rheumatoid arthritis and for cancer prevention.*)
2. Do the comparative benefits and harms of oral treatments for osteoarthritis vary for certain demographic and clinical subgroups of patients?
  - Demographic subgroups include age, sex, and race.
  - Coexisting diseases include hypertension, edema, ischemic heart disease, heart failure; peptic ulcer disease; history of previous bleeding due to NSAIDs.

- Concomitant medication use includes anticoagulants.
3. What are the comparative effects of coprescribing of H2-antagonists, misoprostol, or proton pump inhibitors (PPIs) on the gastrointestinal harms associated with NSAID use?
  4. What are the comparative benefits and harms of treating osteoarthritis with oral medications as compared with topical preparations? Topical preparations include: capsaicin, diclofenac, ibuprofen, ketoprofen, and salicylate.

A summary of the findings is shown in Table A.

## Conclusions

### Oral NSAIDs

#### Benefits: improvements in osteoarthritis symptoms

- **Nonselective NSAID vs. another nonselective NSAID**
  - Many trials found no clear differences between various nonaspirin, nonselective NSAIDs or partially selective NSAIDs (meloxicam, nabumetone, etodolac) in efficacy for pain relief or improvement in function.
  - In one short-term trial, salsalate and aspirin did not differ significantly in efficacy for pain relief or symptom improvement.
  - No studies evaluated the comparative efficacy of salsalate or aspirin vs. a nonaspirin NSAID.
- **COX-2 selective (NSAID) vs. nonselective NSAID**
  - COX-2 selective NSAIDs and nonselective NSAIDs did not clearly differ in efficacy for pain relief, based on many good-quality, published trials.
- **COX-2 selective NSAID vs. different COX-2 selective NSAID**
  - Celecoxib and rofecoxib did not differ significantly in efficacy for pain relief at commonly used and comparable doses, based on consistent evidence from six good-quality trials.
  - No studies compared efficacy of COX-2s other than celecoxib and rofecoxib.

#### Harms: gastrointestinal (GI) and cardiovascular (CV)

- **Rofecoxib vs. nonselective NSAID**

- In the only large, long-term trial (VIGOR), rofecoxib 50 mg daily caused fewer serious ulcer complications than naproxen 1,000 mg daily in patients with rheumatoid arthritis but also significantly increased the risk of myocardial infarction. The overall rate of serious adverse events was higher with rofecoxib than with naproxen.
    - There were about 16 fewer symptomatic ulcers, including 5.2 fewer serious GI complications, for every 1,000 patients treated with rofecoxib vs. naproxen after a median of 9 months of treatment.
    - There were 3.0 additional myocardial infarctions for every 1,000 patients treated with rofecoxib compared to naproxen in VIGOR.
  - Rofecoxib was associated with an increased risk of myocardial infarction relative to placebo in the most comprehensive systematic review of randomized controlled trials (RCTs).
    - About 3.5 additional myocardial infarctions occurred for every 1,000 patients treated for 1 year with rofecoxib compared to placebo in the systematic review.
  - Rofecoxib was withdrawn from the market in September 2004, primarily because of CV risks.
- **Celecoxib vs. nonselective NSAID or placebo**
  - It is not clear whether celecoxib has fewer potential harms than nonselective NSAIDs when used longer than 3-6 months. In the only large, published trial (CLASS), celecoxib at 800 mg daily did not decrease predefined serious ulcer complications overall compared with diclofenac and ibuprofen; the risk of serious GI events was lower than with ibuprofen, but not diclofenac, at 6 months in patients who did not use aspirin; and there was no reduction in serious GI events at the end of followup. The overall rate of serious adverse events with celecoxib was similar to the rate with ibuprofen and diclofenac.
  - In fair-quality meta-analyses of arthritis trials, most of which evaluated short-term use, celecoxib caused fewer ulcer complications than nonselective NSAIDs and did not increase the risk of myocardial infarction.
  - Celecoxib 400 mg twice daily was associated with an increased risk of serious CV events (CV death or myocardial infarction) relative to placebo in a long-term trial of polyp prevention.
  - Celecoxib was associated with an increased risk of myocardial infarction relative to placebo in the most comprehensive systematic review of RCTs. Most of the

CV events with celecoxib were reported in two large polyp-prevention trials evaluating 200 mg or 400 mg twice daily, or 800 mg once daily.

- About 3.5 additional myocardial infarctions occurred for every 1,000 patients treated for 1 year with celecoxib compared to placebo.

- **Valdecoxib vs. nonselective NSAID or placebo**

- Valdecoxib was associated with a lower risk of upper GI complications compared with diclofenac, ibuprofen, or naproxen in two fair-quality meta-analyses of published and unpublished trials.
- There have been too few events reported in RCTs of patients with chronic conditions to accurately assess CV risk associated with valdecoxib.
- Two short-term trials in a high-risk post-coronary-artery-surgery setting found that valdecoxib was associated with a two- to threefold higher risk of CV events compared with placebo.
- Valdecoxib was withdrawn from the market due to life-threatening skin reactions and increased CV risk.

- **Etoricoxib vs. nonselective NSAID**

- Etoricoxib was associated with fewer GI adverse events (perforations, symptomatic ulcers, and bleeds) than nonselective NSAIDs in a fair-quality meta-analysis of 10 trials.
- In primarily short-term trials, systematic reviews of RCTs suggest that etoricoxib has a similar CV safety profile compared to other NSAIDs, with the possible exception of naproxen. Definitive conclusions are not possible because of small numbers of CV events.

- **Lumiracoxib vs. nonselective NSAID**

- Results from one large trial (TARGET) found fewer adverse GI events with lumiracoxib than with naproxen and ibuprofen.
- There was no statistically significant difference in rates of serious CV events between lumiracoxib relative to naproxen or ibuprofen in TARGET.
- Too few events have been reported in RCTs to accurately assess CV risk associated with lumiracoxib.

- **Partially selective NSAID vs. nonselective NSAID**

- Meloxicam: There were no significant differences in risks of serious GI events in several meta-analyses of up to 28 primarily short-term clinical trials, and no difference in CV risk in three observational studies.
- Nabumetone or etodolac: There was insufficient evidence to make reliable judgments about relative GI safety and no evidence on CV safety.
- **Nonselective NSAID vs. nonselective NSAID or any COX-2 selective NSAID**
  - No clear difference in GI safety was found among nonselective NSAIDs at commonly used doses.
  - The CV safety of naproxen was moderately superior to that of any COX-2 selective NSAID in a large systematic review of RCTs.
    - There were 3.3 additional myocardial infarctions for every 1,000 patients treated with any COX-2 inhibitor instead of naproxen for 1 year.
  - The CV safety of nonselective NSAIDs other than naproxen (data primarily on ibuprofen and diclofenac) was similar to that of COX-2 selective NSAIDs in a large systematic review.
  - In indirect analyses, naproxen was the only nonselective NSAID associated with neutral CV risk relative to placebo.
- **Aspirin**
  - Aspirin is associated with a lower risk of thromboembolic events and a higher risk of GI bleeds compared to placebo or nonuse when given in long-term prophylactic doses.
  - There is insufficient evidence to assess the balance of GI and CV safety of higher dose aspirin as used for pain relief compared with nonaspirin NSAIDs.
- **Salsalate**
  - Salsalate was associated with a lower risk of adverse events than other selective and nonselective NSAIDs using broad composite endpoints in older, poor-quality observational studies. In a more recent observational study, salsalate had a similar rate of complications compared with other NSAIDs.
  - Almost no data are available on CV safety.

### **Harms: mortality**

- Individual trials were not large enough to detect differences in mortality between the

included drugs.

- One meta-analysis of celecoxib found no difference between celecoxib and nonselective NSAIDs, but there were few events.
- In one fair-quality cohort study, nabumetone was associated with a lower risk of all-cause mortality compared with diclofenac and naproxen, but this finding has not been replicated.

### **Harms: hypertension, congestive heart failure (CHF), edema, and impaired renal function**

- All NSAIDs and COX-2 inhibitors can cause or aggravate these conditions.
- There is good evidence from short-term trials that, on average, nonselective NSAIDs raise mean blood pressure by about 5.0 mm Hg (95-percent confidence interval [CI] 1.2 to 8.7). However, similar average blood pressure changes may not necessarily correspond with similar likelihoods of an event requiring withdrawal, medication change, or other clinical consequences.
- Evidence from good-quality observational studies suggests that rofecoxib is associated with greater risks of hypertension, CHF, and edema than celecoxib. Indirect evidence from various meta-analyses of either rofecoxib or celecoxib vs. nonselective NSAIDs are consistent with these findings. Direct randomized trial evidence, however, is limited in quantity and difficult to interpret because of possible non-equivalent dosing of drugs. Evidence regarding the comparative risk of renal dysfunction for celecoxib and rofecoxib is sparse.
- There was weak evidence that aspirin and sulindac have less hypertensive effect than other nonselective NSAIDs.
- There were no clear differences among other selective or nonselective NSAIDs for these adverse events.

### **Harms: hepatotoxicity**

- Clinically significant hepatotoxicity was rare.
- Among currently marketed NSAIDs, only diclofenac was associated with a significantly higher rate of liver-related discontinuations compared with placebo (1 additional case for every 53 patients treated with diclofenac).

### **Tolerability**

- Relative to nonselective NSAIDs, COX-2 selective and partially selective NSAIDs were better or similarly tolerated and aspirin was less well tolerated.
- There were no clear differences in tolerability among COX-2 selective or



nonselective NSAIDs.

- Uncertainty remains regarding the comparative tolerability of salsalate and nonselective NSAIDs. Available evidence is somewhat sparse and mixed, with two of three short-term trials suggesting salsalate is less well tolerated than nonselective NSAIDs and older, flawed observational studies suggesting that salsalate is less toxic than nonselective NSAIDs.

## **Other oral agents: benefits and harms**

### **• Acetaminophen**

- Acetaminophen was modestly inferior to NSAIDs for pain and function in four systematic reviews.
  - Pain severity ratings averaged less than 10 points higher for acetaminophen compared to NSAIDs on 100-point visual analog scales.
- Compared with NSAIDs, acetaminophen had fewer GI side effects (clinical trials data) and serious GI complications (observational studies).
- Acetaminophen may be associated with modest increases in blood pressure and renal dysfunction (observational studies).
- One good-quality, prospective observational study found an increased risk of CV events with heavy use of acetaminophen that was similar to the risk associated with heavy use of NSAIDs.
- Acetaminophen at therapeutic doses does not appear to be associated with an increased risk of hepatotoxicity compared to nonuse in patients without underlying liver disease.

### **• Glucosamine and chondroitin**

- In one large, good-quality trial the combination of pharmaceutical-grade glucosamine hydrochloride plus chondroitin (not currently available in the United States) was not superior to placebo among all patients studied. Neither glucosamine nor chondroitin alone was superior to placebo. In an analysis of a small subgroup of patients with at least moderate baseline pain, there was a modest benefit for pain relief from the combination, but this did not appear to be a preplanned analysis.
- Systematic reviews of older trials found glucosamine modestly superior to oral NSAIDs and placebo in most trials, but there was some inconsistency between trials, most trials had some flaws, and results may not be directly applicable to the United States because the positive trials primarily evaluated pharmaceutical-grade glucosamine available in Europe.

- Only 2 of 20 placebo-controlled trials assessed effects of glucosamine on radiologic disease progression. One fair- and one good-quality trial found pharmaceutical-grade glucosamine superior to placebo for progression of knee joint space narrowing over 3 years.
- Glucosamine and chondroitin were generally well tolerated and no serious adverse events were reported in clinical trials.

## **Effect of dosage and duration of treatment on the benefits and harms of oral medication use**

- We found no studies evaluating the GI or CV safety of alternative dosing strategies (such as alternate day dosing, once daily versus twice daily dosing, or periodic drug holidays).
- The risk of GI bleeding increases with higher doses of nonselective NSAIDs.
- The most comprehensive systematic review of RCTs found no clear association between duration of exposure and CV risk of COX-2 inhibitors. However, estimates of CV risk with shorter duration of exposure are imprecise due to low numbers of events.
- The most comprehensive systematic review of RCTs found higher doses of celecoxib associated with increased CV risk, but could not determine the effects of dose on CV risk associated with rofecoxib due to low numbers of events at lower doses. Most trials of nonselective NSAIDs involved high doses.

## **Differences in demographic and clinical subgroups**

- GI and CV complication rates are higher among older patients and those with predisposing comorbid conditions, but there is no evidence that the relative safety of different NSAIDs varies according to baseline risk.
  - Compared to nonuse of NSAIDs, one additional death per 1 year of use occurred for every 13 patients treated with rofecoxib, 14 with celecoxib, 45 with ibuprofen, and 24 with diclofenac in one large, population-based observational study of high-risk patients with acute myocardial infarction.
- There is no evidence that the comparative safety or efficacy of specific selective or nonselective NSAIDs varies depending on age, gender, or racial group, although data are sparse.
- Among patients who had a recent episode of upper GI bleeding, there is good evidence that rates of recurrent ulcer bleeding are high (around 5 percent after 6 months) in patients prescribed celecoxib or a nonselective NSAID plus a PPI.

## Concomitant anticoagulant use

- Concomitant use of anticoagulants (e.g., warfarin) and any nonselective NSAID increases the risk of GI bleeding three- to sixfold compared to anticoagulants alone.
- Reliable conclusions about the safety of selective NSAIDs used with anticoagulants are not possible due to flaws in existing observational studies, although there are case reports of serious bleeding events, primarily in the elderly.

## Concomitant aspirin use

- In the CLASS studies, there was no difference in rates of ulcer complications between celecoxib and nonselective NSAIDs in the subgroup of patients who took aspirin.
- Concomitant low-dose aspirin use increased the rate of endoscopic ulcers by about 6 percent in both patients on celecoxib and those on nonselective NSAIDs in one meta-analysis.
- Rofecoxib plus low-dose aspirin or ibuprofen alone were associated with similar risks of endoscopic ulcers (16-17 percent), which were significantly higher than those for placebo (6 percent) or aspirin alone (7 percent).
- The most comprehensive systematic review of RCTs found that compared to nonuse of aspirin, concomitant aspirin use did not ameliorate the increased risk of vascular events associated with COX-2 selective NSAIDs.

## Effects of coprescribing H2-antagonists, misoprostol, or PPIs

- Consistent evidence from good-quality systematic reviews and numerous clinical trials found coprescribing of PPIs to be associated with the lowest rates of endoscopically detected duodenal ulcers relative to gastroprotective agents.
- Coprescribing of misoprostol is associated with similar rates of endoscopically detected gastric ulcers as coprescribing of PPIs.
- While misoprostol offers the advantage of being the only gastroprotective agent to reduce rates of perforation, obstruction, or bleeding, there is a high rate of withdrawals due to adverse GI symptoms.
- The risk of endoscopic duodenal ulcers for *standard*-dose H2 blockers was lower than placebo, similar to misoprostol, and higher than omeprazole. Standard dosages of H2 blockers were associated with no reduction of risk for gastric ulcers relative to placebo.
- *Double (full)* dose H2 blockers were associated with a lower risk of endoscopic gastric and duodenal ulcers relative to placebo. It is unknown how full-dose H2 blockers compare to other antiulcer medications because head-to-head trials are lacking.

## Comparison of oral medications with topical preparations

- **Topical NSAIDs: efficacy**
  - Studies of topical NSAIDs typically evaluated proprietary formulations not approved by the FDA.
  - Topical NSAIDs were similar to oral NSAIDs for pain relief in trials primarily of patients with osteoarthritis of the knee, with topical diclofenac (often with dimethyl sulphoxide [DMSO], a drug not approved for use in humans in the United States) best studied.
  - Topical ibuprofen was superior to placebo in several trials.
- **Topical NSAIDs: safety**
  - Consistent evidence from good-quality trials, systematic reviews, and observational studies found topical NSAIDs to be associated with increased local adverse events compared with oral NSAIDs.
  - Total adverse events and withdrawal due to adverse events were similar.
  - Data from one good-quality trial found topical NSAIDs superior to oral NSAIDs for GI events, including severe events, and changes in hemoglobin.
- **Topical salicylates and capsaicin**
  - Topical salicylates were no better than placebo in higher quality placebo-controlled trials.
  - Compared to placebo, one additional patient achieved pain relief for every eight that used topical capsaicin in a good-quality meta-analysis, but capsaicin was associated with increased local adverse events and withdrawals due to adverse events.

## Balance of evidence and harms

Each of the analgesics evaluated in this report was associated with a unique set of benefits and risks. Each was also associated with gaps in the evidence necessary to determine the true balance of benefits vs. harms. The role of selective and nonselective oral NSAIDs and alternative agents will continue to evolve as additional information emerges. At this time, although the amount and quality of evidence vary, no currently available analgesic reviewed in this report was identified as offering a clear overall advantage compared with the others. This is not surprising, given the complex tradeoffs between the many benefits (pain relief, improved function,

improved tolerability, and others) and harms (CV, renal, GI, and others) involved.

Individuals are likely to differ in how they prioritize the importance of the various benefits and harms of treatment. Adequate pain relief at the expense of an increase in CV risk, for example, could be an acceptable tradeoff for some patients. Others may consider even a marginal increase in CV risk unacceptable. Factors that should be considered when weighing the potential effects of an analgesic include age (older age being associated with increased risks for bleeding and CV events), comorbid conditions, and concomitant medication use (such as aspirin and anticoagulation medications). As in other medical decisions, choosing the optimal analgesic for an individual with osteoarthritis should always involve careful consideration and thorough discussion of the relevant tradeoffs.

## Remaining Issues

- The CV safety of nonselective NSAIDs has not been well studied in large, long-term clinical trials. Naproxen, in particular, may be associated with fewer CV risks than other NSAIDs and should be investigated in long-term, appropriately powered trials.
- Large observational studies assessing the safety of NSAIDs have been helpful for assessing comparative benefits and harms but have generally had a narrow focus on single adverse events. Observational studies that take a broader view of all serious adverse events would be substantially more helpful for assessing the overall tradeoffs between benefits and harms.
- The CV risks and GI benefits associated with different COX-2 selective NSAIDs may vary. Large, long-term trials with active and placebo-controlled arms would be needed to assess the safety and benefits of any new COX-2 selective analgesic.
- Meta-analyses of the risks associated with selective COX-2 inhibitors need to continue to assess the effects of dose and duration as more data become available; current estimates of risks at lower doses and with shorter duration of exposure are less precise than estimates at higher doses and longer duration of exposure because of small numbers of events.
- Large, long-term trials of the GI and CV safety associated with full-dose aspirin, salsalate, or acetaminophen compared with nonaspirin NSAIDs or placebo are lacking. Recent observational data suggesting an increased CV risk with heavy use of acetaminophen highlight the need for long-term, appropriately powered clinical trials.
- Given the large number of patients who meet criteria for aspirin prophylaxis for CV events, more trials evaluating the dose-related effects of aspirin 50-1500 mg on GI benefits and CV safety are needed.
- The effects of alternative dosing strategies such as intermittent dosing or drug holidays have not been assessed. Studies evaluating the benefits and risks associated with such strategies compared with conventional dosing could help clarify the effects of these alternative dosing strategies. In addition, although there is speculation that once daily versus twice daily dosing

of certain COX-2 inhibitors could reduce CV risk, this hypothesis has not yet been tested in a clinical trial.

- Most trials showing therapeutic benefits from glucosamine were conducted using pharmaceutical-grade glucosamine not available in the United States and may not be applicable to currently available over-the-counter preparations. Large trials comparing currently available over-the-counter preparations of glucosamine and chondroitin with oral NSAIDs are needed, as these are likely to remain available even if the FDA approves pharmaceutical-grade formulations.
- No topical NSAIDs are FDA approved in the United States, yet compounding of NSAIDs is widely available. Although recent trials of topical NSAIDs are promising, most have been conducted using a proprietary formulation of diclofenac with DMSO, which is not approved in the United States for use in humans. Cohort studies using large observational databases may be required to adequately assess CV risk.

As this report was going to press, two relevant meta-analyses on risks associated with NSAIDs were published. We were unable to fully incorporate these studies into this report, but found their results generally consistent with our conclusions:

- A fair-quality meta-analysis of arrhythmia and renal event (peripheral edema, hypertension, or renal dysfunction) risk from 114 randomized trials of COX-2 selective NSAIDs found rofecoxib associated with increased risks of arrhythmia (primarily ventricular fibrillation, cardiac arrest, or sudden cardiac death) and renal dysfunction (peripheral edema, hypertension, or renal dysfunction) relative to control treatments (placebo, other NSAIDs, or mixed/other). The increased risk was equivalent to approximately 1.1 additional arrhythmia events per 1,000 patients treated with rofecoxib. Celecoxib was associated with lower risks of renal dysfunction and hypertension than control treatments, although there was no difference for the pre-specified, primary composite renal outcome of peripheral edema, hypertension, renal dysfunction or arrhythmia. There was no clear association between other COX-2 inhibitors (valdecoxib/parecoxib, etoricoxib, or lumiracoxib) and either arrhythmia or renal events (no arrhythmia events reported with lumiracoxib).
- A good-quality meta-analysis of cardiovascular risk (primarily myocardial infarction) from 23 observational studies was largely consistent with our qualitative assessment of the observational literature. It found rofecoxib associated with a dose-dependent, increased risk of cardiovascular events that was detectable during the first month of treatment. Of the other NSAIDs, diclofenac was associated with the highest risk, followed by indomethacin and meloxicam. Celecoxib, naproxen, piroxicam, and ibuprofen were not associated with increased risks. Assessments of increased risk were modest (relative risks all <2.0), and all of the main analyses were associated with substantial between-study heterogeneity.

**Table A. Summary of Findings on Comparative Effectiveness and Safety of Analgesics for Osteoarthritis, with Strength of Evidence**

Treatment	Benefits: symptom relief	Harms: gastrointestinal, cardiovascular, and other	Special considerations in subgroups
COX-2 selective NSAIDs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Good evidence COX-2-selective NSAIDs are comparable in efficacy (pain relief) to nonselective NSAIDs.</li> <li>▪ Good evidence COX-2 selective NSAIDs are comparable in efficacy to each other.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>GI:</b> Fair to good evidence of fewer serious GI events with COX-2 selective NSAIDs compared to nonselective NSAIDs, at least in the first 6 months of treatment.</li> <li>▪ <b>CV:</b> Comparative data on CV risks of COX-2 selective vs. nonselective and partially selective NSAIDs are sparse, with a few exceptions (see below). Fair evidence that COX-2 selective NSAIDs are associated with increased risks of serious CV events (primarily myocardial infarction) compared to placebo. CV risks may increase with greater dosages and durations of treatment, but estimates of risks at lower doses and with shorter durations of treatment are imprecise due to small numbers of events.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Rofecoxib was withdrawn from the market in September 2004, primarily because of CV risks.</li> <li>○ Cautions about CV risk apply primarily to rofecoxib and celecoxib, as CV safety data are less precise (due to small numbers of events) for valdecoxib, etoricoxib, and lumiracoxib.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ <b>Other</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Valdecoxib was withdrawn from the market due to life-threatening skin reactions and increased CV risk.</li> <li>○ Fair evidence suggests that rofecoxib is associated with greater risk of hypertension, CHF, edema, and cardiorenal events than celecoxib.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Good evidence that risk of GI bleeding and CV events increases with age.</li> <li>▪ Good evidence that risk of GI bleeding is greater in patients with prior bleeding episodes.</li> <li>▪ Fair evidence that risks of CV and renal events are higher in patients with cardiac and renal comorbidities.</li> </ul>
NSAIDs : nonselective (including naproxen), partially selective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Good evidence nonselective and partially selective NSAIDs are comparable in efficacy to each other.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>GI :</b> Good evidence that all nonselective NSAIDs are associated with comparable, dose-dependent increases in risk of serious GI events compared to nonuse. Good evidence that coprescription of misoprostol or PPIs can attenuate this risk, but misoprostol is less well tolerated.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ No clear evidence (fair for meloxicam and poor for etodolac and nabumetone) that partially selective NSAIDs are associated with decreased risk relative to nonselective NSAIDs.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ <b>CV :</b> Data on CV risks of nonselective and partially selective NSAIDs are sparse, with a few exceptions:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Fair evidence that high doses of ibuprofen and diclofenac carry similar risks of serious CV events compared to COX-2 selective NSAIDs.</li> <li>○ Fair evidence that naproxen is associated with a lower risk of CV events than COX-2 selective NSAIDs and no excess risk compared to placebo.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ <b>Other:</b> Fair evidence that diclofenac is associated with higher rates of aminotransferase elevations than other NSAIDs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Good evidence that risk of GI bleeding and CV events increases with age.</li> <li>▪ Good evidence that risk of GI bleeding is greater in patients with prior bleeding episodes.</li> <li>▪ Fair evidence that risks of CV and renal events are higher in patients with cardiac and renal comorbidities.</li> <li>▪ Fair evidence that using NSAIDs concomitantly with anticoagulants increases GI bleeding risk three- to sixfold.</li> </ul>

<b>Treatment</b>	<b>Benefits: symptom relief</b>	<b>Harms: gastrointestinal, cardiovascular, and other</b>	<b>Special considerations in subgroups</b>
Aspirin/ salsalate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No evidence comparing efficacy of aspirin or salsalate to COX-2s or NSAIDs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Good evidence that aspirin 50-1500 mg (for thrombotic event prophylaxis) is associated with greater risks of serious GI events compared to placebo or when added to warfarin.</li> <li>▪ Good evidence that low-dose aspirin is effective for preventing CV events.</li> <li>▪ Insufficient evidence to assess GI and CV risks associated with higher doses of aspirin for pain control or with salsalate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Good evidence that concomitant use of aspirin attenuates or eliminates the GI benefits of COX-2 selective NSAIDs.</li> <li>▪ Fair evidence that concomitant use of low-dose aspirin does not eliminate CV risks when added to NSAIDs .</li> </ul>
Acetaminophen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Good evidence that acetaminophen is modestly inferior in efficacy compared to NSAIDs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Good evidence of lower risk of GI complications with acetaminophen compared to NSAIDs.</li> <li>▪ Fair evidence of increased risk of blood pressure and renal dysfunction with acetaminophen compared to nonuse.</li> <li>▪ Poor evidence (a single observational study) that heavy use of acetaminophen carries a similar CV risk compared to heavy use of NSAIDs.</li> </ul>	None
Glucosamine (pharmaceutical grade)/ chondroitin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fair evidence (some inconsistency between clinical trials) that pharmaceutical-grade glucosamine and chondroitin are not more effective than placebo in unselected patients, including one recent, large, good-quality trial finding no beneficial effects from glucosamine or chondroitin alone or in combination. In an analysis of a small subgroup of patients with at least moderate baseline pain in the latter trial, there appeared to be a modest benefit for pain relief from the combination, but this did not appear to be a preplanned analysis.</li> <li>▪ Fair evidence of no clear difference in efficacy between pharmaceutical-grade glucosamine or chondroitin and NSAIDs.</li> <li>▪ No studies compared glucosamine or chondroitin to acetaminophen.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Good evidence that glucosamine and chondroitin are well tolerated and do not appear to be associated with serious adverse events.</li> </ul>	None



Treatment	Benefits: symptom relief	Harms: gastrointestinal, cardiovascular, and other	Special considerations in subgroups
Topical NSAIDs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Good evidence they are comparable to oral NSAIDs for pain relief in trials primarily of patients with knee osteoarthritis.</li> <li>○ Most trials of topical NSAIDs evaluate proprietary formulations not available in the United States.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Good evidence that topical NSAIDs are associated with increased local adverse events compared with oral NSAIDs.</li> <li>▪ Good evidence that topical and oral NSAIDs are comparable in rates of total adverse events and withdrawals due to adverse events.</li> <li>▪ Good evidence that topical NSAIDs are associated with fewer GI events, including severe events, and changes in hemoglobin compared to oral NSAIDs.</li> </ul>	None
Topical salicylates and capsaicin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fair evidence that capsaicin, but not topical salicylates are superior for pain relief compared to placebo.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Good evidence that topical capsaicin is associated with increased local adverse events and withdrawals due to adverse events compared to placebo.</li> </ul>	None

**Abbreviations:** CHF = congestive heart failure; COX = cyclo-oxygenase; CV = cardiovascular; GI = gastrointestinal; NSAID=nonsteroidal antiinflammatory drug; PPI=proton pump inhibitor.

# Chapter 1. Introduction

Osteoarthritis, the most common form of arthritis, is associated with substantial disability and reduced quality of life.<sup>2</sup> Among U.S. adults aged 30 or older, approximately 6% have symptomatic osteoarthritis of the knee, and 3% have symptomatic osteoarthritis of the hip.<sup>3</sup> Osteoarthritis increases with age, with the incidence and prevalence increasing 2- to 10-fold from age 30 to 65, and continues to increase after age 65.<sup>4</sup> Osteoarthritis accounts for more disability in walking, stair climbing, and other tasks requiring use of the lower extremities than any other disease, particularly in the elderly.<sup>5</sup> The total costs for arthritis, including osteoarthritis, may be greater than 2% of the gross domestic product,<sup>3</sup> with more than half of these costs related to work loss.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to non-pharmacologic interventions (such as physical therapy, weight reduction, and exercise), numerous medications and over-the-counter supplements are available to treat pain and potentially improve functional status in patients with osteoarthritis. Each class of medication or supplement is associated with a unique balance of risks and benefits. In addition, efficacy and safety may also vary for individual drugs within a class. Oral medications commonly used to treat osteoarthritis include nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) and acetaminophen (Appendix A). Many are available at lower over-the-counter and higher prescription doses. Commonly used supplements sold over-the-counter and not regulated as pharmaceuticals by the FDA include glucosamine and chondroitin. Topical agents frequently used by patients with osteoarthritis are rubefacients (including capsaicin), NSAIDs, and other miscellaneous preparations.<sup>6</sup> Opioid medications are also used for patients with chronic pain, especially if it is refractory to other therapies, but are not recommended for first-line treatment for osteoarthritis or other conditions because of risks of addiction, tolerance, diversion, and other adverse events.<sup>7, 8</sup>

NSAIDs exert analgesic, anti-inflammatory, and anti-pyretic effects by blocking *cyclo-oxygenases* (COX), enzymes that are needed to produce *prostaglandins*. Understanding of the pharmacology of NSAIDs continues to evolve, but it is now thought that most NSAIDs block three different COX isoenzymes, known as COX-1, COX-2, and COX-3. COX-2, found in joint and muscle, contributes to pain and inflammation. Because they block COX-2, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs reduce pain compared to placebo in patients with arthritis,<sup>9</sup> low back pain,<sup>10</sup> minor injuries, and soft tissue rheumatism. Less is known about COX-3, which has been found in the cerebral cortex and cardiac tissue and appears to have effects on centrally-mediated pain.<sup>1</sup>

NSAIDs are also associated with important adverse effects. NSAIDs cause gastrointestinal (GI) bleeding because they also block the COX-1 enzyme, which protects the lining of the stomach from acid. In the 1990s in the United States, nonaspirin NSAIDs are estimated cause 32,000 hospitalizations and 3,200 deaths annually from GI bleeding.<sup>11</sup> A risk analysis<sup>12</sup> based on a retrospective case-control survey of emergency admissions for upper GI disease in two United Kingdom general hospitals provided useful estimates of the frequency of serious GI complications from NSAIDs.<sup>13</sup> In people taking NSAIDs, the 1-year risk of serious GI bleeding ranges from 1 in 2,100 in adults under age 45 to 1 in 110 for adults over age 75, and the risk of death ranges from 1 in 12,353 to 1 in 647 (Table 1). In addition to age, prednisone use, disability level, and previous NSAID-induced GI symptoms are risk factors for GI bleeding.

**Table 1. One year risk of GI bleeding due to NSAID**

Age range (years)	Chance of GI bleed due to NSAID	Chance of dying from GI bleed due to NSAID
<i>Risk in any one year is 1 in:</i>		
16-45	2100	12,353
45-64	646	3800
65-74	570	3353
> 75	110	647
Data are from Blower, <sup>13</sup> recalculated in Moore <sup>12</sup> and in Bandolier <sup>14</sup>		

NSAIDs differ in their selectivity for COX-2—how much they affect COX-2 relative to COX-1. Theoretically, an NSAID that blocks COX-2 but not COX-1 might reduce pain and inflammation in joints but leave the stomach lining alone. Appendix B<sup>15</sup> summarizes the NSAIDs and their selectivity based on assay studies (done in the laboratory instead of in living patients). The table gives an idea of how widely NSAIDs vary in their selectivity, but should be interpreted with caution. Different assay methods give different results, and assay method may not reliably predict what will happen when the drug is given to patients. Clinical studies, rather than these assay studies, are the best way to determine whether patients actually benefit from using more selective NSAIDs.

In addition to their propensity to cause GI bleeding, NSAIDs are also associated with adverse effects on blood pressure, renal function, and fluid retention. Mechanisms may involve attenuation of prostaglandin-mediated vasodilation, promotion of sodium and water retention, increased vascular resistance, and increased renal endothelin-1 synthesis.<sup>16-18</sup>

An association between selective COX-2 inhibitors and increased rates of myocardial infarction was first observed in the large, pivotal Vioxx Gastrointestinal Outcomes Research (VIGOR) trial comparing high-dose rofecoxib (50 mg) to naproxen 1000 mg.<sup>19</sup> Reasons for the increase in thromboembolic cardiovascular event risk are complex and not completely understood, but may be related in part to suppression of endothelial-derived prostaglandin I<sub>2</sub> formation by selective COX-2 inhibition, in the setting of unaffected platelet production of pro-thrombotic COX-1 mediated thromboxane A<sub>2</sub>.<sup>20</sup> Blood pressure elevations associated with COX-2 inhibitors may also play a role in increasing cardiovascular risk.<sup>21</sup> On September 30, 2004, rofecoxib was withdrawn from the market after a long-term polyp prevention trial found an increased risk of myocardial infarction compared with placebo.<sup>22</sup> On December 9, 2004, the US Food and Drug Administration issued a black-box warning for valdecoxib for life-threatening skin reactions and increased cardiovascular risk. This drug was subsequently also withdrawn voluntarily by the manufacturer.<sup>23</sup>

Aspirin, or acetylsalicylic acid, has long been known to have analgesic, anti-pyretic, and anti-inflammatory effects.<sup>24</sup> It is thought to be the most consumed medicinal drug in the world. Like the non-aspirin NSAIDs, aspirin's effects are due to blockade of cyclo-oxygenases. However, an important distinction between aspirin and non-aspirin NSAIDs is that aspirin also induces irreversible functional defects in platelets (although non-aspirin NSAIDs also have effects on platelet aggregation, they are short-lived). Because of these antiplatelet effects, low-dose aspirin is also used prophylactically to reduce the risk of thrombotic events.<sup>25</sup> However, even at doses of 325 mg daily or lower, the potential cardiovascular benefits must be balanced against dose-dependent risk of aspirin-induced adverse GI events. Salsalate, a nonacetylated salicylate, is a prodrug of salicylic acid, the active metabolite of aspirin. However, salsalate is considered a relatively weak inhibitor of cyclo-oxygenases.<sup>26</sup>

Acetaminophen (also known as paracetamol) is an anti-pyretic and analgesic medication that

is not thought to have significant anti-inflammatory properties. Although its mechanism of inducing analgesia is still not completely understood, it is thought to work in part by indirectly decreasing production of prostaglandins through inhibitory effects involving COX-2.<sup>16, 27</sup> Acetaminophen is frequently recommended as a first line agent for osteoarthritis and other pain conditions because of its perceived favorable safety profile—particularly with regard to ulcer risk.<sup>28</sup>

Chondroitin sulfate and glucosamine sulfate are natural compounds found in cartilage. Both are marketed to patients who have osteoarthritis. The precise mechanisms of action are unknown, but may involve promoting maintenance and repair of cartilage. Glucosamine, for example, has been shown to increase proteoglycan synthesis.<sup>29</sup> In the European Union countries, glucosamine is available as a prescription drug manufactured by the Rotta Pharmaceutical Company. In the U.S., by contrast, glucosamine and chondroitin are considered dietary supplements and are not regulated as pharmaceuticals. Adequate standardization of glucosamine and chondroitin preparations is a significant concern. It has been shown that the actual content often varies substantially from what is stated on the label.<sup>30</sup> Such inconsistencies may have implications on estimates of efficacy and safety for different commercial preparations.

Topical administration of NSAIDs could theoretically result in local analgesic and anti-inflammatory effects by direct absorption through the skin, with reduced systemic adverse events compared with oral administration.<sup>31</sup> Experimental studies indicate that topical administration is associated with substantially higher concentrations of NSAIDs in soft tissue (particularly meniscus and cartilage) and lower peak plasma concentrations compared with oral administration.<sup>6</sup> For a topical NSAID to be effective, it has to reach the inflamed tissue in sufficient concentrations to produce analgesic and anti-inflammatory activity. The solubility of specific NSAIDs varies considerably, and is also affected by the carrier or formulation used.<sup>31</sup> Superior *in vivo* permeability characteristics, however, may not predict clinical effectiveness.

In contrast to topical NSAIDs, whose mechanism of action involves inhibition of cyclo-oxygenase, topical rubefacients are thought to relieve pain through counter irritation.<sup>6, 32</sup> Although the mechanism of action of topical preparations containing salicylate esters is unclear, they are now usually classified as rubefacients rather than topical NSAIDs because they may not work via inhibition of cyclo-oxygenase.<sup>6, 33</sup> Capsaicin, which is also often classified as a rubefacient, is derived from the hot chili pepper (*Capsicum* species). It is applied topically and thought to work by stimulating the release of substance P and other neuropeptides from sensory nerve endings.<sup>34</sup> Although this release can initially lead to burning and pain, analgesia occurs after repeated and continued application, as substance P becomes depleted. Although a wide variety of other rubefacients are available, only topical salicylates and capsaicin were included in this review.

The purpose of this report was to assess the comparative efficacy and safety of non-opioid oral medications (selective and non-selective non-aspirin NSAIDs, aspirin, salsalate, and acetaminophen), over-the-counter supplements (chondroitin and glucosamine), and topical agents (NSAIDs and rubefacients, including capsaicin) for osteoarthritis.

## Scope and Key Questions

### 1. What are the comparative benefits and harms of treating osteoarthritis

with oral medications or supplements? How do these benefits and harms change with dosage and duration of treatment, and what is the evidence that alternative dosage strategies, such as intermittent dosing and drug holidays, affect the benefits and harms of oral medication use? (*Note: This question addresses the therapeutic benefits of long-term use for the condition osteoarthritis. However, the question does address all harms associated with NSAID use, including use for other labeled indications such as the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis.*)

Oral NSAIDs include:

- aspirin
- celecoxib
- choline magnesium trisalicylate
- diclofenac
- diflunisal
- etodolac
- etoricoxib\*
- fenoprofen
- flurbiprofen
- ibuprofen
- indomethacin
- ketoprofen
- ketoprofen ER
- ketorolac
- lumiracoxib\*
- meclofenamate sodium
- mefenamic acid
- meloxicam
- nabumetone
- naproxen
- oxaprozin
- piroxicam
- rofecoxib\*
- salsalate
- sulindac
- tenoxicam\*
- tiaprofenic acid\*
- tolmetin
- valdecoxib\*

*\* These drugs are currently not approved (etoricoxib, lumiracoxib, tenoxicam, tiaprofenic acid) for use in the United States by the FDA or have been withdrawn from the market (rofecoxib and valdecoxib)*

Other oral agents include acetaminophen, chondroitin, and glucosamine. See Appendix A for a detailed listing of pharmacokinetics, indications, and recommended dosing information for all included drugs. Appendix C shows low, medium and high doses for the more commonly used NSAIDs.

For this report, we defined the terms “selective NSAID” or “COX-2 selective NSAID” as drugs in the “coxib” class (e.g. celecoxib, rofecoxib, and valdecoxib). We grouped etodolac, nabumetone, and meloxicam into a separate category that we referred to as “partially selective NSAIDs,” to explore how in vitro differences in COX-2 selectivity might translate into clinical differences in safety. The salicylic acid derivatives aspirin and salsalate were also considered a separate subgroup. We defined “non-aspirin, non-selective NSAIDs” or simply “non-selective NSAIDs” as all other NSAIDs. We included evidence on the efficacy and safety of the COX-2 inhibitor rofecoxib, even though it is no longer available in the U.S., because it was the first drug to be associated with cardiovascular risks and therefore provides important historical context and illustrates important issues to consider when evaluating the risks and benefits of selective and non-selective NSAIDs. For other COX-2 inhibitors not approved by the FDA for use in the U.S.

(lumiracoxib and etoricoxib) or withdrawn from the market (valdecoxib), we focused only on evidence regarding long-term, serious GI and CV adverse events, which is likely to be the most important factor driving future decisions regarding their use.

“Benefits” include relief of pain and osteoarthritic symptoms and improved functional status. The main outcome measures for this review were pain, functional status, and discontinuations due to lack of efficacy. Frequently used outcome measures include visual and categorical pain scales:<sup>35</sup>

*Visual analogue scale (VAS)*: Using VAS, patients indicate their level of pain, function, or other outcome by marking a scale labeled with numbers (such as 0 to 100) or descriptions (such as “none” to “worst pain I’ve ever had”). An advantage of VAS is that they provide a continuous range of values for relative severity. A disadvantage is that the meaning of a pain score for any individual patient depends on the patient’s subjective experience of pain. This poses a challenge in objectively comparing different patients’ scores, or even different scores from the same patient.

Categorical pain scales consist of several pain category options from which a patient must choose (e.g., no pain, mild, moderate, or severe). A disadvantage of categorical scales is that patients must choose among categories that may not accurately describe their pain. A variety of disease-specific and non-specific scales are used to assess these outcomes in patients with osteoarthritis. Commonly used categorical pain scales include:

- The *Western Ontario and McMaster Universities Osteoarthritis Index (WOMAC)*, a 24-item, disease-specific questionnaire used to assess the functional status of patients with osteoarthritis of the knee and hip. A lower score indicates better function.<sup>36</sup>
- The *Medical Outcomes Short Form-36 (SF-36)* health survey, a commonly used general instrument for measuring health-related quality of life across different diseases.<sup>37</sup>
- *Patient Global Assessment of Disease Status* and *Investigator Global Assessment of Disease Status*. The patient or investigator answers questions about the overall response to treatment, functional status, and pain response, using a VAS or categorical scale.
- *American College of Rheumatology (ACR) criteria* measure disease activity and response to treatment. ACR 20, ACR 50, or ACR 70 reflect either an improvement to the 20%, 50%, or 70% level in the parameters outlined.

Another method for measuring outcomes is classifying patients dichotomously as “responders” or “non-responders.” Responders are often defined as patients with at least a 50% improvement in pain or function. The *Outcomes Measures in Arthritis Clinical Trials-Osteoarthritis Research Society International (OMERACT-OARSI) criteria*, for example, were developed through a consensus process and classifies patients as responders if they meet specific pre-defined criteria ( $\geq 50\%$  improvement in pain or function that was  $\geq 20$  mm on a 100 mm VAS, or a  $\geq 20\%$  improvement in at least two of pain, function, or patient global assessment that was  $\geq 10$  mm on a 100 mm VAS).<sup>38</sup>

“Harms” include tolerability (not having to stop the drug due to adverse effects); cardiovascular, hepato-, renal, and gastrointestinal toxicity; and increased risk for hospitalizations, drug interactions, and death. For gastrointestinal toxicity, we focused on serious complications associated with NSAIDs including perforation, bleeding ulcer, and gastric

outlet obstruction, though we also evaluated other gastrointestinal side effects (such as nausea, dyspepsia, and gastrointestinal tolerability). We only considered rates of endoscopic ulcers when data on clinical ulcer complications were incomplete or not available.

## 2. Are there clinically important differences in the harms and benefits of oral treatments for osteoarthritis for certain demographic and clinical subgroups?

- Demographic subgroups include age, sex, and race.
- Co-existing diseases include hypertension, edema, ischemic heart disease, heart failure, PUD, and history of previous bleeding due to NSAIDs.
- Concomitant medication use includes anticoagulants and aspirin.

## 3. What is the evidence that the gastrointestinal harms of NSAID use are reduced by co-prescribing of H2-antagonists, misoprostol, or proton pump inhibitors?

## 4. What are the benefits and safety of treating osteoarthritis with oral medications as compared with topical preparations?

Topical preparations include:

- Capsaicin
- Diclofenac
- Ibuprofen
- Ketoprofen
- other NSAIDs
- salicylates

# Chapter 2. Methods

## Topic Development

The topic for this report was nominated in a public process. The key questions were developed by investigators from the Oregon EPC with input from a Technical Expert Panel (TEP) formed for this project. Contacted via teleconference, the TEP served in an advisory capacity for this report, helping to refine key questions, identify important issues, and define parameters for the review of evidence.

## Search Strategy

A comprehensive search of the scientific literature was conducted to identify relevant studies addressing the key questions. Results from previously conducted meta-analyses and systematic reviews on these topics were sought and used where appropriate and updated when necessary. To identify systematic reviews, in addition to MEDLINE, we searched the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews and the websites of the Canadian Coordinating Office for Health Technology Assessment (CCOHTA), Bandolier, and the NHA Health Technology Assessment Programme.

To identify articles relevant to each key question, we searched the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews (through 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2005) the Cochrane Central Register of Controlled Trials (through 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2005) and Ovid ®MEDLINE (1966- July, 2005.) We used relatively broad searches, combining terms for drug names with terms for relevant research designs, limiting to those studies that focused on osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis (see Appendix D for the complete search strategy). Other sources include reference lists of review articles and unpublished materials from the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Pharmaceutical manufacturers were invited to submit scientific information packets, including citations if applicable. All 2,665 citations from these sources were imported into an electronic database (EndNote® 9.0) and considered for inclusion.

## Study Selection

Systematic reviews and controlled trials pertinent to the key questions were included. We retrieved any blinded or open, parallel or crossover randomized controlled trial that compared one included drug to another, another active comparator, or placebo. We also included cohort and case-control studies with at least 1,000 cases or participants that evaluated serious gastrointestinal and cardiovascular endpoints that were inadequately addressed by randomized controlled trials.



## Data Extraction

The following data were extracted from included trials: study design, setting, population characteristics (including sex, age, ethnicity, diagnosis), eligibility and exclusion criteria, interventions (dose and duration), method of outcome ascertainment if available, and results for each outcome, focusing on efficacy and safety. We recorded intention-to-treat results if available.

## Quality Assessment

### Assessing Research Quality

We assessed the internal validity (quality) of systematic reviews and randomized trials based on the predefined criteria listed in Appendix E. These criteria are based on those developed by the US Preventive Services Task Force and the National Health Service Centre for Reviews and Dissemination (UK).<sup>39</sup> We rated the internal validity of each trial based on the methods used for randomization, allocation concealment, and blinding; the similarity of compared groups at baseline; maintenance of comparable groups; adequate reporting of dropouts, attrition, crossover, adherence, and contamination; loss to followup; and the use of intention-to-treat analysis. Trials that had a fatal flaw in one or more categories were rated poor quality; trials that met all criteria were rated good quality; the remainder were rated fair quality. As the “fair quality” category is broad, studies with this rating vary in their strengths and weaknesses: the results of some fair-quality studies are *likely* to be valid, while others are only *probably* valid. A “poor quality” trial is not valid—the results are at least as likely to reflect flaws in the study design as the true difference between the compared drugs.

Included systematic reviews were also rated for quality based on pre-defined criteria (see Appendix E) assessing whether they had a clear statement of the question(s), reported inclusion criteria, used an adequate search strategy, assessed validity, reported adequate detail of included studies, and used appropriate methods to synthesize the evidence. We included systematic reviews and meta-analyses that included unpublished data inaccessible to the public, but because the results of such analyses are not verifiable, we considered this a methodological shortcoming.

For assessing the internal validity of observational studies, we evaluated whether they used nonbiased selection methods; whether rates of loss to follow-up were acceptable; whether pre-defined outcomes were specified; whether they used appropriate methods for ascertaining exposures, potential confounders, and outcomes; and whether they performed appropriate statistical analyses of potential confounders. Although many tools exist for quality assessment of nonrandomized trials, there is no consensus on optimal quality rating methods.<sup>40</sup> We therefore did not use a formal scoring system to rate the quality of the observational studies included in this review, but noted methodological deficiencies in any of the above areas when present.

### Assessing Research Applicability

The applicability of trials and other studies was assessed based on whether the publication

adequately described the study population, how similar patients were to the target population in whom the intervention will be applied, whether differences in outcomes were clinically (as well as statistically) significant, and whether the treatment received by the control group was reasonably representative of standard practice. We also recorded the funding source and role of the sponsor.

## **Rating a Body of Evidence**

Overall quality ratings for an individual study were based on ratings of the internal and external validity of the trial. A particular randomized trial might receive two different ratings: one for efficacy and another for adverse events. The overall strength of evidence for a particular key question reflects the quality, consistency, and power of the set of studies relevant to the question.

We assessed the overall strength of evidence for a body of literature about a particular key question, by examining the type, number and quality of studies; the strength of association; the consistency of results within and between study designs; and the possibility for publication bias. Consistent results from good-quality studies across a broad range of populations suggest a high degree of certainty that the results of the studies were true (that is, the entire body of evidence would be considered “good-quality.”) For a body of fair-quality studies, however, consistent results may indicate that similar biases are operating in all the studies. Unvalidated assessment techniques or heterogeneous reporting methods for important outcomes may weaken the overall body of evidence for that particular outcome or make it difficult to accurately estimate the true magnitude of benefit or harm.

## **Data Synthesis**

### **Effectiveness Versus Efficacy**

Throughout this report, we highlight *effectiveness* studies conducted in primary care or office-based settings that use less stringent eligibility criteria, assess health outcomes of most importance to patients, and have longer follow-up periods than most *efficacy* studies. The results of effectiveness studies are more applicable to the “average” patient than results from highly selected populations in efficacy studies. Examples of “effectiveness” outcomes include quality of life, global measures of successful treatment, and the ability to work or function in social activities. These outcomes are more important to patients, family, and care providers than surrogate or intermediate measures such as scores based on psychometric scales. Further discussion of these issues is available at <http://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/reference/purpose.cfm>.

### **Data Presentation**

We constructed evidence tables showing study characteristics, quality ratings, and results for all included studies. We also performed two quantitative analyses for this review. An important limitation of observational studies of NSAIDs is that none simultaneously assessed the risk for

serious cardiac and GI events. We therefore re-analyzed data from a set of observational studies that reported rates of three different serious adverse events in the same population. We assumed that the adverse events occurred independently and that the logarithm of the rate ratios was distributed normally. After estimating the effect (number of events prevented or caused) for each of the three adverse events, we estimated the net effects on all three serious adverse events using Monte Carlo simulation.

We also pooled clinical success rates and withdrawal due to adverse events from head-to-head trials of topical versus oral NSAIDs using a random effects model (Dersimonian-Laird method, using RevMan® statistical software). We performed standard chi-square tests for heterogeneity. Because only four trials were available for pooling, we did not attempt meta-regression analyses to evaluate potential sources of heterogeneity.

# Chapter 3. Results

## Overview

Searches identified 2,789 publications: 1,522 from the Cochrane Central Register of Controlled Trials, 68 from the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, 1015 from MEDLINE and 184 from the combination of other sources listed above. There were also 59 studies not previously reviewed for inclusion that were suggested through peer review or public comment or published after the searches were conducted. Following application of inclusion criteria, 351 publications were included in this review.

**Key Question 1a. What are the comparative benefits and harms of treating osteoarthritis with oral medications or supplements?**

## Benefits: Effectiveness and Efficacy

### Effectiveness Studies

No controlled clinical trials of COX-2 inhibitors and/or NSAIDs met all major criteria for an effectiveness study (conducted in mainly primary care or office-based settings, used broad enrollment criteria, and evaluated longer-term, “real-life” outcomes).

### Efficacy

***Non-selective NSAIDs vs. other NSAIDs.*** Several good-quality systematic reviews by the Cochrane Collaboration evaluated trials that compared non-aspirin NSAIDs for OA of the hip (trials published through 1994),<sup>41</sup> for OA of the back (through 1998),<sup>10</sup> and for OA of the knee (through 1997).<sup>42</sup> These reviews found no clear differences among non-aspirin and primarily non-selective NSAIDs in efficacy. There were also no differences between diclofenac and sustained-release etodolac in patients with OA of the knee<sup>43</sup> or between piroxicam and standard formulation etodolac in patients with OA of the knee or hip<sup>44</sup> in two trials published subsequent to the Cochrane reviews.

Nabumetone was similar in efficacy to the non-selective NSAIDs diclofenac SR<sup>45</sup> and etodolac<sup>46</sup> in two 4-week trials, as reported in the Cochrane review of OA of the knee.<sup>42</sup>

No studies of meloxicam, salsalate, or aspirin were included in any Cochrane reviews. We identified nine double-blinded trials of meloxicam 7.5 mg, 15 mg, and 25 mg versus other NSAIDs and found no clear or consistent differences in efficacy.<sup>47-55</sup> In two of the trials, however, patients taking non-selective NSAIDs were significantly less likely to withdraw due to

lack of efficacy than patients taking meloxicam.<sup>49, 54</sup>

In the only head-to-head trial of salsalate (3 g) in patients with OA, efficacy was similar to that of 3.6 g soluble aspirin after two weeks of treatment.<sup>56</sup>

***Celecoxib vs. non-selective NSAIDs.*** Celecoxib and non-selective NSAIDs were associated with similar decreases in symptom severity and improvements in functional capacity (PGA, WOMAC) after 6- to 24-weeks in five published trials of patients with primarily OA.<sup>57-60</sup>

A good-quality systematic review funded by the makers of celecoxib reached similar conclusions based on data from published and unpublished trials of at least 12 weeks' duration in patients with either OA or RA.<sup>61</sup>

Using an alternative endpoint, a more recent systematic review (published in 2005) with access to all unpublished manufacturer-held clinical trial reports reached slightly different conclusions about the relative efficacy of celecoxib and NSAIDs.<sup>62</sup> Moore et al meta-analyzed data from 31 primarily short-term ( $\leq 12$  weeks) trials and concluded that celecoxib at dose of 200-400 mg was associated with slightly higher rates of withdrawals due to lack of efficacy compared to non-selective NSAIDs (RR 1.1; 95% CI 1.02, 1.23). CLASS remains the pivotal, long-term study (6 to 13 months) of celecoxib in patients with rheumatoid and osteoarthritis. It randomized a total of 7,968 patients to celecoxib or the non-selective NSAIDs ibuprofen or diclofenac. A higher proportion of non-selective NSAID patients withdrew due to lack of efficacy (14.8% vs. 12.6%,  $p=0.005$ ). However, CLASS focused on assessment of adverse events rather than efficacy, and other efficacy results were reported. SUCCESS-1, a shorter (12-week), double-blind, randomized trial of 13,274 patients with osteoarthritis, found no clinically meaningful differences between celecoxib 100 mg or 200 mg twice daily and the non-selective NSAIDs diclofenac or naproxen.<sup>63</sup>

***Rofecoxib vs. non-selective NSAIDs.*** We were unable to determine whether all manufacturer-sponsored trials of rofecoxib versus NSAIDs have been published.<sup>19, 64-76</sup> All but one of the trials included osteoarthritis patients, and all but two<sup>70, 72</sup> were supported by the manufacturer of rofecoxib. All but two of the OA trials<sup>73, 76</sup> have been previously analyzed in a good-quality Cochrane review.<sup>77</sup> Conclusions of the Cochrane review are consistent with our findings that there were no consistent differences between rofecoxib and non-selective NSAIDs in efficacy for OA. In addition, a pivotal, good-quality trial (VIGOR) and a good-quality Cochrane review found rofecoxib equivalent to naproxen in efficacy for rheumatoid arthritis.<sup>19, 78</sup>

***Valdecoxib vs. non-selective NSAIDs.*** In clinical trials submitted to the FDA, valdecoxib was as effective as ibuprofen (800 mg 3 times/day), diclofenac (75 mg twice daily), and naproxen (500 mg twice daily) in treating osteoarthritis symptoms. Published trials found no difference in efficacy between valdecoxib and naproxen<sup>79-81</sup> or ibuprofen or diclofenac.<sup>82</sup> A fifth trial found no difference in efficacy between valdecoxib 20-40 mg and slow-release diclofenac 75 mg in treating rheumatoid arthritis.<sup>83</sup>

***Comparisons between selective COX-2 inhibitors.*** We found six published randomized, multicenter, fair-to-good quality trials that directly compared COX-2 inhibitors for osteoarthritis of the knee.<sup>84-89</sup> Pharmaceutical manufacturers were reported as funding sources in all but one study.<sup>88</sup> This small (N=30), short-term (7 days), fair-quality trial found that rofecoxib 25 mg and celecoxib 200 mg had similar effects on patients' pain intensity, 3-hour pain relief, global

assessment of efficacy and rescue medication use.<sup>88</sup> Two trials of higher-risk osteoarthritic patients with hypertension (both funded by the maker of celecoxib) found no differences in efficacy between rofecoxib 25 mg and celecoxib 200 mg daily, but reported a higher rate of adverse events with rofecoxib.<sup>84, 85</sup>

The remaining three trials appeared to enroll patients with similar demographics and baseline levels of pain and were more homogeneous in design (see table below).<sup>86, 87, 89</sup> All compared rofecoxib 25 mg qd and celecoxib 200 mg qd in patients with flare-ups of chronic osteoarthritis of the knee and were 6 weeks in duration. One trial, funded by the manufacturer of celecoxib, found no difference in efficacy between rofecoxib and celecoxib, but a higher rate of adverse events with rofecoxib.<sup>86</sup> Another (VACT, or *Vioxx Acetaminophen Celecoxib Trial*)<sup>87</sup> trial, funded by the manufacturer of rofecoxib, found rofecoxib more effective than celecoxib, with no differences in rates of adverse effects. The most recent study, funded by the maker of celecoxib,<sup>89</sup> found no difference in either efficacy or adverse effects between celecoxib and rofecoxib.

**Table 2. Comparison of rofecoxib and celecoxib in flare-ups of chronic osteoarthritis of the knee**

Characteristic	McKenna <sup>86</sup>	Geba <sup>87</sup>	Gibofsky <sup>89</sup>
Rofecoxib 25mg (n)	59	95	190
Celecoxib 200mg (n)	60	97	189
Aspirin 325 qd permitted	Yes	No	Yes
Mean age	62	62.6	62.9
Mean osteoarthritis duration	10.5 years	10 years	9 years
Percent white	80%	85%	NR
Baseline pain on walking (score)	72	72	68
Discontinued trial by 6 wks:			
Rofecoxib 25mg	16%	19%	15%
Celecoxib 200mg	22%	17%	16%

All three trials were probably adequately randomized and blinded, and didn't have statistically significant differences in baseline characteristics. Gibofsky and colleagues hypothesized that neither McKenna nor Geba were powered sufficiently to measure differences between celecoxib and rofecoxib. Gibofsky viewed the McKenna study as being powered only to compare active treatments with placebo and the Geba study as powered to compare rofecoxib with acetaminophen. Therefore, Gibofsky, and colleagues set out to conduct a study powered to compare celecoxib and rofecoxib, with a sample size based on results of the McKenna study.

Efficacy results are summarized in Table 3 below. Mean changes in WOMAC VAS score for Walking Pain were similar for celecoxib 200 mg and rofecoxib 25 mg across trials. In the Geba trial, rofecoxib was associated with significantly greater mean reductions than celecoxib on VAS scores for WOMAC Rest Pain and Night Pain and a similar mean reduction in Morning Stiffness. WOMAC Composite Score results from Geba and Gibofsky were conflicting. In the Gibofsky trial, there were no differences, but in the Geba trial, there were significant differences favoring rofecoxib for mean changes in the WOMAC pain (7 points) and stiffness (8 points) subscales. However, an analysis of data from randomized trials estimated that the minimal perceptible improvement for each WOMAC scale was a difference of 11 mm.<sup>90</sup>

**Table 3. Head to head efficacy comparisons at 6 weeks (mean change from baseline)**

	WOMAC VAS Scores					WOMAC Composite Subscales			
	Walking pain	Rest pain	Morning stiffness	Night pain	Arthritis pain	Pain	Stiffness	Function	Total
Geba <sup>87</sup>									
Rofecoxib	-42	-31.1*	-36.2	-32.7**	nr	-35.4*	-35*	-29.7	-26
Celecoxib	-36.2	-23.4	-29.1	-22.6	nr	-28.6	-27.9	-24.9	-26
McKenna <sup>86</sup>									
Rofecoxib	-38	nr	nr	nr	-40	nr	nr	nr	nr
Celecoxib	-38	nr	nr	nr	-39	nr	nr	nr	nr
Gibofsky <sup>89</sup>									
Rofecoxib	-29.2	nr	nr	nr	nr	-42.6	-34.7	-35.5	-20.1
Celecoxib	-31.5	nr	nr	nr	nr	-42.0	-36.7	-37.9	-22.1

\*p≤0.05; \*\*p<0.001; nr=not reported

## Safety: Serious Gastrointestinal and Cardiovascular Events

### Rofecoxib and Celecoxib: GI and CV Safety in CLASS and VIGOR

#### GI Safety

Two pivotal studies were large enough to evaluate serious complications of peptic ulcer disease (bleeding, perforations, obstruction) as a primary endpoint in average-risk patients (those without a recent UGI bleed). The VIGOR trial<sup>19</sup> evaluated rofecoxib versus naproxen and the CLASS trials<sup>60</sup> evaluated celecoxib versus ibuprofen and diclofenac.

**VIGOR (Vioxx Gastrointestinal Outcomes Research) Trial.** VIGOR, a randomized, double-blind trial, compared twice the highest recommended dose of rofecoxib (50 mg daily) to naproxen 500 mg twice a day in 8,076 patients with rheumatoid arthritis. VIGOR found a statistically significant reduction in complicated upper GI events (defined as perforation, obstruction, or severe upper gastrointestinal bleeding). During a median follow-up of 9 months, the rates of confirmed upper gastrointestinal events were 3.0% vs. 1.4% (NNT to prevent one event 62), and the rates of complicated, confirmed upper gastrointestinal events were 0.9% vs. 0.4% (NNT 192).

VIGOR met all but one of the criteria for a good-quality study. The one weakness was the varying duration of exposure among study participants. The duration of VIGOR was designed to be both time and event driven, so that the trial would terminate after a minimum of 120 patients experienced clinical upper GI events (or 40 patients experienced complicated upper GI events) and for at least 6 months after randomization of the last patient enrolled. Because patients were enrolled over a 6-month period, patients in VIGOR were followed for varying lengths of time. The longest time a patient could have remained in the study was 13 months, but half of the patients were followed for 9 months or less, and only about 1,000 patients (13%) were followed for longer than 10 months. By 13 months, about 29% of the subjects had discontinued the study drugs. Similar proportions discontinued naproxen or rofecoxib because of an adverse event (naproxen—16.1%, rofecoxib—16.4%).

In 2003, the VIGOR investigators published a *post hoc* analysis of lower GI events, defined

as bleeding with a 2 g/dL drop in hemoglobin or hospitalization, or hospitalization for perforation, ulceration, diverticulitis, or obstruction.<sup>91</sup> There were 11 events in the rofecoxib group and 24 events in the naproxen group (0.41 versus 0.89 per 100 patient-years; RR 0.46, 95% CI 0.22 to 0.93). The absolute risk difference (per 100 patient-years) was -0.48 (95% CI -0.91 to -0.05), with a NNT of 208. When the investigators combined the analysis of lower GI events with previously reported results on upper GI complications (0.6 with rofecoxib versus 1.4 with naproxen per 100 patient-years<sup>92</sup>), the rates of all serious GI events were 0.96 for rofecoxib and 2.26 per 100 patient-years for naproxen (relative risk 0.43, 95% CI 0.27 to 0.67, NNT 77).

**CLASS (Celecoxib Long-term Arthritis Safety Study.)** CLASS was designed as two trials with separate patient recruitment and randomization procedures: one compared celecoxib 400 mg twice a day with ibuprofen 800 mg three times a day, and the other compared celecoxib 400 mg twice a day with diclofenac 75 mg twice a day.<sup>60</sup> Because the FDA was concerned that selective COX-2 inhibitors could interfere with the benefits of COX-2 in ulcer healing and lead to a long term increase in GI complications without warning symptoms, the pre-specified primary outcome was “ulcer-related complications.”<sup>93</sup> Another pre-specified outcome was ulcer related complications plus symptomatic ulcers. The planned maximum duration of the trials were 15 and 12 months, respectively, or until at least 20 ulcer-related complications occurred in each trial, or 45 in both trials combined.<sup>94</sup> The protocols stated that celecoxib would be claimed to be different from traditional NSAIDs only if there were statistically significant differences between celecoxib and each of the comparators, as well as between celecoxib versus the comparator groups combined.

The CLASS trials were stopped early after the predefined threshold of ulcer complications occurred. However, the analysis and reporting of the results as presented in the main publication in JAMA were in part incomplete and differed in some ways from the protocols. The JAMA article reported truncated 6-month results even though the median duration of follow-up was 9 months (range 6 to 13 months), and combined the ibuprofen and diclofenac results without reporting the results of the two trials separately.<sup>60</sup> Subsequently, additional details of the study have been made public on the FDA web site<sup>94</sup> and have been extensively analyzed. The findings of the FDA analysis suggest that the published results of CLASS are, in part, misleading because they appear to selectively report results at the point in time at which celecoxib was most effective.<sup>95-97</sup>

There were 3,987 subjects randomized to celecoxib and 3,981 subjects randomized to non-selective NSAIDs in the CLASS trials. For the combined outcome of ulcer complications or symptomatic ulcers, the JAMA article reported that patients on celecoxib experienced fewer GI complications compared with patients in the combined NSAID groups (32/3987 versus 51/3981, annualized incidence rates 2.08% vs. 3.54%, p=0.02),<sup>60</sup> while the rate of complicated ulcers alone was not significantly different (13/3987 vs. 22/3981, annualized incidence rates 0.76% vs. 1.45%, p=0.09). However, by 12 months, according to FDA documents (see Table 14, FDA Medical Officer Review)<sup>94</sup> there was no longer a trend favoring celecoxib for the primary outcome of complicated ulcers. There were 17/3987 events in the celecoxib group (0.43%) versus 21/3981 (0.53%) in the NSAID groups combined.<sup>94</sup> This difference was not statistically significant (relative risk 1.10, 95% CI 0.47 to 2.58<sup>97,98</sup>, also see Figure 4, Scheiman review<sup>99</sup>). For the individual comparisons between celecoxib and ibuprofen or diclofenac, which were not reported in the JAMA article, there was no difference in the rate of ulcer complications at either 6 months or at the end of follow-up.<sup>97</sup> For the outcome of ulcer complications or symptomatic ulcers, celecoxib was superior to ibuprofen, but not to diclofenac at either 6 months or at the end



of follow-up.<sup>97</sup>

Authors of CLASS have not completely explained the reasons for selective reporting of results, though they contend that combining the two trials and reporting ulcer complications plus symptomatic ulcers as a primary outcome were permitted by the protocols.<sup>100, 101</sup> However, reporting only combined results appears to obscure differences between the results for the two comparator drugs.<sup>96</sup> The investigators' main argument for reporting truncated data is that results after 6 months were not interpretable because of high and differential rates of drop-outs due to symptomatic ulcers, which could have biased results against celecoxib because of depletion of high-risk patients in the non-selective NSAID arms.<sup>100, 101</sup> On closer inspection, however, this rationale appears flawed, as neither symptomatic ulcers nor gastrointestinal symptoms predicted ulcer complications.<sup>96</sup> Furthermore, simply truncating data is not considered an acceptable method for resolving issues related to high drop-out rates.

Twenty per cent of the patients in the CLASS trial took aspirin in addition to their study drug. When patients taking aspirin were excluded from the analysis, there were fewer confirmed serious ulcer complications in the celecoxib group than in the ibuprofen group ( $p=0.03$ ).<sup>94, 97</sup> However, serious ulcer complications for celecoxib and diclofenac were equivalent even when patients taking aspirin were excluded from the analysis.

Changes in hemoglobin or hematocrit were not a primary outcome of CLASS and were not reported in the main JAMA publication. However, rates of significant hemoglobin ( $>2$  g/dL) and/or hematocrit drops ( $\geq 0.10$ ), a surrogate marker for GI blood loss, are available from the FDA Medical Officer Review.<sup>94</sup> Over the entire study period, patients randomized to celecoxib were significantly less likely to experience declines in these laboratory parameters (87/3701 or 2.4%) relative to patients randomized to either diclofenac (82/1849 or 4.4%) or ibuprofen (102/1802, 5.7%). Celecoxib was also superior when patients were stratified according to aspirin use (4.1% vs. 6.9% and 7.5%) or non-use (1.9% vs. 3.7% and 5.2%). However, the significance of these findings is unclear as they were not associated with differences in clinically relevant outcomes (such as rates of MI, angina, or congestive heart failure).

In summary, the CLASS trials did not demonstrate a statistically significant advantage over either diclofenac or ibuprofen for the primary endpoint of complicated ulcers for all patients enrolled over the full duration of follow-up. Celecoxib appeared superior to ibuprofen, but not diclofenac, in a subgroup of subjects not taking aspirin. In its decision regarding labeling for celecoxib, the FDA agreed with its Advisory Committee recommendations that CLASS did not demonstrate a safety advantage in upper gastrointestinal safety for celecoxib compared with either ibuprofen or diclofenac.<sup>102</sup>

***Comparison between VIGOR and CLASS.*** There are several possible reasons why rofecoxib (VIGOR), but not celecoxib (CLASS), significantly reduced ulcer complications. First, patient populations and study designs differed. VIGOR included patients aged 50 or older with rheumatoid arthritis, while CLASS had a broader age range of patients with either osteoarthritis or rheumatoid arthritis. VIGOR also prohibited the use of aspirin while CLASS did not. However, the rate of ulcers in the patients taking a control drug was almost three times as high in VIGOR as in CLASS, although rates of ulcer complications were similar. In addition, VIGOR compared rofecoxib to naproxen and CLASS compared celecoxib to diclofenac and ibuprofen. This could have affected the results if the non-selective comparator NSAIDs are associated with differential risk of ulcers. Finally, it is possible that rofecoxib, which has greater COX-2 selectivity, is truly more gastroprotective than celecoxib.

## CV Safety

**CV risk in VIGOR.** Findings from the VIGOR trial raised concerns that the putative GI safety benefits of COX-2 selective NSAIDs relative to non-selective NSAIDs may have come at the expense of increased cardiovascular events. The main publication of VIGOR<sup>19</sup> reported that “the incidence of myocardial infarction was lower among patients in the naproxen group than among those in the rofecoxib group (0.1 percent vs. 0.4 percent; relative risk, 0.2; 95 percent confidence interval, 0.1 to 0.7); the overall mortality rate and the rate of death from cardiovascular causes were similar in the two groups.” This corresponds to one additional heart attack for every 333 patients treated with rofecoxib instead of with naproxen. A re-analysis of VIGOR with three additional myocardial infarctions not included in the results originally submitted for journal publication estimated a relative risk for myocardial infarction of 5.00 (95% CI 1.68 to 20.13) for rofecoxib compared with naproxen among all patients, and 3.00 (95% CI 0.91 to 12.78) among patients in whom aspirin was not indicated.<sup>103</sup> For patients who had indications for aspirin, 8 MIs occurred during 105 person-years of exposure to rofecoxib, compared with no MIs during 102 person-years of exposure to naproxen. Blinded adjudication of the VIGOR trial data classified 45/4047 (one in every 90) rofecoxib patients and 19/4029 (one in 212) naproxen patients as having serious thrombotic events (heart attack, stroke, unstable angina, transient ischemic attack, resuscitated cardiac arrest, and sudden death).<sup>104</sup> This corresponds to one additional serious thrombotic event for every 156 patients taking rofecoxib.

**CV risk in CLASS.** The original publication of the CLASS trials, using 6-month data, reported that celecoxib had no effect on the rate of myocardial infarction or for any cardiovascular event (stroke, myocardial infarction, or angina) compared with diclofenac and ibuprofen.<sup>60</sup> The number of myocardial infarctions was 10/3987 (0.3%) with celecoxib versus 11/3981 (0.3%) with the non-selective NSAIDs). The full CLASS data on thrombotic events were analyzed in more detail by White and colleagues,<sup>105</sup> who also found no differences in the rates of any significant cardiovascular event for the overall sample or for the subgroup who did not use aspirin. For the overall sample, myocardial infarctions occurred in 19/3987 (0.5%) of patients on celecoxib and 13 (0.3%) on diclofenac or ibuprofen. In fact, more detail about the design of the CLASS trials is necessary to judge the validity and generalizability of these results. In particular, reporting of longer-term data is important because 6 months of exposure to celecoxib may not be enough time to assess cardiovascular risk. At 8 months in the VIGOR trial there was no significant difference between rofecoxib and naproxen in the cumulative incidence of events. From 8 to 12 months, differences in the incidence of myocardial infarction between rofecoxib and naproxen became apparent (Figure 1 of Mukherjee<sup>106</sup>). This observation could be due to increased power due to a larger number of events with longer follow-up, or in part to a duration-dependent increase in risk. Based on the pattern observed in VIGOR, if celecoxib is associated with an increased risk of cardiovascular events, it may not be seen until 10 or 12 months of followup. In the VIGOR trial, 2,140 subjects, about one-fourth of the original sample, were available for 10 months of followup, and 1,045 were available for 12 months. In the CLASS trials, 2,770 subjects, about one-third of the original sample, had at least 9 months of follow-up, and 1,126 had at least 12 months of follow-up, suggesting that an analysis should have been able to detect an increased risk of cardiovascular events similar to that observed in VIGOR, if it was present (see Table 4, FDA Medical Officer Review<sup>94</sup>).

White and colleagues argue that their meta-analysis shows that celecoxib is safer than rofecoxib.<sup>105</sup> To support their argument, they note that the annualized rate of all cardiovascular

thromboembolic events in the naproxen group in the VIGOR trial and the non-aspirin celecoxib users in the CLASS trial were similar. However, this comparison of rates across the VIGOR and CLASS studies is imprecise. After 8 months, about 0.4% of naproxen patients had experienced an event in VIGOR, compared to about 0.8% of non-aspirin celecoxib users in CLASS. It is not clear whether or not this is a statistically significant difference. By contrast, Mukherjee and colleagues suggested that the selective NSAIDs as a class might be associated with an increased risk of myocardial infarction because the 0.8% rate of myocardial infarction on celecoxib in the CLASS trials and the 0.74% rate on rofecoxib in VIGOR are both higher than the 0.52% rate observed in a meta-analysis<sup>107</sup> of patients receiving placebo in studies of aspirin prophylaxis.<sup>106</sup> In our opinion, all of these conclusions are unsubstantiated because they involve cross-trial and historical comparisons.

The importance of analyzing longer-term data and assessing dose effects are underscored by the results of the long-term Adenoma Prevention with Celecoxib (APC) trial in a different population—that of patients receiving celecoxib for colorectal polyp prevention.<sup>108</sup> This trial, which randomized patients to celecoxib versus placebo, was terminated after 33 months because of a higher rate of cardiovascular events (death from cardiovascular causes, myocardial infarction, stroke, or heart failure) in the celecoxib arms. According to Figure 1 in the main publication of this trial,<sup>108</sup> the difference in rates of events became most apparent only after twelve to eighteen months. There was also a non-significant increase in risk with higher compared to lower doses of celecoxib. Compared with placebo, the relative risk of cardiovascular events in patients randomized to celecoxib 400 mg twice daily was 3.4 (95% CI 1.4 to 8.3) compared to 2.5 (95% CI 1.0 to 6.3) in patients randomized to 200 mg twice daily.<sup>108</sup> Much of the increased risk was due to differences in rates of fatal or nonfatal myocardial infarctions, which occurred in 22/1356 (1.6%) of celecoxib users and 3/679 (0.4%) of patients on placebo.<sup>109</sup> On the other hand, data from PreSAP,<sup>110</sup> another polyp prevention trial, and preliminary data from ADAPT,<sup>111</sup> an Alzheimer's prevention trial, found no significant increase in cardiovascular events with celecoxib 400 mg once daily (PreSAP, RR 1.3, 95% CI 0.6 to 2.6<sup>109</sup>) or 200 mg twice daily (ADAPT) compared to placebo. However, the lack of an association could be due to insufficient power to detect a difference because of the small number of myocardial infarctions associated with celecoxib in these trials (2 in ADAPT<sup>112</sup> and 9 in PreSAP<sup>109</sup>). Alternatively, the smaller relative risk in PreSAP relative to APC could be related to a higher placebo event rate in PreSAP (7.2 versus 3.4 per 1000 patient-years).<sup>109</sup> SUCCESS-I, a recently published, large (N=13,274) trial of osteoarthritis patients, also reported no significant difference in rates of cardiovascular thromboembolic events with celecoxib 100 mg or 200 mg twice daily versus diclofenac or naproxen (10 events or 0.55/100 patient-years in the combined celecoxib arms versus 1 event or 0.11/100 patient-years in the non-selective NSAID arms, p=0.11), but may have been too short in duration (12 weeks) and have recorded too few events to detect a difference.<sup>63</sup>

***Overall rate of serious adverse events in CLASS and VIGOR.*** One Canadian analysis used FDA materials to analyze the rates of serious adverse events, defined as death, hospitalization, or “any life-threatening event, or event leading to severe disability” in the CLASS and VIGOR trials.<sup>113</sup> This measure combines the rates of serious upper GI complications (in which coxibs are expected to have an advantage over NSAIDs) with other serious adverse events. The numbers of all serious adverse events were drawn directly from FDA materials, pages 7 and 8 (rofecoxib<sup>114</sup>) and 57 (celecoxib<sup>94</sup>).

In the Canadian re-analysis, shown in Table 4, the rates were calculated using the number of patients as the denominator. These simple rates are compared with the number of serious upper GI events, which constitute only about 10% of all serious adverse events (the two rightmost columns in the table). Using all serious adverse events as the criterion for “harm,” the number-needed-to-harm one person was 82 for celecoxib vs. diclofenac, 129 for celecoxib vs. ibuprofen, 100 for celecoxib vs. diclofenac and ibuprofen, and 65 for rofecoxib vs. naproxen. The Canadian authors also pooled the results for celecoxib and rofecoxib, assigning more weight to VIGOR, which had a longer duration than CLASS. In the pooled analysis, the number needed to harm was 78 for the selective COX-2 inhibitors versus non-selective NSAIDs and was statistically significant.

**Table 4. Re-analysis of the CLASS and VIGOR Trials<sup>113</sup>**

Trial	ALL SERIOUS ADVERSE EVENTS		SERIOUS UPPER GI EVENTS	
	Treatment	Control	Treatment	Control
CLASS <sup>60</sup> (Celecoxib 400 mg)	270/3987 (6.8%)	230/3981(5.8%)	20/3987 (0.5%)	24/3981 (0.6%)
VIGOR <sup>19</sup> (Rofecoxib 50 mg)	378/4047 (9.3%)*	315/4029 (7.8%)	16/4047 (0.4%)*	37/4029 (0.9%)

\*statistically significant vs. control group.

For the VIGOR trial, the FDA calculated rates of serious adverse events in exactly the same manner as the Canadian investigators.<sup>114</sup> The FDA analysis shows that the rates of each serious adverse event (except GI adverse events) were higher for rofecoxib than for naproxen. For the CLASS trials, the FDA used patient-years as the denominator instead of a simple proportion to calculate rates of serious adverse events.<sup>94</sup> This approach was used because the two trials that make up CLASS had different durations. In the FDA analysis, the rates of all serious adverse events combined were 11.6 per 100 patient-years for celecoxib; 10.3 per 100 patient-years for diclofenac, and 10.6 per 100 patient-years for ibuprofen, a difference that was not statistically significant.

In summary, the FDA data clearly show that these two coxibs, in doses higher than those commonly used in practice, do not reduce the overall rate of serious adverse events, and may have increased them. It should be noted, however, that not all serious adverse events are equal in importance to patients and physicians. A reduction in the rate of one kind of adverse event might be considered more important than an increase in another one.

### **Rofecoxib and Celecoxib: Further Analyses of CV Toxicity and GI Safety**

The GI and CV risk profiles of celecoxib and rofecoxib relative to one another and to NSAIDs, placebo, or no treatment have also been assessed in numerous meta-analyses of randomized trials and observational studies. We were unable obtain final results of one systematic review evaluating the GI safety associated with selective and non-selective NSAIDs in time to include it in this report.<sup>115</sup> However, analyses of GI safety with celecoxib and rofecoxib in this systematic review were based on results from CLASS,<sup>60</sup> VIGOR,<sup>19</sup> the then-unpublished SUCCESS-1 trial of celecoxib,<sup>116</sup> and two previously published meta-analyses<sup>117, 118</sup> (all included in this report).

## Systematic Reviews and Meta-analyses of GI Safety

**Rofecoxib.** VIGOR remains the only individual trial large enough to adequately assess rates of upper GI complications with rofecoxib and non-selective NSAIDs in patients with arthritis. However, the manufacturer of rofecoxib also sponsored a prospective meta-analysis of GI safety from eight smaller phase 2b/3 osteoarthritis trials (N=5425).<sup>118</sup> It found the 12-month combined incidence of perforations, symptomatic ulcers, and upper GI bleeding significantly lower with rofecoxib compared to non-selective NSAIDs (1.3% vs. 1.8%, P=0.046; rate per 100 patient-years 1.33 vs. 2.60, RR 0.51, 95% CI 0.26 to 1.00). The rate of ulcer complications alone, however, was not reported. A Food and Drug administration review has been critical of several aspects of this meta-analysis.<sup>119</sup> It notes that it is not clear how assiduously investigators of the trials adhered to the pre-specified protocols (for example, by not delivering the prespecified type of primary source material mandated in the original protocol), and that most (50 of 62) cases were unblinded before the adjudication process occurred. In addition, the FDA review suggests that simple pooling and comparisons of the rofecoxib and the non-selective NSAIDs outcomes may be misleading because study duration varied, different patient withdrawal criteria were applied, different diagnostic surveillance methods (including endoscopic surveillance in two trials) were employed, doses of rofecoxib varied, and different comparator NSAIDs were used. Rates of complicated ulcers at 12 weeks, for example, were substantially higher in patients on ibuprofen (1.12%) compared with diclofenac (0.19%). Further, combining symptomatic ulcers and ulcer complications may be less informative because the morbidity associated with ulcer complications is substantially higher than the morbidity associated with symptomatic ulcers. Data reported on the FDA web site (page 78) indicate that only six complicated ulcers in 3,357 patients on rofecoxib and five in 1,564 patients on non-selective NSAIDs (cumulative incidence at 12 months 0.45% vs. 0.55%) occurred; the difference was not statistically significant (relative risk using Cox proportional hazards model 0.51, 95% CI 0.16 to 1.69).<sup>119</sup>

An updated meta-analysis of 20 trials sponsored by the manufacturer of rofecoxib (excluding VIGOR) reported 0.21 vs. 0.45 confirmed complicated PUBs per 100 patient-years of exposure (p=0.03) among 10,026 subjects randomized to rofecoxib and 7,046 to non-selective NSAIDs. However, this meta-analysis was rated fair-quality because it did not evaluate the effects of study quality, duration of therapy, or dose (about 30% of patients received 12.5 mg of rofecoxib, about 50% received 25 mg, and about 10% received 50 mg).<sup>120</sup> With regard to duration of exposure, the results as presented in this study are somewhat misleading, as the rate of PUBs are reported as occurring over 24.8 months (last point in time at which there were >200 patients left in each treatment group), even though the median duration of exposure was only 3 months. Only one-quarter of the patients receiving rofecoxib had over 6 months of exposure.

The only randomized controlled trial evidence clearly demonstrating a lower risk of complicated ulcers with long-term use of rofecoxib compared with non-selective NSAIDs therefore comes from VIGOR, which evaluated a higher-than-conventional dose of 50 mg of rofecoxib. Although the most recent meta-analysis<sup>120</sup> reporting rates of complicated ulcers is consistent with VIGOR, its results appear primarily applicable to patients with shorter-term (<6 months) exposure to rofecoxib.

**Celecoxib.** One manufacturer-funded, fair-quality meta-analysis examined the endpoint of “UGI ulcer complications” in 14 RCTs of celecoxib (not including CLASS) versus placebo or non-selective NSAIDs (usually naproxen).<sup>121</sup> The trials ranged in duration from 2 to 24 weeks, with most lasting 6 or 12 weeks. The strength of this meta-analysis was that the endpoint—upper

GI bleeding with endoscopic findings of an ulcer or large erosion, perforation, or gastric outlet obstruction—was similar to those used in the VIGOR and CLASS trials. A Safety Committee adjudicated potential ulcer complications in a blinded manner. These endpoints were ascertained through a monitoring program that appears to have been superimposed on all of the trials; it is not clear how assiduously investigators complied with this program. Not all of the included trials have been published, and their quality was not assessed as part of the meta-analysis. In addition, like the meta-analysis of rofecoxib trials described above, results of the trials were simply pooled despite differences in dose of celecoxib, duration of therapy, or which comparator NSAID was used. In the 14 trials, there were 2 UGI ulcer complications among 6,376 patients in the celecoxib group (3 per 10,000), 9 among 2,768 in the NSAIDs group (33 per 10,000) and none in the placebo group (0/1,864). This corresponded to annual rates of two per 1,000 per year for celecoxib and about 17 per 1,000 per year for NSAIDs ( $p=0.002$ ).

There are several possible reasons why the results of the meta-analysis differed from those of CLASS, which did not clearly show a decreased risk of UGI ulcer complications for celecoxib compared to diclofenac and ibuprofen. First, the incidence of serious ulcer complications in CLASS was much higher than in the trials included in the meta-analysis. In the CLASS trials, the annualized rate of serious ulcer complications was 7.6 per 1,000 per year for celecoxib and 14.5 per 1,000 per year for the two NSAIDs combined.<sup>60</sup> The nearly four-fold higher rate of ulcer complications in the CLASS trials compared to the other celecoxib trials could be due in part to enrollment of a higher-risk population, the use of concomitant medications, the dose of celecoxib evaluated, or other factors. In CLASS, for example, 21% of patients randomized to celecoxib were on aspirin and 30.6% on corticosteroids. By contrast, only 12.4% of patients in the meta-analysis were taking aspirin, and 13.5% were on corticosteroids.<sup>121</sup> In addition, antiulcer medications (except for occasional antacids) were prohibited in CLASS, but used in 16.5% of celecoxib patients in the meta-analysis. Another potential explanatory factor is that the high dose of celecoxib used in CLASS—400 mg twice daily—was evaluated in only about 10% of the patients in the meta-analysis. It is possible that using higher doses of celecoxib could attenuate GI safety benefits because of incomplete COX-2 selectivity. Finally, different comparator NSAIDs could be associated with different risks of GI complications. In the meta-analysis, six trials (N=6151) compared celecoxib to naproxen versus only three trials (N=2439) that compared celecoxib to diclofenac or ibuprofen (the drugs evaluated in CLASS). Pooling data from trials evaluating different comparator NSAIDs could obscure differential effects on GI safety if they were present.

Moore, McQuay and others conducted a separate meta-analysis of celecoxib trials for osteoarthritis or rheumatoid arthritis, with funding from Pfizer and the Oxford Pain Relief Trust.<sup>62</sup> The authors obtained a declaration from Pfizer that they had received information on all completed clinical trials of celecoxib and would be permitted to publish the results no matter what their findings showed. However, much of the data on which this meta-analysis was based remains inaccessible to the public. The unpublished data used in this meta-analysis add value in that they may help provide the most comprehensive and precise estimates of adverse events. However, although the meta-analysis methods appeared appropriate, it is impossible to verify whether the meta-analysis assessed validity appropriately, abstracted outcomes correctly, or otherwise confirm the reproducibility of the meta-analysis.

Moore and colleagues reviewed over 180,000 pages of company documents, which included detailed information on study methods. All 31 included trials were rated 5 out of 5 on the Jadad quality scale, and 16 out of 16 on an eight-item validity scale. Only two of the 31 trials were

longer than 12 weeks in duration. The meta-analysis found celecoxib associated with a lower risk of hemoglobin fall of 20 g/L or more (a marker for a significant GI bleed) (RR 0.72, 95% CI 0.56 to 0.92) and hematocrit fall of 5% or more (RR 0.78, 95% CI 0.69 to 0.89) compared with non-selective NSAIDs.<sup>62</sup> Although the risk of complicated ulcers was not evaluated as a separate outcome, celecoxib was also associated with a lower risk of clinical ulcers and bleeds than non-selective NSAIDs in 18 trials (RR 0.61, 95% CI 0.46 to 0.81). When the analysis was limited to trials evaluating doses of 200 or 400 mg daily of celecoxib (in other words, excluding the results of CLASS), the benefit was more pronounced (RR 0.35, 95% CI 0.22 to 0.56).

The largest (N=13,274) randomized controlled trial (SUCCESS-1) of celecoxib (included in the Moore meta-analysis) assessed ulcer complications through 12 weeks.<sup>63</sup> It found that in patients with osteoarthritis, celecoxib was associated with a lower incidence of ulcer complications than naproxen or diclofenac (0.1% versus 0.8%, OR 7.02, 95% CI 1.46 to 33.8; p=0.008). Post hoc analysis indicated that non-aspirin users in the non-selective NSAID groups had a significantly higher risk of ulcer complications when compared to non-aspirin users in the celecoxib group (OR=12.05, 95% CI 1.45-100.09.) Among aspirin users, there was no statistically significant difference in the rates of ulcer complications for both NSAIDs and celecoxib.<sup>63</sup>

#### **Systematic Reviews and Meta-analyses of CV Toxicity**

**Rofecoxib.** VIGOR and other randomized trials of rofecoxib have been extensively re-examined to further explore its cardiovascular risk profile. Many questions have been raised in response to the disparate findings of these analyses and a myriad of possible explanatory factors have been proposed.

**Rofecoxib versus non-selective NSAIDs.** In October 2001, a fair-quality meta-analysis published in *Circulation*<sup>122</sup> by Konstam and colleagues reported pooled results from 23 rofecoxib Phase IIb through V trials sponsored by Merck. The investigators stratified results by patient group (rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis, or Alzheimer's disease) and by control group (placebo, naproxen, or non-naproxen NSAID). The risk of cardiovascular events was 1.69 times higher for rofecoxib than for naproxen (95% CI 1.07 to 2.69), but was not elevated in trials comparing rofecoxib to non-naproxen NSAIDs (RR 0.79, 95% CI 0.40 to 1.55) (Table 5). The authors hypothesized that rofecoxib might have been an "innocent bystander" in the VIGOR trial. In other words, rather than rofecoxib increasing the rate of cardiovascular events, naproxen might have reduced it.

A problem with the Konstam analysis<sup>122</sup> is that the non-naproxen and naproxen studies are not directly comparable. VIGOR, the only long-term COX-2 trial to demonstrate a significant reduction in serious GI events, used rofecoxib 50 mg, prohibited aspirin, and followed patients for 9 months. By contrast, some of the non-naproxen-controlled studies were 12 weeks or shorter in duration, permitted aspirin, or used lower doses of rofecoxib. The data presented in the meta-analysis are also inadequate to judge the quality of the included studies and how concomitant aspirin use, duration of treatment, or dose might have affected rates of cardiovascular events, as adjustment using individual patient risk factors was not performed.

A subsequent meta-analysis by Reicen and colleagues, also rated fair-quality, provided a more detailed analysis of eight phase IIb/III trials of osteoarthritis patients previously included in the Konstam analysis.<sup>123</sup> Although the Konstam meta-analysis cites a planned duration of follow-up of 86 weeks for these trials, the Reicen meta-analysis reports that the mean duration of

treatment was actually 3½ months. Like the Konstam study, insufficient information was provided to judge the quality of the studies analyzed or the effects of concomitant aspirin. The incidence of thrombotic cardiovascular adverse events was lower in the rofecoxib treatment group (1.93/100 patient-years) compared with the non-naproxen NSAID (ibuprofen, diclofenac, or nabumetone) groups (2.27/100 patient-years) (Table 5).

The conclusion of the Reicen analysis—that there were no significant differences between rofecoxib and non-naproxen NSAIDs—may be valid for this set of studies. However, the results do not address the more specific question of whether rofecoxib is safe at the dosage proven to reduce serious GI events associated with long-term use. The analysis combined data from all rofecoxib doses (12.5, 25, and 50 mg/day); only 545 of the patients received the 50 mg/day dose. Although 50 mg/day is higher than doses used conventionally, the issue of dose may be important because only the 50 mg dose has been shown to reduce serious GI adverse events compared to non-selective NSAIDs in a long-term trial.<sup>19</sup> It is possible that lower doses of rofecoxib do not increase cardiovascular events compared with non-naproxen NSAIDs. However, even though lower, conventional doses of rofecoxib would be expected to be associated with lower long-term rates of GI ulcer complications compared to higher doses, this has not been proven in clinical trials.

Using a different methodology from the studies by Konstam and Reicen, a good-quality meta-analysis funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation came to different conclusions (Table 5).<sup>124</sup> Juni and colleagues included 18 randomized controlled trials of rofecoxib in patients with chronic musculoskeletal disorders (N=25,273), using published data on myocardial infarction as well as unpublished data available from the FDA. They found that the risk of myocardial infarction was higher in patients in the rofecoxib arms of trials compared with patients in the combined comparator arms (naproxen, non-naproxen NSAIDs, or placebo) (RR 2.24, 95% CI 1.24 to 4.02). The risk did not vary according to dose of rofecoxib or duration of therapy (shorter versus longer than 6 months). Trials with an external endpoint committee had a substantially higher risk for myocardial infarction (RR 3.88, 95% CI 1.88 to 8.02) than those without an external endpoint committee (RR 0.79, 95% CI 0.29 to 2.13). VIGOR contributed 8,076 of the 21, 432 included in the meta-analysis. However, even when the results of VIGOR were excluded, the increased risk of myocardial infarction in trials with an external endpoint committee persisted (RR 2.5, 95% CI 1.1 to 6.0).<sup>125</sup>

**Table 5. CV events in trials of rofecoxib versus non-selective NSAIDs: meta-analyses**

Study	Outcome	Comparison	Relative risk (95% CI)
Konstam, 2001 <sup>122</sup>	Cardiovascular events	Rofecoxib versus non-naproxen NSAIDs	0.79 (0.40-1.55)
		Rofecoxib versus naproxen	1.69 (1.07-2.69)
Reicin, 2002 <sup>123</sup>	Cardiovascular events	Rofecoxib versus non-selective NSAIDs	1.44 (0.65-3.17)
Juni, 2004 <sup>124</sup>	Myocardial infarction	Rofecoxib versus any comparator	2.24 (1.24-4.02)
		Subgroup analyses:	
		Rofecoxib versus non-naproxen NSAIDs	1.55 (0.55-4.36)
		Rofecoxib versus naproxen	2.93 (1.36-6.33)

Unlike the previous meta-analyses by Reicen and Konstam, the Juni meta-analysis analyzed aggregated study-level data, evaluated the effects of variables related to methodologic quality (allocation concealment and use of an external endpoint committee), and assessed the outcome of myocardial infarction (rather than composite cardiovascular endpoints, which could have diluted the effects on myocardial infarction rates). A major point of contention, however, centers on



whether the Juni meta-analysis inappropriately combined results from different control interventions. Although Reicen and others have criticized this method of analysis because different control interventions may be associated with different risks for myocardial infarction,<sup>126</sup> Juni and colleagues' methods appear defensible based on their meta-regression analyses for potential sources of heterogeneity. They found that the only significant source of variation between study results was related to the use of an independent, external endpoint committee, and not to the type of control intervention. For studies with an external endpoint committee, the relative risks for myocardial infarction for rofecoxib compared with placebo, non-naproxen NSAIDs, or naproxen were 2.31, 2.98, and 3.72, respectively, with overlapping confidence intervals ( $p=0.41$  for interaction).<sup>125</sup> The Reicen and Konstam meta-analyses did not assess the effects of this potential source of bias. Other criticisms of Juni have centered on its exclusion of two Alzheimer's trials (discussed below) and on some of its statistical methods (such as adding 0.5 to both arms of a trial when no events occurred in one of the arms). However, Juni and colleagues appeared to follow pre-specified inclusion criteria (trials of patients with musculoskeletal disease), and the statistical methods for dealing with empty cells meet current standards for conducting meta-analysis.<sup>127</sup> A post-hoc re-analysis of the Juni study sponsored by the manufacturer of rofecoxib and criticizing its methods and conclusions is available on-line, but has not been published in the peer-reviewed literature.<sup>128</sup>

A fourth, fair-quality meta-analysis evaluated the cardiovascular risks of selective versus non-selective NSAIDs.<sup>129</sup> However, it only reported results for all COX-2 inhibitors pooled together. It is discussed in the section on cardiovascular risks associated with non-selective NSAIDs.

***Rofecoxib versus placebo.*** The manufacturer-funded meta-analyses by Konstam and Reicin found no significant differences in cardiovascular risk between rofecoxib and placebo.<sup>122, 123</sup> In the Konstam analysis, the relative risk of cardiovascular events (cardiovascular, hemorrhagic, or unknown death; nonfatal myocardial infarction; and nonfatal stroke) was 0.85 (95% CI 0.51 to 1.38).<sup>122</sup> A total of 33 cardiovascular events were reported in the rofecoxib arms. In the Reicin analysis, the incidence of thrombotic cardiovascular AEs was 2.71/100 patient-years in the rofecoxib group and 2.57/100 patient-years in the placebo group (7 events reported in the rofecoxib arms).<sup>123</sup> There were too few events to evaluate the risk of myocardial infarction alone: 3 in the rofecoxib arms in one meta-analysis<sup>123</sup> and 19 fatal and nonfatal myocardial infarctions or resuscitated cardiac arrests in the other.<sup>122</sup> In the Juni meta-analysis, the relative risk for myocardial infarction with rofecoxib relative to placebo was 1.04 (95% CI 0.34 to 3.12) when all trials were pooled, but 2.31 (95% CI 0.49 to 10.82) in trials with an external endpoint committee.<sup>125</sup>

In two subsequent trials of cognitively impaired adults, rates of thrombotic vascular events were similar for rofecoxib 25 mg and placebo.<sup>130, 131</sup> Four thrombotic vascular events (myocardial infarction not reported separately) occurred in 321 patients randomized to rofecoxib (1.2%) compared to 11 of 327 (3.4%) randomized to placebo in one 12-month trial of 692 patients (mean age=75.5 years) with mild to moderate Alzheimer's dementia.<sup>130</sup> In the second trial, 38 of 723 patients with mild cognitive impairment randomized to rofecoxib (5.2%) and 36 of 728 randomized to placebo (4.9%) had a confirmed serious thrombotic vascular event after 115-130 weeks (mean age=74.9 years); the number of confirmed nonfatal myocardial infarctions was 13 versus 10.<sup>131</sup> However, more deaths occurred in the rofecoxib group in this trial (24 or 3.3% versus 15 or 2.1%).

On the other hand, in another long-term (the Adenomatous Polyp Prevention on Vioxx, or APPROVe) trial of a different population—that of patients receiving rofecoxib for prevention of colon polyps—rofecoxib 25 mg/day was associated with an increased risk of cardiac events (myocardial infarction, sudden death from cardiac causes, or unstable angina pectoris) relative to placebo (RR 2.80, 95% CI 1.44 to 5.45).<sup>132</sup> Though the rate of events appeared to diverge only after 18 months in the initially published report,<sup>132</sup> a subsequent analysis that included adverse events originally censored because they occurred more than 14 days after discontinuation of therapy suggests that the curves began to diverge by 4 to 6 months.<sup>133</sup> The risk of cerebrovascular events and peripheral vascular events were not significantly higher on rofecoxib (RR 2.32, 95% CI 0.89 to 6.74 and 0.46, 95% CI 0.08 to 2.03, respectively). Reasons for the discordant findings between the APPROVe and the Alzheimer’s trials are unclear but could be related to differential underlying risk in the populations studied, duration of exposure, or differential use of aspirin or other antiplatelet agents.

The most recent and comprehensive meta-analysis included 37 placebo-controlled trials of rofecoxib.<sup>129</sup> It includes data from the trials evaluated in the earlier meta-analyses<sup>122-124</sup> as well as newer information from the long-term polyp prevention and cognitive impairment trials. Much of the data regarding cardiovascular event rates were obtained by requesting unpublished data from trial sponsors. The meta-analysis was rated fair quality because it did not adequately assess the quality of included trials. Rofecoxib was associated with greater risks relative to placebo for the outcomes “any vascular event” (1.5% or 98/6638 versus 1.1% or 72/6415, RR 1.38, 95% CI 1.01 to 1.87) and myocardial infarction (0.8% or 54/6638 versus 0.5% or 30/6415, RR 1.76, 95% CI 1.14 to 2.73), but not for the outcomes stroke or vascular death. This is equivalent to approximately one additional myocardial infarction per 289 patients exposed to rofecoxib for one year instead of placebo. About 85% of the vascular events occurred in patients on a 25 mg dose of rofecoxib. Approximately 40% (21 of 54) of the myocardial infarctions were from the APPROVe trial.<sup>132</sup>

**Table 6. CV events in trials of rofecoxib versus placebo: meta-analyses**

Study	Outcome	Number of events	Relative risk for (95% CI)
Konstam, 2001 <sup>122</sup>	Combined cardiovascular events	33	0.84 (0.51-1.38)
Reicin, 2002 <sup>123</sup>	Combined cardiovascular events	7	1.42 (0.24-6.22)
Juni, 2004 <sup>125</sup>	Myocardial infarction	Not reported	1.04 (0.34-3.12); all trials 2.31 (0.49 -10.82); only trials with external endpoint committee
Kearney, 2006 <sup>129</sup>	Myocardial infarction	54	1.76 (1.14-2.73)

**Celecoxib.** Five meta-analyses (three funded by the manufacturer of celecoxib<sup>62, 134, 135</sup>) have analyzed the cardiovascular risks associated with celecoxib in primarily unpublished trials.<sup>62, 129, 134-136</sup> The first, a fair-quality study by White and others, included 13 new drug application studies and two large post-marketing trials (CLASS and SUCCESS) of 18,942 patients randomized to celecoxib with osteoarthritis or rheumatoid arthritis.<sup>134</sup> Only two of the 15 trials were longer than 12 weeks in duration. The meta-analysis did not provide enough information about the design of the included studies to judge their quality. A total of 25 cardiovascular events (0.8%) and 6 myocardial infarctions (0.2%) occurred in patients randomized to celecoxib.

There were no differences in risk of cardiovascular events (cardiovascular, hemorrhagic and unknown deaths; nonfatal MI, or nonfatal stroke), fatal myocardial infarction, or nonfatal myocardial infarction between patients randomized to celecoxib versus those randomized to placebo, all NSAIDs, or naproxen (Table 7). There were also no differences in the subgroup of patients who were aspirin non-users. The authors did not perform an analysis of risk associated with different doses of celecoxib.

**Table 7. CV events in trials of celecoxib: meta-analysis of 15 trials in patients with arthritis** <sup>134</sup>

Comparison	Relative risk for cardiovascular, hemorrhagic and unknown deaths; nonfatal MI; or nonfatal stroke (95% CI)
<i>All patients</i>	
Celecoxib versus placebo	0.85 (0.23 to 3.15)
Celecoxib versus all NSAIDs	1.06 (0.70 to 1.61)
Celecoxib versus naproxen	0.85 (0.29 to 2.46)
<i>Aspirin nonusers</i>	
Celecoxib versus placebo	0.60 (0.11 to 3.29)
Celecoxib versus all NSAIDs	0.86 (0.48 to 1.56)
Celecoxib versus naproxen	0.82 (0.18 to 3.70)

A second, more comprehensive meta-analysis was presented to the FDA's Arthritis Advisory Committee in February 2005.<sup>135</sup> It included 41 trials of celecoxib (N=24,933) for chronic conditions; 33 of the trials were in patients with osteoarthritis or rheumatoid arthritis. Only four of the 41 trials were longer than 12 weeks in duration. The investigators used full follow-up data from the CLASS trials (2,320 patient-years for 3,987 patients). In addition to the composite outcome of any cardiovascular thromboembolic event, the analysis also reported separate analyses for myocardial infarction, stroke, and peripheral vascular events. Over 80% of the cardiovascular events occurred in three large trials: CLASS (N=7,968), SUCCESS (N=13,194), and CAESAR (N=916) (the latter trial remains unpublished). The methods and limitations of this study were similar to the White meta-analysis. There were no significant differences between celecoxib and comparators for myocardial infarction, though event rates were low: only nine myocardial infarctions occurred among 7,462 celecoxib-exposed patients (0.12%) in the placebo-controlled trials. There were also no significant differences for any other cardiovascular thromboembolic event.

**Table 8. CV events in trials of celecoxib: meta-analysis of 41 trials**<sup>135</sup>

Comparison	Relative risk for myocardial infarction (95% CI)
All patients	
Celecoxib $\geq$ 200 mg/day versus placebo	1.58 (0.92-2.72)
Celecoxib $\geq$ 200 mg/day versus non-selective NSAIDs	1.65 (0.38-7.21)
Aspirin nonusers	
Celecoxib $\geq$ 200 mg/day versus placebo	1.40 (0.61-3.21)
Celecoxib $\geq$ 200 mg/day versus non-selective NSAIDs	1.64 (0.17-15.33)

Another meta-analysis of manufacturer-held reports of 31 trials by Moore and colleagues found that celecoxib was not associated with a significantly increased risk for myocardial infarction compared with non-selective NSAIDs, any active comparator (including rofecoxib or

paracetamol), any comparator (including placebo), or any non-coxib comparator using a fixed-effect model in patients with rheumatoid or osteoarthritis, though trends towards increased risk were present (Table 9).<sup>62</sup> The overall proportion of patients randomized to celecoxib with myocardial infarction was less than 0.3% (fewer than 60 cases in the largest comparison). There were too few myocardial infarctions in the celecoxib arms of trials comparing celecoxib to placebo (10 events), paracetamol (0 events), or rofecoxib (1 event) to analyze differences in risk. In the two largest trials included in the meta-analysis (CLASS and SUCCESS-I), myocardial infarctions occurred in 0.23% (29 of 12,787) of patients randomized to celecoxib 200 to 800 mg and in 0.18% (15 of 8,375) randomized to a non-selective NSAID (RR 1.7, 95% CI 0.88 to 3.2).

Although this study appears to adhere to high standards for conducting meta-analysis, its results are not verifiable because it analyzed publicly inaccessible data. In addition, myocardial infarctions in the included trials were as reported by investigators, and not subject to adjudication. The duration of exposure to celecoxib in the trials varied, with a mean of about 7 months. The authors of the meta-analysis were unable to perform an analysis on effects of duration of exposure, because the trial reports generally did not provide sufficient information on median duration of use.

**Table 9. MI's in trials of celecoxib: meta-analysis of 31 trials in patients with arthritis<sup>62</sup>**

Comparison	Relative risk for myocardial infarction
Celecoxib 200 or 400 mg/day versus NSAID	1.9 (0.87 to 4.1)
Celecoxib any dose versus NSAID	1.6 (0.93 to 2.6)
Celecoxib any dose versus any active comparator	1.4 (0.87 to 2.3)
Celecoxib any dose versus any comparator	1.4 (0.88 to 2.2)
Celecoxib any dose versus non-coxib comparator	1.4 (0.88 to 2.2)

A fourth meta-analysis of CV risk associated with celecoxib (not funded by the manufacturer) was less comprehensive because it did not have access to all of the trial data.<sup>136</sup> It limited its analysis to trials that were at least 6 weeks duration and reported cardiovascular events in published articles or publicly available material on the FDA or manufacturer website, and also differed from the Moore analysis by including trials of patients receiving celecoxib for colon polyp prevention and Alzheimer's disease. It found that the risk of myocardial infarction was increased in 3 trials (APC, ADAPT, PreSAP; none of arthritis patients) comparing celecoxib to placebo (OR 2.26, 95% CI 1.0 to 5.1) and in 5 trials (APC, CLASS, ADAPT, PreSAP, VACT; the latter 2 of arthritis patients) comparing celecoxib to placebo, diclofenac, ibuprofen, or paracetamol (OR 1.88, 95% CI 1.15 to 3.08) (Table 10). No heterogeneity was present. There was no association between celecoxib use and either cerebrovascular events, cardiovascular death, or composite cardiovascular events. Although this study was rated good quality, lack of comprehensiveness is a concern because it excluded 42 celecoxib trials either because they were shorter than 6 weeks or because publicly available information on cardiovascular events was not available. In addition, nearly two-thirds (18 of 29) of the myocardial infarctions in the placebo-controlled trials (the primary analysis) came from the APC (polyp prevention) trial. On the other hand, the meta-analysis also did not include the recently published, large (N=13,274), 12-week SUCCESS-I Study, which reported results consistent with its findings (10 myocardial infarctions or 0.55/100 patient-years in the combined celecoxib arms versus 1 myocardial infarction or 0.11/100 patient-years in the combined non-selective NSAID arms).<sup>63</sup>

**Table 10. MI's in trials of celecoxib: meta-analysis of trials of at least 6 weeks duration with published or publicly available data<sup>136</sup>**

Comparison	Relative risk for myocardial infarction
Celecoxib any dose versus placebo (3 trials)	2.3 (1.0 to 5.1)
Celecoxib any dose versus placebo, diclofenac, ibuprofen, or paracetamol	1.9 (1.2 to 3.1)

The fifth meta-analysis (also not funded by the manufacturer) analyzed data from 41 published and unpublished trials of celecoxib (8,976 patient-years of exposure).<sup>129</sup> Nine of the trials were longer than 12 weeks in duration. Characteristics of this study, which also evaluated cardiovascular risks associated with other selective and non-selective NSAIDs, are discussed in the rofecoxib section above. Data on celecoxib risk primarily came from patients with osteoarthritis or rheumatoid arthritis (33 trials), but studies of low back or temporomandibular joint pain, ankylosing spondylitis, Alzheimer's disease, and colon polyp prevention were also included. Myocardial infarction rates were higher with celecoxib relative to placebo (0.5% or 44/8976 person-years versus 0.2% or 9/4953, RR 2.13, 95% CI 1.20 to 3.80), and for combined vascular events (0.9% vs. 0.6%, RR 1.51, 95% CI 1.02 to 2.24), but there were no significant differences in risk of stroke alone or vascular death (Table 11). This is equivalent to approximately one additional myocardial infarction for every 325 patients treated with celecoxib instead of placebo for one year. The 99% confidence interval (reported in the article because of multiple subgroup analyses) remained significant for myocardial infarction, but not for combined vascular events. Two large polyp prevention trials accounted for about 60% (27 of 44) of the myocardial infarctions in patients randomized to celecoxib.<sup>109</sup> A trend towards increased risk of vascular events (p=0.03) with higher doses of celecoxib was present, but nearly all of the events at the highest (800 mg daily) dose occurred in the polyp prevention trials. Analyses on the effects of duration and independent event adjudication were not stratified by specific COX-2 inhibitor, nor were estimates of cardiovascular risk with specific COX-2 inhibitors relative to naproxen or non-naproxen NSAIDs (see section on CV risk of non-selective NSAIDs).

**Table 11. CV events in trials of celecoxib: meta-analysis of 41 trials of at least 4 weeks duration<sup>129</sup>**

Comparison	Outcome	Relative risk (95% CI)
Celecoxib any dose versus placebo	Any vascular event	1.5 (1.0 to 2.2)
Celecoxib any dose versus placebo	Myocardial infarction	2.1 (1.2 to 3.8)
Celecoxib any dose versus placebo	Stroke	1.1 (0.6 to 2.2)
Celecoxib any dose versus placebo	Vascular death	1.3 (0.6 to 2.8)

The estimates of risk for myocardial infarction with celecoxib relative to placebo in the non-manufacturer-funded meta-analyses<sup>129, 136</sup> are higher than in the manufacturer-funded meta-analyses.<sup>134, 135</sup> The major reason for the difference in estimates appears to be the inclusion of two recent, long-term trials of colon polyp prevention (APC and PreSAP) in the former.<sup>108, 110</sup> A large number of myocardial infarctions occurred in these trials (27, compared to a total of nine in the most comprehensive manufacturer-funded meta-analysis<sup>135</sup>), and estimates of risk from both trials were higher than previous pooled estimates without these trials (RR 1.58, 95% CI 0.92 to 2.72).<sup>135</sup> In one meta-analysis,<sup>129, 136</sup> the rate of nonfatal myocardial infarction was 1.3% (18/1356) with celecoxib (200 or 400 mg twice daily) versus 0.4% (3/679) with placebo (RR

2.67, 95% CI 0.5 to 8.41) in the APC trial<sup>108</sup> and 1.0% (9/933) versus 0.5% (3/628) for a relative risk of 1.84 (95% CI 0.54 to 6.28) in PreSAP (400 mg once daily).<sup>110</sup> A subsequent analysis of the APC trial and PreSAP using slightly different data (due to the identification of additional events after study closure) reported a pooled relative risk of 1.9 (95% CI 1.1 to 3.1, no heterogeneity) for the composite outcome of cardiovascular death, nonfatal myocardial infarction, nonfatal stroke, or heart failure.<sup>109</sup> Rates of fatal or nonfatal myocardial infarction in were 1.6% (22/1356) versus 0.4% (3/679) in the APC trial and 9/933 (1.0%) vs. 4/628 (0.6%) in PreSAP.

In summary, celecoxib appears associated with an increased risk of myocardial infarctions or thromboembolic cardiovascular events relative to placebo. Much of the evidence for increased cardiovascular risk comes from two large, long-term polyp prevention studies comparing celecoxib 200 or 400 mg twice daily, or 400 mg once daily to placebo. Although trends toward increased myocardial infarction risk with celecoxib relative to placebo as well as relative to other NSAIDs are also present in meta-analyses of primarily short-term trials of arthritis patients, small numbers of events limit the precision of estimates from those trials.

### **Observational Studies of GI and CV Safety**

**Overview.** Numerous long-term observational studies have evaluated the GI and CV risks associated with selective and non-selective NSAIDs. The studies primarily relied on claims data or other administrative databases or on electronic medical record data collected in practice networks to identify cases, and prescription claims to determine exposure. A strength of these studies is that they evaluated much larger populations than could be enrolled into clinical trials.<sup>137</sup> In addition, they reflect how coxibs and other NSAIDs are actually used in practice better than many clinical trials, which are usually short term, require rigid dosing regimens, limit the use of other drugs, and implement strategies to monitor and enhance compliance. Population- and practice-based studies may also better represent patients who would be excluded from randomized trials because of comorbidities, age, or other factors.

On the other hand, the most important weakness of observational studies is that patients are allocated treatment in a non-randomized matter. This can lead to biased estimates of effects even when appropriate statistical adjustment on a variety of confounding variables is performed.<sup>40</sup> In addition, data sources typically cannot reliably assess over-the-counter aspirin, NSAIDs, or acid-suppressing medication use,<sup>137</sup> and information on prescription fills may not always accurately correspond to the actual degree of exposure to the drugs.

**Rofecoxib.** Five observational studies reported rates of serious GI events for rofecoxib relative to celecoxib, NSAIDs, and non-use.<sup>138-142</sup> (Table 12). In direct comparisons, rofecoxib was associated with a similar risk of upper GI complications compared to meloxicam,<sup>140</sup> but a greater risk of upper GI hemorrhage than celecoxib, non-selective NSAIDs, and diclofenac plus misoprostol.<sup>139, 142</sup> In a nested case-control study, the risk of upper GI bleeding was modestly higher for rofecoxib compared to celecoxib, NSAIDs, or non-use (RR in the range of 1 to 2).<sup>138</sup> Another case-control study that reported higher relative risks of serious GI events with rofecoxib should be interpreted with caution because exposure information was ascertained using unblinded patient interviewing, which is more susceptible to recall bias than blinded coding of exposures status from prescription or general practice databases.<sup>141</sup>

Analyses of the effects of exposure duration, dosage, and study duration on risk of serious GI events were generally not reported. In fact, COX-2 dosages were only reported in one study

which reported that the proportion of patients on celecoxib receiving >200 mg/day was 19%, and the proportion of patients on rofecoxib on >25 mg/day was 8%.<sup>139</sup>

**Table 12. Serious GI events in observational studies**

Author, Year Study design Sample size	Mean age (yrs)	Duration (days)	Outcome	Main findings
Hippisley-Cox 2005 <sup>138</sup> Case-control Cases: 9407	NR; ≥ 25	Unclear	Complicated GI event	↑ <i>risk relative to non-use</i> : No for celecoxib (RR 1.25; 95% CI 0.91, 1.72) Yes for rofecoxib (RR 1.79; 95% CI 1.42, 2.26); overall selective (RR 1.72; 95% CI 1.29, 2.29) and non-selective NSAIDs (1.67; 95% CI 1.43, 1.94); ibuprofen (RR 1.58; 95% CI 1.37, 1.83); diclofenac (RR 2.07; 95% CI 1.82, 2.35); naproxen (RR 1.97; 95% CI 1.48, 2.61)
Mamdani 2002 <sup>139</sup> Cohort n=143,969	75.7	141	Upper GI hemorrhage	↑ <i>risk relative to celecoxib</i> : Yes for rofecoxib (RR 1.9; 95% CI 1.2, 2.8), non-selective NSAIDs (RR 1.9; 95% CI 1.0, 3.5) and diclofenac+ misoprostol (RR 3.2; 95% CI 1.6, 6.5)
Layton 2003 <sup>140</sup> Cohort n=34,355	60.4-62.5	270	Upper GI complications (perforations/bleeding)	Similar risk for rofecoxib and meloxicam (RR 0.91; 95% CI 0.59, 1.42)
Laporte 2004 <sup>141</sup> Case-control Cases=2,813	NR; ≥ 18	NR	Upper GI bleeding	↑ <i>risk vs. non-use</i> for rofecoxib (RR 7.2; 95% CI 2.3, 23.0), diclofenac (RR 3.7; 95% CI 2.6, 5.4), ibuprofen (RR 3.1; 95% CI 2.0, 4.9), indomethacin (RR 10.0; 95% CI 4.4, 22.6), ketoprofen (RR 10.0; 95% CI 3.9, 25.8), ketorolac (RR 24.7; 95% CI 8.0, 77.0), meloxicam (RR 5.7; 95% CI 2.2, 15.0), naproxen (RR 10.0; 95% CI 5.7, 17.6), nimesulide (RR 3.2; 95% CI 1.9, 5.6), piroxicam (RR 15.5; 95% CI 10.0, 24.2)
Kasliwal 2006 <sup>142</sup> Cohort n=32,726	62.5	Median Rofecoxib=111 Celecoxib=90 p<0.0001	Upper GI complications (perforations/bleeding)	Rofecoxib versus celecoxib aRR (95% CI): 1.60 (0.95, 2.70)

Fourteen observational studies evaluated the risk of cardiovascular events associated with rofecoxib (Table 13).<sup>142-155</sup> Interpretation of the studies is complicated by the use of different study designs, adjustment for different confounders, and evaluation of different populations and outcomes. Six of these studies appeared to rely exclusively on administrative and pharmaceutical databases to determine outcomes, exposures, and comorbidities.<sup>143, 147, 149-152</sup> The other studies supplemented administrative or claims data with chart review,<sup>145, 153</sup> clinical or practice-based databases,<sup>146, 148, 155</sup> or telephone interviews.<sup>144</sup> An interim analysis of one study relied on a combination of a medication surveillance database, physician questionnaires, hospital admission data, spontaneous reports, and national morbidity and mortality databases.<sup>154</sup>

Several studies indicate that using claims data is quite accurate (positive predictive value >90%) for identifying myocardial infarction.<sup>156, 157</sup> A weakness of relying exclusively on administrative databases, however, is that they frequently have incomplete information about potentially important confounders such as income level, obesity, smoking status, and level of

education.<sup>157</sup> All three of the observational studies that collected information about body mass index, for example, supplemented administrative databases with other sources.<sup>144-146</sup> Unmeasured confounders could result in less accurate estimates of cardiovascular risk, though one analysis suggests that the effects would be only modest.<sup>158</sup> On the other hand, studies can also ‘overcontrol’ if they attempt to adjust for cardiovascular risk factors identified after the initiation of treatment, when the risk factors are actually intermediate effects of the drugs themselves that predispose to subsequent cardiovascular events.<sup>159</sup>

Rofecoxib was associated with an increased risk of CV events relative to non-selective NSAIDs in three of five studies<sup>40, 144, 152, 153</sup> and an increased risk relative to celecoxib in three of five studies.<sup>142, 144, 145, 154, 160</sup> In studies that compared rofecoxib, celecoxib, or NSAID use to non-use, none of the drugs were consistently associated with increased risk of CV events.<sup>143, 146, 147, 149, 151, 155</sup> CV event risk estimates from two observational studies of rofecoxib relative to naproxen (Solomon 2004<sup>145</sup>: OR 1.17, 95% CI 0.90, 1.52; Kimmel 2005<sup>144</sup>: OR 3.30, 95% CI 1.37, 8.40) were lower than the estimated relative risk for myocardial infarction of 5.00 (95% CI 1.68 to 20.13) for rofecoxib compared with naproxen in VIGOR.<sup>103</sup> It is likely that the inconsistencies in effect magnitudes were due in large part to population differences and study methodology. For example, risk estimates from the Solomon 2004 study<sup>145</sup> may only be generalizable to a population that is of a more advanced age than that of VIGOR (81.6 vs. 58 years) and of a possibly lower income level, as it focused on low-income Medicare beneficiaries. Participants in the Kimmel 2005 study,<sup>144</sup> on the other hand, were similar in mean age to those in VIGOR (53.1 vs. 58 years), but different methods of data ascertainment may have affected risk estimates. This study, which found the highest risk of MI associated with rofecoxib compared with celecoxib (OR 2.72), differed from the others in that it collected information about exposures and covariates using structured telephone interviews rather than by using administrative or large practice databases.<sup>144</sup> The use of structured telephone interviews could have enhanced the ability of the investigators to measure relevant confounders and drug exposures. On the other hand, participation bias (only 50% of those approached participated) and recall bias could have skewed the results, though it is not clear that such biases should favor either rofecoxib or celecoxib.

Results of studies that found similar risk of CV events with rofecoxib and meloxicam<sup>152</sup> or celecoxib<sup>142, 154</sup> may also be less reliable. These studies adjusted for far fewer demographic and prognostic factors than other studies that adjusted for multiple demographic factors and comorbidities.

Another factor that varied between studies was how exposure status was defined. In one of the studies that reported no association between rofecoxib use and cardiovascular thrombotic events, use of selective COX-2 inhibitors was defined as prescriptions within 6 months of the index date.<sup>150</sup> By contrast, other studies defined current use as occurring on or near the index date, which strengthens confidence in inferences about the link between rofecoxib and the observed MIs.



**Table 13. Cardiovascular events in observational studies**

Author, Year Data source Sample size	Mean age	Rate of aspirin use (% pts)	Exposure (days)	Main findings
Levesque 2005 <sup>143</sup> Cohort n=59724	NR; ≥ 66	22.50%	844.8	<b>Acute MI, fatal or nonfatal</b> ↑ risk relative to NSAID non-use: Yes for rofecoxib, regardless of dose (Overall RR 1.24; 95% CI 1.05, 1.46) No for celecoxib (Overall RR 0.99; 95% CI 0.85, 1.16), naproxen (RR 1.17; 95% CI 0.75, 1.84) or meloxicam (95% CI 1.06; 95% CI 0.49, 2.30)
Kimmel 2005 <sup>144</sup> Case-control Cases: 1718	NR; aged 40 to 75	33.60%	NR	<b>Nonfatal MI</b> ↑ risk for rofecoxib when directly compared with celecoxib (OR 2.72; 95% CI 1.24 to 5.95) or naproxen (OR 3.39; 95% CI 1.37, 8.40)  ↑ risk for rofecoxib* relative to ibuprofen or diclofenac (OR 2.04; 95% CI 1.16, 3.60) or naproxen (OR 3.30; 95% CI 1.37, 8.40) Risk for celecoxib* similar to ibuprofen or diclofenac (OR 0.77; 95% CI 0.4, 1.48) or naproxen (OR 0.81; 95% CI 0.37, 1.77) *Regardless of aspirin use
Solomon 2004 <sup>145</sup> Case-control Cases=10,895	NR; > 80	NR	1-30 days 31-90 days > 90 days	<b>Acute MI</b> ↑ risk for rofecoxib relative to celecoxib (OR 1.24; 95% CI 1.05, 1.46)  Risk for rofecoxib similar to naproxen (aOR 1.17; 95% CI 0.9, 1.52) or ibuprofen (aOR 1.21; 95% CI 0.92, 1.58) or other NSAIDs (aOR 1.17; 95% CI 0.99, 1.38) Risk for celecoxib similar to naproxen (aOR 0.95; 95% CI 0.74, 1.21) or ibuprofen (aOR 0.98; 95% CI 0.76, 1.26) or other NSAIDs (aOR 0.95, 95% CI 0.82, 1.10)
Hippisley-Cox 2005 <sup>146</sup> Case-control Cases: 9218	NR; aged 25-100	NR	NR	<b>First ever MI</b> ↑ risk relative to nonuse: Yes for rofecoxib (aOR 1.32; 95% CI 1.09, 1.61), other selective NSAIDs (aOR 1.27; 95% CI 1.00, 1.61), ibuprofen (aOR 1.24; 95% CI 1.11, 1.39), diclofenac (aOR 1.55; 95% CI 1.39, 1.72), naproxen (aOR 1.27; 95% CI 1.01, 1.60) and other non-selective NSAIDs (aOR 1.21; 95% CI 1.02, 1.44) No for celecoxib (aOR 1.21; 95% CI 0.96, 1.54)
Mamdani 2003 <sup>147</sup> Cohort n=166,964	NR; ≥ 66	14.70%	165.6	<b>Incidence of hospitalization for acute MI: risk relative to non-use</b> Similar risk for rofecoxib (aRR 1.0; 95% CI 0.8, 1.4), celecoxib (aRR 0.9; 95% CI 0.7, 1.4), naproxen (aRR 1.0; 95% CI 0.6, 1.7), or non-naproxen non-selective NSAIDs (aRR 1.2; 95% CI 0.9, 1.4)
Graham 2005 <sup>160</sup> Case-control Cases=8,143	NR: 18-84	Telephone interview subgroup (n=817): 23%	Mean=113 days before event	<b>Acute MI requiring admission or sudden cardiac death: risk relative to celecoxib</b> ↑ risk for rofecoxib for all dosages (aOR 1.59; 95% CI 1.10, 2.32) or for dosages > 25 mg (aOR 3.58; 95% CI 1.27, 10.11), but dosages ≤ 25 mg had risk similar to celecoxib (aOR 1.47; 95% CI 0.99, 2.17) ↑ risk for ibuprofen (aOR 1.26; 95% CI 1.00, 1.60), naproxen (aOR 1.36; 95% CI 1.06, 1.75), or other NSAIDs (aOR 1.35; 95% CI 1.06, 1.72)

Author, Year Data source Sample size	Mean age	Rate of aspirin use (% pts)	Exposure (days)	Main findings
Johnsen 2005 <sup>149</sup> Case-control Cases=10,280	69.6	6.9% high dose	NR	<b>Acute MI: risk relative to nonusers</b> ↑ risk current (aRR 1.80; 95% CI 1.47, 2.21) and new users (aRR 2.52; 95% CI 1.45, 3.13) of rofecoxib ↑ risk for new users of celecoxib (aRR 2.13; 95% CI 1.45, 3.13) and similar risk for current and non-users of celecoxib (aRR 1.25; 95% CI 0.97, 1.62) Similar risk for new (aRR 1.65; 95% CI 0.57, 4.83) or current users of naproxen (aRR 1.50; 95% CI 0.99, 2.29) relative to nonuse ↑ risk for new (aRR 2.65; 95% CI 2.00, 3.50) or current users of other nonaspirin NSAIDs (aRR 1.68; 95% CI 1.52, 1.85) naproxen (aRR 2.13; 95% CI 1.45, 3.13) and similar risk for current and non-users of celecoxib (aRR 1.25; 95% CI 0.97, 1.62)
Shaya 2005 <sup>150</sup> Cohort n=6,250 50% black	NR; 70% were aged 50 years or younger	NR	≥ 60 prior to event	<b>Cardiovascular thrombotic events: relative to non-naproxen NSAIDs</b> Similar for rofecoxib (aOR 0.99; 95% CI 0.76, 1.30) or celecoxib (aOR 1.19; 95% CI 0.93, 1.51)
Ray 2002 <sup>161</sup> Cohort n=378,776	61.5	NR	NR	<b>Serious CHD (hospital admission for AMI or death from CHD): relative to non-use</b> Similar risks for rofecoxib at dosages ≤ 25 mg (aIRR 1.03; 95% CI 0.78, 1.35) or > 25 mg (aIRR 1.70; 95% CI 0.98, 2.95), celecoxib (aIRR 0.96; 95% CI 0.76, 1.21), ibuprofen (aIRR 0.91; 95% CI 0.78, 1.06), or naproxen (aIRR 0.93; 95% CI 0.82, 1.06) relative to nonuse
Layton 2003 <sup>152</sup> Cohort n=34,355	NR	NR	270	<b>Thromboembolic events: Rofecoxib vs meloxicam</b> (A) cardiovascular: similar risk (RR 1.38; 95% CI 0.71, 2.67) (B) cerebrovascular: increased risk with rofecoxib (RR 1.68; 95% CI 1.15, 2.46) (C) peripheral venous thrombotic: lower risk for rofecoxib (RR 0.29; 95% CI 0.11, 0.78)
Velentgas 2005 <sup>153</sup> Cohort n=424,584	NR (40-64 years)	NR	5.1 months	<b>Combined endpoint of acute coronary syndrome and myocardial infarction: risk relative to ibuprofen or diclofenac (adjusted rate ratios)</b> Increased risk for current use of rofecoxib (1.35; 95% CI 1.09, 1.68) and but not for recent use (1.15; 95% CI 0.88, 1.50) No increased risk for current (1.03; 95% CI 0.83, 1.27) or recent use of celecoxib (0.91; 95% CI 0.70, 1.17) No increased risk for current (1.14 95% CI 0.93, 1.39) or recent use of naproxen (0.86; 95% CI 0.70, 1.04)
Harrison-Woolrych 2005 <sup>154</sup> Cohort Interim analysis of 11,149 of 58,849 who completed follow-up by 11/30/04	NR	NR	NR	<b>Thrombotic cardiovascular events</b> Celecoxib and rofecoxib were associated with similar risks (aHR 0.94; 95% CI 0.51, 1.70)

Author, Year Data source Sample size	Mean age	Rate of aspirin use (% pts)	Exposure (days)	Main findings
Andersohn 2006 <sup>155</sup> Case-control Cases=3,643	68.7	NR	Mean=542 days	<b>aRR (95% CI) for diagnosis of AMI, death from AMI, or sudden death from coronary heart disease (CHD) relative to nonuse:</b> Increased risk for celecoxib 1.56 (1.23, 1.98), rofecoxib 1.33 (1.06, 1.67), etoricoxib 2.02 (1.08, 3.80) and diclofenac 1.36 (1.17, 1.58) No increased risk for valdecoxib 4.26 (0.60, 30.27), ibuprofen 1.00 (0.83, 1.21) or naproxen 1.16 (0.86, 1.58)
Kasliwal 2006 <sup>142</sup> Cohort n=32,726	62.5	Rofecoxib=35.3% Celecoxib=21.9% P<0.0001	Median Rofecoxib=111 Celecoxib=90 p<0.0001	aRR (95% CI) for rofecoxib versus celecoxib (adjusted for age, age <sup>2</sup> , sex, and concomitant use of the combination of aspirin and/or antiplatelet/anticoagulant agents (a) Cardiovascular TE: 1.04 (0.50, 2.17) (b) Cerebrovascular TE: 1.43 (0.86, 2.38) (c) Peripheral venous (DVT/PE): 0.36 (0.01, 1.34)

aOR=adjusted odds ratio; aRR=adjusted relative risk; aIRR=adjusted incidence rate ratios; aHR=adjusted hazard ratio; CI=confidence interval

**Celecoxib.** As summarized above, celecoxib was consistently associated with lower risks of serious GI<sup>139</sup> and CV events<sup>144, 145, 160</sup> than rofecoxib in several observational studies. Observational studies also demonstrated that, compared with non-selective NSAIDs, celecoxib was consistently GI protective<sup>139, 162</sup> or neutral<sup>138</sup> and was never associated with higher risks of CV events.<sup>144, 145, 150, 160</sup>

Specifically, with regard to GI safety, celecoxib was associated with significantly lower risks of GI hemorrhage when directly compared to non-selective NSAIDs (relative risk 0.23, 95% CI 0.12, 0.43)<sup>139</sup> and of perforation or bleeding compared to meloxicam (RR 0.56; 95% CI 0.32, 0.96).<sup>162</sup> Risk of complicated GI events was significantly lower for NSAID nonuse relative to numerous NSAIDs (i.e., selective NSAIDs, ibuprofen, diclofenac, naproxen, non-selective) but was similar relative to celecoxib.<sup>138</sup>

With regard to CV safety, celecoxib was associated with similar risks (estimate range 0.77 to 1.19) of serious CV events compared to ibuprofen, diclofenac, naproxen, and “other NSAIDs”<sup>144, 145, 150</sup> and, in one study, was associated with significantly lower risks of acute MI requiring admission or sudden cardiac death than ibuprofen, naproxen, or other NSAIDs.<sup>160</sup>

Relative to non-use, some observational studies have shown an increased risk of MI associated with celecoxib<sup>149, 155</sup>, whereas others have not.<sup>143, 146, 147</sup> In the two studies that found an association, the increased MI risk was either time-dependent<sup>149</sup> or dose-dependent.<sup>155</sup>

**Additional analysis of observational studies.** An important limitation of the observational studies is that they did not simultaneously assess the risk for serious cardiac and GI events. We re-analyzed data from three studies that reported rates of acute myocardial infarction,<sup>147</sup> hospital admissions for congestive heart failure,<sup>163</sup> and upper gastrointestinal bleeding<sup>139</sup> in a large cohort of elderly patients in Ontario, Canada, to estimate the net effects of selective and non-selective NSAIDs on serious cardiovascular and GI events in this population. Although the three studies evaluated the cohort at slightly different points in time, study methods and populations characteristics appeared essentially identical.

We calculated the effects of selective and non-selective NSAIDs on numbers of acute myocardial infarction, upper GI bleed, and hospitalization for heart failure using baseline rates of events in patients not exposed to NSAIDs and estimates of risk as reported in the studies (Table 14). We then estimated the net effects on all three serious adverse events using Monte Carlo simulation (see Methods section for additional details).

**Table 14. Baseline rates of MI, upper GI bleed, and congestive heart failure (CHF) and risk associated with selective and non-selective NSAIDs in an Ontario cohort of elderly persons**

Adverse event	Study, year	Baseline rates (per 1000 person-years)	Risk with celecoxib	Risk with rofecoxib	Risk with non-selective NSAIDs	Risk with naproxen
Myocardial infarction	Mamdani, 2003 <sup>147</sup>	8.2	0.9 (0.7 to 1.2)	1.0 (0.8 to 1.4)	1.5 (1.2 to 1.8)	1.0 (0.6 to 1.7)
Upper GI bleed	Mamdani, 2002 <sup>139</sup>	2.2	1.0 (0.7 to 1.6)	1.9 (1.3 to 2.8)	4.0 (2.3 to 6.9)	4.0 (2.3 to 6.9)
Heart failure admission	Mamdani, 2004 <sup>163</sup>	9.1	1.0 (0.8 to 1.3)	1.8 (1.5 to 2.2)	1.4 (1.0 to 1.9)	1.4 (1.0 to 1.9)

Our results (see Table 15) suggest that in this population, under real-world conditions, use of celecoxib was neutral with regard to these adverse events when compared with non-use. On the other hand, use of rofecoxib, non-selective NSAIDs, and naproxen were all associated with more serious adverse events than they prevented (Table 15). Rofecoxib and naproxen essentially appeared equivalent when considering all three adverse events together, though rofecoxib was associated with more heart failure admissions and fewer GI bleeds. Our estimates are consistent with analyses of serious adverse events in VIGOR (discussed earlier), which found that rates were essentially equivalent for rofecoxib and non-selective NSAIDs.<sup>113, 114</sup> However, the result are discordant from analyses of serious adverse events in CLASS, which found that celecoxib offered no advantage over non-selective NSAIDs.<sup>94, 113</sup> Differences in populations (the Ontario cohort only enrolled patients over 65 years old who filled multiple prescriptions), indications for starting celecoxib, dosing of celecoxib, or co-medication use might account for this discrepancy. In addition, because these studies only included patients who filled multiple prescriptions for NSAIDs, the analyses could underestimate early adverse events.

**Table 15. Effects of selective or non-selective NSAIDs on number of serious adverse events**

	Estimated effect on MI's (number per 1000 person-years)	Estimated effect on GI bleed (number per 1000 person-years)	Estimated effect on heart failure admissions (number per 1000 person-years)	Net effect on number of MI's, GI bleeds, and heart failure admissions (number per 1000 person-years)
<b>Celecoxib</b>	-0.82 (-2.46 to 1.64)	0 (-0.66 to 1.32)	0 (-1.82 to 2.73)	-0.70 (-3.58 to 2.71)
<b>Rofecoxib</b>	0 (-1.64 to 3.28)	+1.98 (0.66 to 3.96)	+7.28 (4.55 to 10.92)	+9.42 (5.47 to 13.99)
<b>Non-selective NSAIDs</b>	+4.1 (1.64 to 6.56)	+6.6 (2.86 to 12.98)	+3.64 (0 to 8.19)	+14.68 (8.59 to 22.72)
<b>Naproxen</b>	0 (-3.28 to 5.74)	+6.6 (2.86 to 12.98)	+3.64 (0 to 8.19)	+10.77 (3.92 to 19.89)

## GI and CV Safety of Valdecoxib

The risk of clinically significant upper GI events (bleeding, perforation, and gastric outlet obstruction) with valdecoxib was evaluated in a fair-quality, manufacturer-funded meta-analysis of eight randomized controlled trials of 12 to 26 weeks duration.<sup>117</sup> This study prospectively defined ulcer complications and used independent adjudication to determine adverse events. However, it is not described how assiduously the trials adhered to the adjudication process. Four of the trials were not published, and there was insufficient information about study design to determine the quality of the trials. The meta-analysis found valdecoxib associated with a significantly lower rate of significant upper GI events compared with non-selective NSAIDs (0.68% vs. 1.96%, all patients; 0.29% vs. 2.08%, non-aspirin users;  $p < 0.05$ ). Another meta-analysis of five trials by the same authors found valdecoxib associated with a lower risk of ‘moderate-to-severe’ upper GI symptoms compared with non-specific NSAIDs (HR 0.59, 95% CI 0.47 to 0.74) and similar risk relative to placebo.<sup>164</sup> Adverse events were self-reported by patients in these trials, and the quality of the trials was not assessed by the meta-analysts. Two of the included trials were published only in abstract form.

We found no published trials evaluating the risk of cardiovascular events associated with valdecoxib in patients with arthritis. Valdecoxib was not associated with an increased risk of cardiovascular events relative to placebo or other NSAIDs in any of three fair-quality meta-analyses of primarily unpublished data. The ability to detect increased cardiovascular risk in all of these meta-analyses is limited by small numbers of events. A meta-analysis funded by Pfizer and presented to the FDA in February 2005 analyzed primarily unpublished data from 19 trials of patients with chronic pain (methods described above in the section on celecoxib).<sup>135</sup> Thirteen studies were of patients with osteoarthritis or rheumatoid arthritis. Three were longer than 12 weeks in duration. There was no association between valdecoxib use and either cardiovascular thromboembolic events or myocardial infarction (Table 16). However, only 5 of 4,438 patients (0.2%) randomized to valdecoxib in the placebo-controlled trials and 6 of 4,591 (0.1%) in the active-controlled trials had a cardiovascular event. An earlier meta-analysis of 10 trials (also funded by Pfizer, and using similar methods) also found no difference in risk for myocardial infarction between valdecoxib and either placebo or other NSAIDs.<sup>134</sup>

**Table 16. Myocardial infarction in trials of valdecoxib for chronic pain: meta-analysis of 19 trials<sup>135</sup>**

Comparison	Relative risk for myocardial infarction
Valdecoxib $\geq$ 10 mg/day versus placebo	1.80 (0.47-6.97)
Valdecoxib $\geq$ 10 mg/day versus non-selective NSAID	0.32 (0.12-0.87)

The most recent meta-analysis (not funded by the manufacturer) included 14 placebo-controlled trials (Table 17).<sup>129</sup> There were no significant differences between valdecoxib and placebo for the outcomes any vascular event (RR 1.47, 95% CI 0.44 to 4.95), myocardial infarction (RR 1.65, 95% CI 0.28 to 9.87), stroke (RR 0.85, 95% CI 0.07 to 10.6) or vascular death (RR 2.72, 95% CI 0.49 to 15.2). A total of 14 vascular events (1.9%) and 8 myocardial infarctions (1.1%) occurred among the 748 patients in the valdecoxib arms.

**Table 17. Cardiovascular events in trials of valdecoxib versus placebo: meta-analysis of 14 trials<sup>129</sup>**

Comparison	Outcome	Relative risk
Valdecoxib versus placebo	Any vascular event	1.47 (0.44-4.95)
Valdecoxib versus placebo	Myocardial infarction	1.65 (0.28-9.87)
Valdecoxib versus placebo	Stroke	0.85 (0.07-10.6)
Valdecoxib versus placebo	Vascular death	2.72 (0.49-15.2)

None of the meta-analyses included two short-term (<2 month) trials in the high-risk setting of post-coronary artery bypass surgery.<sup>165,166</sup> In these trials, parecoxib (an intravenous coxib rapidly converted to valdecoxib) followed by valdecoxib (40 mg bid<sup>165</sup> or 20 mg bid<sup>166</sup>) was associated with a two- to three-fold higher short-term risk of cardiovascular events compared with placebo (pooled relative risk 3.08, 95% CI 1.20 to 7.87).<sup>167</sup>

**FDA information.** A warning was added to the valdecoxib product label in November, 2002. It was prompted by reports of cases of serious anaphylactic reactions and serious dermatologic adverse events in postmarketing surveillance.<sup>168</sup> A study of two large European data sources and the US FDA spontaneous adverse events reporting system prior to the introduction of COX-2 inhibitors found other NSAIDs—in particular piroxicam and tenoxicam—also associated with Stevens-Johnson syndrome and toxic epidermal necrolysis.<sup>169</sup> However, the rates of these events were extremely low, on the order of one per 100,000 or less during an initial 8-week course of therapy.

#### GI and CV Safety of Etoricoxib

A fair quality meta-analysis of ten RCTs, which included long-term (>1 year) data from 7 trials of OA, RA, or ankylosing spondylitis patients, found etoricoxib at doses ranging from 5 to 120 mg/day (mean dose 87 mg/day) associated with a lower risk of confirmed PUBs (upper GI perforations, symptomatic gastroduodenal ulcers, and upper GI bleeding) compared to diclofenac 150 mg/day, naproxen 1000 mg/day or ibuprofen 2400 mg/day (1.24% vs. 2.48%, RR 0.48, 95% CI 0.32, 0.73).<sup>170</sup> This meta-analysis was rated fair quality because it did not provide adequate detail of the included trials and did not evaluate the effects of dose, duration, or other potential sources of heterogeneity. In addition, it included results of noncomparative extension phases in its analyses, resulting in unequal durations of follow-up for the etoricoxib group (median 12.4 months) compared to the non-selective NSAID groups (median 6.3 months). There were too few events in patients on concomitant aspirin (8 overall) to evaluate its effects on GI safety. An earlier meta-analysis that used similar methods to analyze rates of perforations, symptomatic ulcers, and bleeds reported similar results.<sup>171</sup>

There is only limited evidence regarding the CV risk associated with long-term use of etoricoxib. One 52-week trial reported that no patients randomized to naproxen and five (2%) randomized to etoricoxib (four receiving 90 mg/day; one 120 mg/day) experienced a serious cardiovascular adverse event.<sup>172</sup>

Three meta-analyses have evaluated cardiovascular risks associated with etoricoxib. The largest and most recent meta-analysis (by Kearney and colleagues) included 17 placebo-controlled trials of patients (1,167 person-years of exposure) mainly with osteoarthritis or rheumatoid arthritis.<sup>129</sup> Most of the trials had short (less than 12 weeks) placebo-controlled periods. There was no difference between etoricoxib and placebo for risk of any vascular event (RR 1.78, 95% CI 0.43 to 7.40), myocardial infarction (RR 4.48, 95% CI 0.20 to 99.4), stroke

(RR 1.17, 95% CI 0.21 to 6.51), or vascular death (RR 4.48, 95% CI 0.36 to 56.3). The number of cardiovascular events was very low, with only two myocardial infarctions over 753 person-years of exposure to etoricoxib (0.3%). A less-comprehensive systematic review of five short-term trials (all included in the Kearney meta-analysis) also found no significant increased risk of thromboembolic event (pulmonary embolism, deep vein thrombosis, myocardial infarction, unstable angina, cerebrovascular accident, or transient ischemic attack) with etoricoxib (dose range 30 to 90 mg) versus placebo (OR 1.49, 95% CI 0.42-5.31).<sup>173</sup> A third meta-analysis (available only as an abstract) of 12 trials of unspecified durations found that the cardiovascular safety of etoricoxib compared favorably to placebo and non-selective NSAIDs (RR 1.11, 95% CI 0.32, 3.81 and RR 0.83, 95% CI 0.26, 2.64, respectively) though there was a trend towards increased risk compared to naproxen (RR 1.70, 95% CI 0.91,3.18).<sup>174</sup>

### **GI and CV Safety of Lumiracoxib**

One large (N=18,325), long-term (52 weeks) study of osteoarthritis patients (The Therapeutic Arthritis Research and Gastrointestinal Event Trial, or TARGET) compared the safety of a supratherapeutic dose of lumiracoxib (400 mg/day) to naproxen (1000 mg/day) or ibuprofen (2400 mg/day) over 52 weeks.<sup>175-177</sup> In patients not taking aspirin, lumiracoxib was associated with a lower risk of bleeding, perforation, or obstruction compared to naproxen or ibuprofen (HR 0.21, 95% CI 0.12, 0.37, 1-year incidence of ulcer complications 0.25% vs. 1.09%).<sup>175</sup> There was no difference in ulcer complication risk among aspirin users (HR 0.79, 95% CI 0.40, 1.55). The rate of myocardial infarction was low, ranging from 0.16% to 0.38%, and there were no statistically significant differences between interventions (HR 1.77 for lumiracoxib versus naproxen, 95% CI 0.82, 3.84 and HR 0.66 for lumiracoxib versus ibuprofen, 95% CI 0.21, 2.09).<sup>177</sup>

A recent fair-quality meta-analysis of 12 primarily short-term trials found no significant increase in risk of vascular events (RR 1.13, 95% CI 0.43 to 2.93), myocardial infarction (RR 1.07, 95% CI 0.20 to 5.63), stroke (RR 0.63, 95% CI 0.13 to 3.11), or vascular death (RR 2.55, 95% CI 0.54 to 12.0) with lumiracoxib relative to placebo.<sup>129</sup> The number of events, however, was low, with only five myocardial infarctions among 1375 patients in the lumiracoxib arms (0.4%).

### **GI and CV Safety: Comparison of NSAIDs**

***Partially selective NSAIDs.*** Evidence that meloxicam, nabumetone, and etodolac prevent ulcer complications is weaker than that for coxibs. Meloxicam is the most widely studied of the three drugs and was generally associated with no advantage in GI protection relative to other partially-selective and non-selective NSAIDs or non-use.<sup>143, 178-185</sup> Evidence for nabumetone and etodolac is sparse and insufficient to make reliable judgments about comparative GI and CV safety.

***Meloxicam.*** Risks of serious ulcer complications (perforation, bleeding, or obstruction) and/or MI were reported in one clinical trial of meloxicam<sup>179</sup> and three observational studies.<sup>143, 180, 182</sup> In the single, poor-quality (non-randomized and non-blinded) trial, meloxicam was not associated with significant differences in rates of GI hemorrhage at 6 months relative to other NSAIDs (RR 0.32; 95% CI 0.06, 1.63) in 4,526 rheumatoid arthritis patients seen by family or internal medicine physicians in Germany between August 1996 and July 1997.<sup>179</sup> However,

differences in baseline disease severity could have favored the control group, and it is unclear whether the analyses adjusted for such baseline differences. Estimates of GI and CV risk have also been reported in two recent (2004) cohort studies that followed participants for 14 months<sup>180</sup> and 2.4 years.<sup>143</sup> GI complication-related hospitalizations were similar for meloxicam (0), nabumetone (1, 4.5%), salsalate (1, 5.9%), naproxen (5, 7.9%), and ibuprofen (0) among a cohort of long-term care residents in Indiana (mean age=81.2 years).<sup>180</sup> In a cohort of 59,724 elderly individuals in Quebec, meloxicam (adjusted rate ratio 1.06; 95% CI 0.49, 2.30) and naproxen (1.17; 95% CI 0.75, 1.84) were associated with similar increases in risk of MI relative to non-use.<sup>143</sup> Meloxicam (RR 1.5; 95% CI 0.1, 17.1), naproxen (RR 1.0; 95% CI 0.3, 3.3), and piroxicam (RR 0.7; 95% CI 0.2, 2.3) were also associated with similar nonsignificant risks of MI relative to diclofenac in a nested case-control study using data from the UK GPRD.<sup>182</sup>

Estimates of GI risk as measured by a composite score that included GI tolerability, PUBs, hospitalization or GI-related death outcomes were reported in a good-quality meta-analysis.<sup>183</sup> Compared to non-use, the composite GI risk for meloxicam (RR 1.24; 95% CI 0.98, 1.56) was comparable with that of non-selective NSAIDs. Relative risks of GI hospitalizations or GI-related deaths alone were not reported. Composite GI outcome data from cohort studies were also analyzed in this study and suggested higher risk estimates (combined NSAID RR 2.2, 95% CI 1.7, 2.9) than the trials, but the results were not stratified by individual NSAIDs.

Three meta-analyses focussing only on short-term trials reported PUBs (perforation, symptomatic ulcer, or bleeding) associated with meloxicam. The first meta-analysis included 10 trials (seven double-blinded).<sup>181</sup> Most of the patients were followed for only 4 weeks, and the dose of meloxicam was 7.5 mg in 4 trials and 15 mg in 6 trials. The meta-analysis did not report absolute event rates, but found that the risk of PUBs was reduced in the meloxicam patients (OR 0.52, 95% CI 0.28-0.96) relative to non-selective NSAIDs. A twelve-week double-blind trial of meloxicam 7.5, 15 or 22.5 mg and diclofenac 75 mg bid in RA patients (n=894) published after this meta-analysis found similar PUB rates (1.1%, 0.5%, 0.6%, and 0%, respectively) in all arms.<sup>178</sup> In a more recent meta-analysis funded by the manufacturer of meloxicam and using manufacturer-held documents from 28 trials, there was a dose-response relationship between meloxicam and PUBs as ascertained by a blinded, external adjudication committee.<sup>186</sup> Meloxicam at 7.5 mg was associated with lower PUB rates during the first 60 days compared to diclofenac, piroxicam, or naproxen, but the 15 mg dose was only associated with lower PUB rates than piroxicam. In a third meta-analysis (not yet published) of three short-term (4- to 6-week) trials, there was no difference in the risk of complicated ulcers (perforations, obstructions and bleeds) associated with meloxicam relative to the non-selective NSAIDs piroxicam (two trials<sup>47, 52</sup>) and diclofenac (one trial<sup>49</sup>), with a relative risk of 0.50 (95% CI 0.23, 1.12).<sup>115</sup>

**Nabumetone.** For nabumetone, a fair-quality meta-analysis of six short-term (3 to 6 months) studies (five published and one abstract) found one PUB event among 4,098 patients taking nabumetone versus 17 events among 1,874 non-selective NSAID patients; this result was highly statistically significant.<sup>187</sup> The absolute PUB rates were about 2 versus 6 per 1,000 patient-years. For comparison, in a similar meta-analysis of rofecoxib studies, the PUB rates per 1,000 patients per year were 13 for rofecoxib and 26 for NSAIDs;<sup>118</sup> it is not clear why the rates of PUBs were so much lower in the nabumetone trials. There was also a significant reduction in treatment-related hospitalizations in the nabumetone group (6.4 per 1,000 patients per year vs. 20.3 per 1,000 patients per year). The results of this meta-analysis are not directly comparable to other trials and meta-analyses that reported complicated ulcers as a separate outcome because



symptomatic ulcers were also included. In addition, the methods used to ascertain the endpoints in the trials were not described in enough detail to determine whether they were accurate and applied consistently. Finally, the similarity of the subjects in the efficacy trials to a broader group of NSAID users could not be determined.

***Etodolac.*** We found no trials reporting rates of serious GI complications in patients taking etodolac. In two observational studies, etodolac was not associated with a lower rate of PUBs compared to non-use<sup>184</sup> or naproxen.<sup>188</sup> In another observational study using data from the UK General Practice Database, the adjusted relative risks of PUB compared with non-use ranged from 2.2 (95% CI 0.4, 11.3) for etodolac to 6.2 (95% CI 3.7, 10.1) for piroxicam and overlapped across all NSAIDs studied.<sup>189</sup> When compared to naproxen using historical data from Dallas Veterans Affairs Medical Center records, etodolac had a GI protective effect for all users (RR 0.24, 95% CI 0.09, 0.63) and for NSAID-naïve users (RR 0.18, 95% CI 0.05, 0.61) only when low-dose aspirin was not taken concomitantly.<sup>188</sup>

***Non-selective NSAIDs - GI safety.*** Randomized controlled trials<sup>115</sup> and observational studies<sup>11, 190, 191</sup> consistently report that non-selective, non-aspirin NSAIDs are associated with increased risks of serious GI events relative to non-use. There is no clear, consistent evidence that any one non-selective, non-aspirin NSAID is any less risky than another.

Preliminary results (not yet published) from a meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials found that selective COX-2 inhibitors as a class (defined by the investigators as celecoxib, rofecoxib, valdecoxib, lumiracoxib, and meloxicam) were associated with lower risks of complicated ulcers (perforation, obstruction, or bleed) when compared with naproxen (0.34; 95% CI 0.24, 0.48), ibuprofen (0.46; 95% CI 0.30, 0.70), and diclofenac (0.31; 95% CI 0.06, 1.61).<sup>115</sup> There were no clear differences among the three non-selective NSAIDs. The validity of these findings, however, cannot be assessed until the full report is published. However, they are consistent with results from a previous meta-analysis in which increased risks of GI complications (major plus minor) were similar for different NSAIDs relative to non-use: indomethacin (RR 2.25; 95% CI 1.01, 5.07), naproxen (RR 1.83; 95% CI 1.25, 2.68), diclofenac (RR 1.73; 95% CI 1.21, 2.46), piroxicam (RR 1.66; 95% CI 1.14, 2.44), tenoxicam (RR 1.43; 95% CI 0.40, 5.14), meloxicam (RR 1.24; 95% CI 0.98, 1.56) and ibuprofen (RR 1.19; 95% CI 0.93, 1.54).<sup>183</sup>

In an earlier, collaborative meta-analysis of cohort and case-control studies published between 1985 and 1994, use of all non-selective NSAIDs were associated with significantly increased risks of peptic ulcer complication hospitalizations relative to non-use.<sup>190</sup> Ibuprofen, at doses used in general practice, was associated with the lowest risk of peptic ulcer complication-related hospitalizations.<sup>190</sup> In a subsequent meta-analysis of cohort and case-control studies published between 1990 and 1999, however, risk of serious GI event-related hospitalizations and specialist visits was dose-dependent, and was no lower for ibuprofen compared to any other non-aspirin, non-selective NSAID when results were stratified by low to medium (RR 2.1, 95% CI 1.6, 2.7) or high dose (RR 5.5, 95% CI 3.0, 10.0) (Table 18).<sup>184, 191</sup> A more recent review of observational studies published through 2002 also found GI bleeding risk increased for all non-selective NSAIDs, and risk appeared related more to dose than to the specific drug evaluated.<sup>11</sup>

**Table 18. Relative Risk (95% CI) of UGIB\* for NSAIDs vs. non-use**

NSAID	Hernandez-Diaz 2000 <sup>191</sup>			Garcia-Rodriguez 2001 <sup>184</sup>
	Overall	Dose		Overall
		Low-Medium	High	
Diclofenac	3.3 (2.8, 3.9)	3.1 (2.0, 4.7)	3.6 (2.3, 5.6)	4.6 (3.6, 5.8)
Ibuprofen	1.9 (1.6, 2.2)	2.1 (1.6, 2.7)	5.5 (3.0, 10.0)	2.5 (1.9, 3.4)
Indomethacin	4.6 (3.8, 5.5)	3.0 (2.2, 4.2)	6.5 (4.8, 8.6)	5.2 (3.2, 8.3)
Ketoprofen	4.6 (3.3, 6.4)	NR	NR	3.3 (1.9, 5.9)
Naproxen	4.0 (3.5, 4.6)	3.5 (2.8, 4.3)	5.1 (3.8, 6.9)	4.0 (2.8, 5.8)
Piroxicam	6.3 (5.5, 7.2)	5.6 (4.7, 6.7)	6.2 (4.4, 8.7)	6.2 (3.7, 10.1)
Sulindac	3.6 (2.8, 4.7)	NR	NR	NR

\*Upper GI tract bleeding/perforation

Non-selective NSAIDs were also associated with an increased risk of serious GI events in more recent observational studies. Ibuprofen (Odds Ratio 1.42, 95% CI 1.27, 1.59), diclofenac (OR 1.96; 95% CI 1.78, 2.15) and naproxen (OR 2.12, 95% CI 1.73, 2.15) were all associated with increased risks of GI hemorrhage, perforation, surgery or undefined uncomplicated events relative to non-use in a case-control study of the UK General Practice Research Database.<sup>138</sup> Odds ratios for upper GI events resulting in hospitalization associated with NSAIDs relative to non-use ranged from 3.1 (95% CI 2.0, 4.9) for ibuprofen to 24.7 (95% CI 8.0, 77.0) for ketorolac based on data from 10 hospitals in Spain using a case-control design.<sup>141</sup>

#### Non-selective NSAIDs – CV Safety

**Randomized controlled trials.** Evidence regarding the comparative risk of serious CV events for non-selective NSAIDs is more limited than the evidence for selective COX-2 inhibitors. In particular, long-term clinical trials are lacking. A recent, fair-quality meta-analysis by Kearney and colleagues of 91 trials (mostly ranging from 4 to 13 weeks in duration) evaluated risks with any non-selective NSAID (33,260 person-years of exposure) compared to any COX-2 inhibitor (23,325 person-years of exposure).<sup>129</sup> Most of the trials evaluated naproxen (42 trials), ibuprofen (24 trials), and diclofenac (26 trials); only 7 evaluated other non-selective NSAIDs. Generalizability to usual practice could be limited because the majority of the trials evaluated higher than standard doses of NSAIDs. Much of the data regarding cardiovascular event rates were obtained by requesting unpublished data from trial sponsors. Other characteristics of this meta-analysis are discussed in more detail in the section on cardiovascular risks associated with rofecoxib.

Table 19 shows estimates of risk for different cardiovascular outcomes with COX-2 inhibitors relative to non-selective NSAIDs. Risk of myocardial infarction was similar with COX-2 inhibitors and non-naproxen NSAIDs, but about two-fold greater for COX-2 inhibitors compared to naproxen (0.6% or 99/16360 vs. 0.3% or 30/10,978, RR 2.04, 95% CI 1.41 to 2.96). This is equivalent to about one additional myocardial infarction for every 301 patients treated for one year with a COX-2 inhibitor instead of naproxen. COX-2 inhibitor use was also associated with a lower risk of stroke relative to non-naproxen NSAIDs (RR 0.62, 95% CI 0.41 to 0.95). In subgroup analyses of specific non-selective NSAIDs (ibuprofen, diclofenac, other non-selective NSAIDs), the difference in stroke risk was only observed with diclofenac, which was usually evaluated at high doses (RR 0.48, 95% CI 0.27 to 0.83). There was insufficient data to analyze the effects of lower doses on estimates of risk.

**Table 19. Rate Ratios (95% CI)\*: COX 2 inhibitor relative to non-selective NSAID<sup>129</sup>**

NSAID group	Vascular events	Myocardial Infarction	Stroke	Vascular Death
Any non-selective NSAID	1.16 (0.97 to 1.38)	<b>1.53 (1.19 to 1.97), p=0.0009</b>	0.83 (0.62 to 1.12)	0.97 (0.69 to 1.35)
Any non-naproxen, non-selective NSAID	0.88 (0.69 to 1.12)	1.20 (0.85 to 1.68)	<b>0.62 (0.41 to 0.95), p=0.03</b>	0.67 (0.43 to 1.06)
Naproxen	1.57 (1.21 to 2.03)	<b>2.04 (1.41 to 2.96), p=0.0002</b>	1.10 (0.73 to 1.65)	1.47 (0.90 to 2.40)

\*Rate ratios below 1 favor COX 2 inhibitors and rate ratios above 1 favor NSAIDs

Kearney and colleagues found insufficient data to directly estimate risks of non-selective NSAIDs from placebo-controlled trials. Indirect analyses (based on trials of non-selective NSAIDs versus COX-2 inhibitors and trials of COX-2 inhibitors versus placebo) suggest an increased risk of vascular events with ibuprofen (RR 1.51, 95% CI 0.96 to 2.37) and diclofenac (RR 1.63, 95% CI 1.12 to 2.37) relative to placebo, but not with naproxen (RR 0.92, 95% CI 0.67 to 1.26). However, indirect analyses should be interpreted with caution because they can give discrepant results compared to head-to-head comparisons.<sup>192</sup>

In December 2004, the Alzheimer’s Disease Anti-Inflammatory Prevention Trial (ADAPT) was suspended in part because of an “apparent increase in cardiovascular and cerebrovascular events among the participants taking naproxen when compared with those on placebo.”<sup>111</sup> However, further details from the ADAPT trial have not yet become available.

**Observational studies—naproxen.** The risk of MI and other cardiovascular events associated with various non-selective NSAIDs has been evaluated in numerous observational studies. Naproxen has been the most extensively studied non-selective NSAID because of interest generated after the results of the VIGOR trial were published. In order to assess the proposed hypothesis that naproxen is protective against myocardial infarction (rather than rofecoxib causing additional myocardial infarctions), authors of a meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials of rofecoxib also analyzed 11 observational studies of naproxen (four based on the General Practice Research Database).<sup>124</sup> Compared with non-naproxen NSAIDs, naproxen was associated with a small cardioprotective effect (OR 0.86, 95% CI 0.75 to 0.99). The modest cardioprotective effect would not completely explain the 80% reduction in risk with naproxen compared with rofecoxib observed in the VIGOR trial. In addition, meta-regression analyses indicated that the funding source largely explained between-study heterogeneity. Specifically, Merck-funded studies of naproxen reported larger cardioprotective effects.

An FDA review of four observational studies of naproxen reporting a cardioprotective effect illustrate some difficulties in interpreting the results.<sup>148</sup> In a study by Rahme and colleagues, current exposure to naproxen was associated with a lower risk of acute MI compared with exposure to other NSAIDs (OR 0.79, 95% CI 0.63 to 0.99).<sup>193</sup> However, when the FDA reviewer re-analyzed the data to compare current exposure to naproxen to non-use of NSAIDs, naproxen was associated with a *higher* risk (OR 1.28, 95% CI 1.10 to 1.49).<sup>148</sup> Although the FDA re-analysis was not adjusted for confounders, examination of adjusted and unadjusted results in the paper suggests that the effects of adjusting would be minor. A study by Kimmel and colleagues found naproxen associated with a lower risk of MI compared with non-use (OR 0.48, 95% CI 0.28 to 0.82), but the results were susceptible to participation bias (about 50% of cases and controls participated) and recall bias (exposure determined by telephone interviews rather than by using pharmaceutical databases or other sources).<sup>194</sup> The third study, by Watson

and colleagues, reported a lower risk of thromboembolic cardiovascular events with current use of naproxen versus non-use (OR 0.61, 95% CI 0.39 to 0.94), but did not adequately control for baseline cardiovascular risk (it used an unvalidated composite measure of risk).<sup>195</sup> Further, when the endpoint of MI alone rather than the composite endpoint of thromboembolic cardiovascular events (which included subdural hematoma, subarachnoid hemorrhage, ischemic stroke, sudden death, or MI) was evaluated, the reduction in risk was not significant (OR 0.57, 95% CI 0.31 to 1.06). Finally, a study by Solomon and colleagues reported a lower risk of MI with use of naproxen within 6 months of an acute MI (OR 0.84, 95% CI 0.72 to 0.98).<sup>196</sup> However, the risk was reduced to a similar degree when the naproxen prescription had run out between 61 and 180 days earlier. Unless naproxen exerts a long-term cardioprotective effect (which is thought to be highly unlikely), these findings are suggestive of underlying selection bias—in other words, persons receiving naproxen were at lower risk for cardiovascular events, and adjustment for known confounders did not eliminate this bias.

In four other recent observational studies (not included in the Juni systematic review) evaluating cardiovascular risk, naproxen was not associated with a cardioprotective effect relative to non-use (Table 20).<sup>143, 146, 149, 155, 160</sup> However, naproxen was also not clearly associated with an increased risk of myocardial infarction. None of these studies received pharmaceutical industry funding. The FDA review also included two other unpublished studies (Ingenix and MediCal studies) that found no cardioprotective benefit associated with naproxen.<sup>148</sup>

**Table 20. Risk of myocardial infarction associated with naproxen in recent observational studies not included in the Juni meta-analysis**

Study	Estimate of risk (current use versus no or remote use)
Hippisley-Cox, 2005 <sup>146</sup>	1.27 (1.01 to 1.60)
Levesque, 2005 <sup>143</sup>	1.17 (0.75 to 1.84)
Johnsen, 2005 <sup>149</sup>	1.50 (0.99 to 2.29)
Andersohn 2006 <sup>155</sup>	1.16 (0.86 to 1.58)

Overall, the general conclusion from observational studies of a modest decrease in cardiovascular risk associated with naproxen relative to other NSAIDs appears consistent with a systematic review of RCTs.<sup>129</sup> On the other hand, protective cardiovascular effects of naproxen relative to non-use observed in some observational studies usually appear to be explainable by issues related to study design or analysis. More recent, high-quality observational studies are mostly consistent with a neutral cardiovascular effect of naproxen relative to non-use.

**Observational studies—non-naproxen NSAIDs.** Results from observational studies regarding the cardiovascular risk associated with non-naproxen, non-selective NSAIDs are mixed. Non-selective NSAIDs as a class and individual NSAIDs have not been consistently associated with increased risks. Results from recent observational studies from the COX-2 era are summarized in Table 21.

**Table 21. Risk of myocardial infarction associated with non-selective, non-naproxen NSAIDs**

Study	Drug	Estimate of risk (current use versus no or remote use)
Hippisley-Cox, 2005 <sup>146</sup>	Ibuprofen	1.24 (1.11 to 1.39)
	Diclofenac	1.55 (1.39 to 1.72)
	Other non-selective, non-naproxen NSAIDs	1.21 (1.02 to 1.44)
Graham, 2005 <sup>160</sup>	Non-selective, non-naproxen NSAIDs	1.13 (1.01 to 1.27)
Levesque, 2005 <sup>143</sup>	Non-selective, non-naproxen NSAIDs	1.00 (0.73 to 1.37)
Johnsen, 2005 <sup>149</sup>	Non-selective, non-naproxen NSAIDs	1.50 (0.99 to 2.29)
Garcia Rodriguez, 2004 <sup>185</sup>	Ibuprofen	1.06 (0.87 to 1.29)
	Diclofenac	1.18 (0.99 to 1.40)
	Ketoprofen	1.08 (0.59 to 1.96)
	Piroxicam	1.25 (0.69 to 2.25)
	Indomethacin	0.86 (0.56 to 1.32)
	Other non-selective, non-naproxen NSAIDs	0.89 (0.63 to 1.25)
Mamdani, 2003 <sup>147</sup>	Non-selective, non-naproxen NSAIDs	1.2 (0.9 to 1.4)
Ray, 2002 <sup>151</sup>	Ibuprofen	0.91 (0.78 to 1.06)
Solomon, 2002 <sup>196</sup>	Ibuprofen	1.02 (0.88 to 1.18)
Watson, 2002 <sup>195</sup>	Ibuprofen	0.74 (0.35 to 1.55)
	Diclofenac	1.68 (1.14 to 2.49)
Andersohn, 2006 <sup>155</sup>	Ibuprofen	1.00 (0.83, 1.21)
	Diclofenac	1.36 (1.17, 1.58)
Schlienger 2002 <sup>197</sup>	Ibuprofen	1.17 (0.87, 1.58)
	Diclofenac	1.38 (1.08, 1.77)
	Piroxicam	1.65 (0.78, 3.49)
	Ketoprofen	1.39 (0.77, 2.51)
	Indomethacin	1.03 (0.58, 1.85)
	Flurbiprofen	2.26 (0.93, 5.46)

In April 2005, after reviewing the available observational data, the FDA issued a Public Health Advisory stating, “Long-term controlled clinical trials have not been conducted with most of these (non-selective) NSAIDs. However, the available data suggest that use of these drugs may increase CV risk. It is very difficult to draw conclusions about the relative CV risk among the COX-2 selective and non-selective NSAIDs with the data available. All sponsors of non-selective NSAIDs will be asked to conduct and submit to FDA a comprehensive review and analysis of available controlled clinical trial databases pertaining to their NSAID product(s) to which they have access to further evaluate the potential for increased CV risk.”<sup>198</sup> The FDA also required labeling changes to both prescription and non-prescription non-selective NSAIDs warning about potential cardiovascular risks.

**Aspirin.** Aspirin is known to be protective against occlusive vascular events because of its irreversible antiplatelet effects. In a collaborative meta-analysis of 65 randomized controlled trials of aspirin for prophylaxis against thrombotic events, any dose of aspirin reduced the risk of vascular events by an average of 23% (standard error 2).<sup>199</sup> The cardioprotective effects of aspirin appeared lower (13%) in three trials evaluating doses of lower than 75 mg/day, but in trials that directly compared higher and lower doses, there were no significant differences. Again, the populations evaluated in these trials probably varied substantially from trials of

patients with arthritis.

In fact, randomized controlled trials assessing the risk of upper GI bleeding with aspirin have mainly been conducted in populations receiving aspirin as prophylaxis for thrombotic events. It is for this reason that the populations evaluated in these trials may differ on risk factors for bleeding compared to patients who take aspirin for arthritis, as well as being at higher cardiovascular risk. Randomized controlled trials<sup>200</sup> and observational studies generally reported that aspirin increases risk of serious GI events relative to placebo or non-use,<sup>138, 190, 200, 201</sup> but at a rate similar to that of other non-selective NSAIDs.<sup>138, 189, 190</sup> In these studies, the dose of aspirin varied widely and was generally lower (50 mg to 1500 mg daily) than the doses considered effective for analgesia and anti-inflammatory effects, and patients typically received aspirin for prolonged periods. In a good-quality meta-analysis of 24 randomized trials with nearly 66,000 participants, the risk of gastrointestinal hemorrhage was 2.47% with aspirin compared with 1.42% with placebo (OR 1.68, 95% CI 1.51 to 1.88), based on an average of 28 months therapy.<sup>200</sup> There was no relation between gastrointestinal hemorrhage and dose in this study. Further, modified release formulations did not attenuate the risk for bleeding. In a more recent, fair-quality meta-analysis of 31 randomized trials with over 190,000 subjects, the risk of major bleeding was 1.56% with doses <100 mg, 1.54% with 100-200 mg, and 2.29% with >200.<sup>202</sup> Although the difference between doses >200 and <100 was statistically significant, the absolute differences are small.

Systematic reviews of cohort and case-control studies published between 1985 and 2001 reported similar findings,<sup>189, 190, 201</sup> except that the most recent review found a dose-response relationship between aspirin and risk of bleeding.<sup>189</sup> However, aspirin was associated with upper GI bleeding even at low doses. Findings from a recent UK practice-based case-control study (9,407 cases) found that compared with non-use, aspirin was associated with an increased risk of complicated or uncomplicated adverse GI events (odds ratio 1.60, 95% CI 1.49, 1.72) similar to that of naproxen, diclofenac, and ibuprofen.<sup>138</sup> These findings are consistent with a systematic review of observational studies that only assessed peptic ulcer-related hospitalizations.<sup>190</sup>

**Salsalate.** Serious GI event rates (bleeding, perforation, obstruction) associated with salsalate were only reported in one cohort of long-term care residents in Indiana. The number of cases of GI-related hospitalizations associated with salsalate (1, 5.9%) after 14 months was similar to that of other selective and non-selective NSAIDs (cited in partially selective NSAID section above).<sup>180</sup>

## **Other Adverse Events Associated with Selective and Non-Selective NSAIDs**

**Mortality.** Large clinical trials have not shown differences in mortality rates between different NSAIDs. In VIGOR, for example, mortality was 0.5% with rofecoxib versus 0.4% with naproxen,<sup>19</sup> and in CLASS mortality rates were 0.47%, 0.37%, and 0.45% for celecoxib, diclofenac, and ibuprofen, respectively.<sup>94</sup> A meta-analysis that included unpublished company clinical trial data (including CLASS) found no significant difference in rates of death in patients randomized to celecoxib compared with non-selective NSAIDs, though there were few events (0.03% or 6/18,325 in the celecoxib arms versus 0.11% or 14/12,685 in the NSAID arms).<sup>62</sup> In one retrospective cohort study of Saskatchewan health-services databases that followed patients from 6 months following prescription until death, nabumetone was associated with significantly lower rates of all-cause mortality compared with diclofenac (adjusted odds ratio 1.96; 95% CI

1.25, 3.07) and naproxen (adjusted odds ratio 2.95, 95% CI 1.88, 4.62).<sup>203</sup> However, we found no other studies replicating this finding.

**Hypertension, CHF, edema, and renal function.** All non-selective NSAIDs appear to be associated with increases in blood pressure. However, evidence regarding differential effects of specific NSAIDs is somewhat conflicting. Two meta-analyses of placebo-controlled trials have compared the effects of different non-selective NSAIDs on blood pressure increases.<sup>204, 205</sup> One meta-analysis found that non-selective NSAIDs raised mean blood pressure by an average of about 5.0 mm Hg (95% CI, 95% CI 1.2 to 8.7).<sup>204</sup> Piroxicam produced the most marked elevation in blood pressure.<sup>204</sup> By contrast, the other meta-analysis found that piroxicam and ibuprofen had negligible effects on blood pressure, and that indomethacin and naproxen were associated with the largest increases.<sup>205</sup> In both meta-analyses, aspirin and sulindac were associated with minimal hypertensive affect. In an analysis of head-to-head trials, there were no significant differences between indomethacin and sulindac (10 trials), indomethacin and salicylate (one trial), diclofenac and sulindac (one trial), ibuprofen and sulindac (one trial), and naproxen and sulindac (three trials).<sup>204</sup> The reliability of the meta-analyses is compromised by a high likelihood of publication bias; more than half of published NSAID trials did not report hypertension rates as an outcome.<sup>205</sup>

Several studies have reported hypertension outcomes for selective COX-2 inhibitors compared to non-selective NSAIDs. One fair-quality meta-analysis found COX-2 inhibitors as a class (celecoxib, rofecoxib, and etoricoxib) not associated with an increased risk of developing hypertension compared to non-selective NSAIDs (RR 1.25, 95% CI 0.87 to 1.78). Pooling evidence on blood pressure effects from various selective and non-selective NSAIDs may be misleading, however, because of potential differences between COX-2 inhibitors, dissimilarities in dosing and comparator drugs, and a high likelihood of publication bias affecting conclusions.

Evidence regarding risks of hypertension with rofecoxib is somewhat mixed. A good-quality Cochrane review found that rates of edema and hypertension were not reported in most trials.<sup>77</sup> For rofecoxib versus nabumetone, there was no difference in the rate of hypertension in two trials (pooled RR 1.46, 95% CI 0.53 to 4.12). A meta-analysis of nine phase IIb/III osteoarthritis trials sponsored by the manufacturer of rofecoxib found that rofecoxib 12.5 mg and 25 mg daily were associated with higher rates of lower extremity edema, congestive heart failure, and hypertension than placebo.<sup>206</sup> Edema and hypertension rates were similar between the rofecoxib (1.2 per 100 patient-months) and ibuprofen (1.3 per 100 patient-months) groups but somewhat higher than in the diclofenac group (0.3 per 100 patient months). Discontinuations due to these adverse events were rare: of 2,829 randomized to rofecoxib, seven discontinued due to edema, two due to hypertension, and one due to CHF. However, five of the nine trials were shorter than 6 weeks in duration, so these rates may not be representative of results in long-term users. A more recent fair-quality meta-analysis of arthritis trials found rofecoxib associated with a higher risk of developing hypertension compared to either placebo (RR 2.63, 95% CI 1.42 to 4.65) or non-selective NSAIDs (RR 1.78, 95% CI 1.17 to 2.69).<sup>21</sup>

Results of large, longer-term trials appear to be consistent with an increased risk of hypertension with rofecoxib compared to either placebo or non-selective NSAIDs. In VIGOR (N=8,076) rofecoxib 50 mg daily was associated with a higher risk of developing hypertension compared to naproxen (RR 1.69, 95% CI 1.42-1.99) and a higher risk of discontinuation due to hypertension-related adverse events (RR 4.67, 95% CI 1.93 to 11.28).<sup>114</sup> In addition, 19 patients developed CHF-related adverse events during 4,047 patient-years of exposure, compared with

nine patients during 4,029 patient-years of exposure to naproxen (RR 2.11, 95% CI 0.96 to 4.67). In the long-term APPROVe polyp prevention trial, hypertension (RR 2.02, 95% CI 1.71 to 2.38), edema (RR 1.57, 95% CI 1.17 to 2.10), and heart failure or pulmonary edema (RR 4.61, 95% CI 1.50 to 18.83) were all increased with rofecoxib 25 mg qD compared with placebo.<sup>132</sup>

In contrast to rofecoxib, several meta-analyses of celecoxib suggest no increased risk of hypertension or heart failure compared to non-selective NSAIDs. In fact, a recent fair-quality meta-analysis found celecoxib (dose not specified) not associated with an increased risk of hypertension compared to either placebo (RR 0.81, 95% CI 0.13 to 5.21) or non-selective NSAIDs (RR 0.82, 95% CI 0.68 to 1.00).<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, a Pfizer-funded meta-analysis submitted to the FDA found that, for celecoxib (any dose), the risk of developing hypertension was higher than placebo (1.1% vs. 0.7%,  $p=0.023$ ) but lower than the non-selective NSAIDs (1.5% vs. 2.0%,  $p=0.002$ ).<sup>135</sup> Heart failure was more frequent in patients taking celecoxib than those taking placebo (13 of 8,405 versus one of 4,057,  $p=0.046$ ), though not compared with non-selective NSAIDs (0.1% vs. 0.2%,  $p=0.056$ ). A third meta-analysis, funded in part by the manufacturer, reported similar findings for risk of hypertension (celecoxib vs. non-selective NSAID RR 1.1, 95% CI 0.90 to 1.3) and heart failure (celecoxib vs. non-selective NSAID RR 0.70, 95% CI 0.43 to 1.1).<sup>62</sup> Most of the trials included in the meta-analyses were short-term and only one meta-analysis<sup>62</sup> evaluated the quality of the trials. However, results from large trials of celecoxib are consistent with the meta-analyses. In CLASS (N=8,059), celecoxib was associated with a similar rate of hypertension (new-onset and aggravated pre-existing) compared with diclofenac (2.7% vs. 2.6%), but a significantly lower rate than ibuprofen (2.7% vs. 4.2%).<sup>105</sup> CHF rates were similar in patients randomized to celecoxib versus either ibuprofen or diclofenac (0.3% vs. 0.3%). In the shorter-term SUCCESS-I trial (N=13,274), rates of hypertension were similar with celecoxib 100 or 200 mg bid compared to either diclofenac or naproxen (RR 0.86, 95% CI 0.62 to 1.20).<sup>21</sup> The APC polyp prevention trial found celecoxib associated with significant systolic blood pressure elevations compared to placebo at 1 and 3 years at either 200 mg twice daily (2.0 mm Hg at 1 year and 2.6 mm Hg at 3 years) and 400 mg twice daily (2.9 mm Hg at 1 year and 5.2 mm Hg at 3 years).<sup>109</sup> By contrast, the PreSAP polyp prevention trial found no difference in systolic blood pressure elevations between celecoxib 400 mg once daily and placebo.<sup>109</sup> The APC polyp prevention trial found no difference in rates of heart failure between patients randomized to celecoxib versus those randomized to placebo, though event rates were low (five cases of heart failure among 1,356 subjects).<sup>108</sup>

Direct evidence on comparative blood pressure effects of celecoxib compared to rofecoxib is more limited. A good-quality Cochrane review found no difference in rates of clinically significant increases in blood pressure or edema with rofecoxib versus celecoxib in three head-to-head trials of average-risk populations with osteoarthritis.<sup>77</sup> Another meta-analysis that used unpublished clinical trial reports also found no difference in risk of hypertension or aggravated hypertension in patients on celecoxib versus rofecoxib (RR 0.75, 95% CI 0.52 to 1.1).<sup>62</sup> On the other hand, in contrast to the Cochrane review, this meta-analysis found a lower rate of edema with celecoxib versus rofecoxib (5 trials, RR 0.72, 95% CI 0.62 to 0.83). A third meta-analysis found rofecoxib associated with a greater risk of developing a clinically important elevation in systolic blood pressure (RR 1.50, 95% CI 1.00 to 2.26), though the difference was not statistically significant.<sup>21</sup>

Three other short-term head-to-head trials of celecoxib and rofecoxib in higher-risk populations (hypertensive, osteoarthritic patients) funded by the manufacturer of celecoxib should be interpreted cautiously because they evaluated doses (rofecoxib 25 mg daily and



celecoxib 200 mg daily) that may not provide equivalent pain relief.<sup>84, 85, 207</sup> Two 6-week trials of elderly (>65 years) patients with osteoarthritis and on antihypertensive therapy (SUCCESS VI and SUCCESS VII) found that rates of increased systolic blood pressure (>20 mm Hg increase and absolute value >140 mm Hg) were higher in patients randomized to rofecoxib (n=399) compared to celecoxib (n=411): 14.9% vs. 6.9% (p<0.01) in one trial<sup>85</sup> and 17% vs. 11% (p=0.032) in the other.<sup>84</sup> However, in one of these trials (SUCCESS VI),<sup>84</sup> there was an important baseline difference in the proportion of patients who took an ACE inhibitor for hypertension (40% for celecoxib-treated patients versus 29% for rofecoxib-treated patients, p=0.002). This could suggest inadequate randomization, as successful randomization is unlikely to have resulted in such a marked baseline difference. In the third trial (CRESCENT), which enrolled patients with controlled hypertension, diabetes, and osteoarthritis, the proportion that developed ambulatory hypertension (systolic blood pressure >135) was higher with rofecoxib than with celecoxib (30% vs. 16%, p=0.05).<sup>207</sup> In the CRESCENT and SUCCESS-VI trials, edema was more common in patients assigned to rofecoxib compared with those assigned to celecoxib (7.7% vs. 4.7%, p<0.05<sup>207</sup> and 9.5% vs. 4.9%, p=0.014<sup>84</sup>). Three patients on rofecoxib and two on celecoxib developed heart failure in CRESCENT compared with four versus none in SUCCESS-VI; these differences were not significant. Discontinuations due to these adverse events did not differ.

With regards to renal toxicity, there is little evidence to suggest that selective NSAIDs as a class are safer than non-selective NSAIDs. A systematic review of five small (sample size range 15 to 67), short-term (28 days or less) trials found that selective NSAIDs had similar effects on glomerular filtration rate and creatinine clearance in three trials, and were modestly superior in two.<sup>208</sup> The clinical effects of the modest differences observed in the latter two trials are unclear. Another meta-analysis found that celecoxib at 200 to 400 mg was not associated with a greater risk of increase in creatinine greater than 1.3 times the upper limit of normal compared to non-selective NSAIDs (RR 0.78, 95% CI 0.46 to 1.3).<sup>62</sup>

There is also no clear evidence suggesting that celecoxib is associated with improved renal safety compared with rofecoxib. In the CLASS trial, there was one fewer episode of edema, hypertension, or increased creatinine for every 62 patients treated with celecoxib instead of ibuprofen 800 mg tid or diclofenac 75 bid.<sup>60</sup> The effects of celecoxib on renal function were also reviewed in a meta-analysis of primarily unpublished data (not including CLASS) that found the overall incidence of renal adverse events similar to that of non-selective NSAIDs.<sup>209</sup> In VIGOR, the incidence of adverse events related to renal function (outcome not specifically defined) was similar for the rofecoxib and naproxen groups (1.2% versus 0.9%), with 0.2% discontinuing treatment in each arm because of these events.<sup>19</sup> A meta-analysis of manufacturer's data found rofecoxib associated with an overall incidence of elevations in serum creatinine similar to non-selective NSAIDs.<sup>206</sup> Discontinuations due to elevated serum creatinine were rare, and there were no cases of acute renal failure (not defined) associated with rofecoxib.

The risks of hypertension and heart failure with rofecoxib and celecoxib have also been evaluated in several good-quality observational studies. A large case-control study found that rofecoxib users were at significantly increased risk for new-onset hypertension compared with patients taking celecoxib (OR 1.6, 95% CI 1.2 to 2.1).<sup>210</sup> A retrospective cohort study found rofecoxib associated with an increased risk of admission for heart failure compared with NSAID-non-users (RR 1.8, 95% CI 1.5 to 2.2), though celecoxib was not (RR 1.0, 95% CI 0.8 to 1.3).<sup>163</sup> Rofecoxib (HR 1.27, 95% CI 1.09 to 1.49) and non-selective NSAIDs (HR 1.26, 95% CI 1.00 to 1.57) were also associated with higher risks of death or recurrent CHF compared with

celecoxib in another study of high-risk patients following a heart-failure admission.<sup>211</sup> In two observational studies, use of non-selective NSAIDs was associated with heart-failure admissions (RR 1.4, 95% CI 1.0 to 1.9)<sup>163</sup> and newly diagnosed heart failure (adjusted RR 1.6, 95% CI 1.2 to 2.1)<sup>212</sup> when compared with non-use.

**Hepatotoxicity.** We identified one systematic review that evaluated rates of aminotransferase elevations, liver-related discontinuations, and other serious hepatic adverse events, including hospitalizations and deaths, in randomized controlled trials of rofecoxib, celecoxib, valdecoxib, meloxicam, diclofenac, naproxen, and ibuprofen in adults with osteoarthritis or rheumatoid arthritis.<sup>213</sup> It identified 67 published articles and 65 studies accessible from the FDA archives. Diclofenac (3.55%, 95% CI 3.12% to 4.03%) and rofecoxib (1.80%, 95% CI 1.52% to 2.13%) had higher rates of aminotransferase elevations >3 times the upper limit of normal compared with placebo (0.29%; 95% CI 0.17% to 0.51%) and the other NSAIDs (all < or = 0.43%). However, only diclofenac was associated with a higher rate of liver-related discontinuations than placebo (2.17%, 95% CI 1.78% to 2.64%). Serious complications related to liver toxicity were extremely rare: only one liver-related hospitalization (among 37,671 patients) and death (among 51,942 patients) occurred in a patient on naproxen in the VIGOR trial. There was also a statistically significant difference in elevated (three times above the upper limit of normal) transaminase levels between lumiracoxib (which is chemically related to diclofenac) and naproxen or ibuprofen (HR 3.97, 95% CI 2.96, 5.32) in the large TARGET (N=18,325) trial, though these elevations were reversible upon drug discontinuation.<sup>175</sup>

A recent systematic review of seven population-based epidemiological studies of hepatotoxicity with NSAIDs found a similarly low risk of serious hepatic toxicity.<sup>214</sup> In those studies, the excess risk of liver injury associated with current NSAIDs ranged from 4.8 to 8.6/100,000 person-years of exposure compared with past use. There were zero deaths from liver injury associated with NSAIDs in over 396,392 patient-years of exposure. A recent cohort study from Italy found that nimesulide, an NSAID not available in the U.S., was associated with a higher incidence of serious liver injury compared with other NSAIDs.<sup>215</sup> None of the other NSAIDs, including celecoxib, were associated with an increased risk of serious liver injury. An earlier review of five population-based studies found sulindac associated with a 5-10 fold higher incidence of hepatic injury compared with other NSAIDs.<sup>216</sup> Diclofenac was associated with higher rates of aminotransferase elevations compared with users of other NSAIDs, but not with a higher incidence of serious liver disease.

### **Tolerability: Comparison of NSAIDs**

**Partially selective NSAIDs.** Evidence is mixed regarding the relative tolerability of meloxicam (7.5 mg or 15 mg) compared to non-selective NSAIDs. The meta-analysis of meloxicam studies mentioned earlier found lower rates of any gastrointestinal event (OR 0.64; 95% CI 0.59, 0.69) and withdrawals due to GI events (OR 0.59; 95% CI 0.52, 0.67) compared with NSAIDs, but as mentioned before it included some inadequately blinded studies, which are less reliable for assessing withdrawals and attributing the cause of adverse events.<sup>181</sup> The double-blind trial of meloxicam 7.5, 15, and 22.5 mg and diclofenac 75 mg bid mentioned earlier<sup>217</sup> found no significant differences in rates of withdrawals due to adverse events or in incidence of overall and gastrointestinal tolerability.

In the nabumetone meta-analysis, the incidence of GI adverse events was significantly lower on nabumetone compared to non-selective NSAIDs (25.3% vs. 28.2%, p=.007), corresponding to

about one fewer event for every 34 patients treated with nabumetone.<sup>187</sup>

Numerous randomized controlled trials reported microscopic bleeding or endoscopic outcomes with etodolac. However, we identified no randomized trials or systematic reviews assessing the clinical tolerability of etodolac relative to non-selective NSAIDs.

**Non-selective NSAIDs.** One Cochrane review evaluated the tolerability of different NSAIDs.<sup>41</sup> The only relatively consistent finding was that indomethacin was associated with higher rates of toxicity than other NSAIDs, but it was not clear if these differences were statistically significant.

**Aspirin and salsalate.** Five randomized trials have evaluated the efficacy or safety of aspirin or salsalate compared with non-aspirin NSAIDs in patients with arthritis.<sup>56, 218-221</sup> All were short-term in duration ( $\leq 12$  weeks) and involved a total of 471 patients; of the subjects enrolled, only four had osteoarthritis of the hip/knee for every 100 patients with rheumatoid arthritis. Aspirin was associated with higher incidence of overall adverse events than salsalate (70% vs. 40%,  $p < 0.05$ )<sup>56</sup> and diclofenac (61% vs. 46%;  $p < 0.05$ );<sup>218</sup> these led to higher rates of withdrawals due to adverse events for aspirin compared with diclofenac (23% vs. 6%;  $p < 0.05$ ). Salsalate was associated with a higher incidence of overall adverse events compared to other non-selective NSAIDs in two<sup>220, 221</sup> of three trials, but the actual rates were not reported.

The overall safety profile of salsalate has also been evaluated in the rheumatoid arthritis population using the Arthritis, Rheumatism, and Aging Medical Information System (ARAMIS) databases. These studies reported summary measures of drug toxicity based on tabulations of mean frequencies of overall adverse events per patient years, weighted by severity, and adjusted for differences in demographic factors. Numerically larger index scores indicate greater levels of toxicity. The summary index score takes into account symptoms from all body systems, laboratory abnormalities, and all-cause hospitalizations.<sup>201, 222-224</sup> Symptoms were assessed every 6 months using patient self-report in response to open-ended questions. Hospitalization and death data were ascertained from discharge summaries and death certificates. Descriptions of study methods varied, but in general the ARAMIS studies were somewhat vague with regard to patient selection and ascertainment methods; adverse events were not clearly defined or prespecified; exposure duration and length of follow-up were unclear; and adjustments were made only for demographic factors such as age and gender. Because the results of these studies are more subject to recall bias and had other methodological shortcomings, the findings that aspirin, salsalate, and ibuprofen were the least toxic among the NSAIDs studied (Table 22 below) are less convincing than results of more recent observational studies (discussed earlier).

**Table 22. Toxicity Index Scores from ARAMIS database studies**

Study	Aspirin	Ibuprofen	Salsalate	Others (range)
Fries 1991 <sup>222</sup>	1.19	1.94	1.28	2.17 (Naproxen) to 3.99 (Indomethacin)
Fries 1993 <sup>224</sup>	1.33	1.89	NR	1.90 (Naproxen) to 2.86 (Tolmetin)
Fries 1996 <sup>223</sup>	1.77	2.68	2.00	1.63 (Sulindac) to 3.09 (Ketoprofen)
Singh 1997 <sup>201</sup>	2.25	1.95	1.79	3.29 (Naproxen) to 5.14 (Meclofenamate)

**COX-2 vs. NSAID.** Two manufacturer-funded meta-analyses<sup>61, 62</sup> and one good-quality Cochrane review<sup>225</sup> found celecoxib consistently associated with more favorable overall and GI tolerability profiles relative to some, but not all, non-selective NSAIDs in short-term RCTs of

patients with OA/RA (Table 23). Evidence of relative tolerability is less consistent for rofecoxib compared to partially-selective or non-selective NSAIDs in short-term RCTs of patients with OA/RA as reported in one manufacturer-funded meta-analysis,<sup>226</sup> two good-quality Cochrane reviews;<sup>77, 78</sup> and one other RCT that was not included in the systematic reviews.<sup>76</sup>

Effect size differences between the COX-2 manufacturer-funded analyses and the Cochrane reviews may have been due, in large part, to differences in methods of study selection and statistical analyses. The Cochrane Reviews primarily relied upon electronic database searches for identification of published RCTs evaluating narrow patient populations, and results from each trial were generally presented separately.<sup>77, 78, 225</sup> Manufacturer-funded meta-analyses relied solely<sup>62, 226</sup> or in part<sup>61</sup> on internal records to identify studies and presented only pooled estimates of broader populations including OA and RA patients.

**Table 23. Tolerability profile of COX-2's vs. NSAIDs in meta-analysis and systematic reviews**

Review	AE incidence		Withdrawals	
	Overall	GI-related	Any AE	GI-related
<b>Celecoxib vs. NSAIDs for OA/RA</b>				
<i>Manufacturer-funded meta-analyses</i>				
<i>Deeks 2002<sup>61</sup></i>	-	-	RR 0.86 (0.72, 1.04)	<b>RR 0.54 (0.42, 0.71)</b>
<i>Moore 2005<sup>62</sup></i>	<b>0.96 (0.94, 0.98)</b>	<b>0.84 (0.81, 0.87)</b>	<b>RR 0.86 (0.81, 0.91)</b>	<b>RR 0.75 (0.7, 0.8)</b>
<b>Celecoxib vs. individual NSAIDs for RA</b>				
<i>Garner 2005a<sup>225</sup> (Cochrane Collaboration Systematic Review)</i>				
<i>Celecoxib vs. Naproxen</i>				
-	-	-	No differences (RR Range: 1.02-1.36)	No differences (RR Range: 0.26-0.61)
<i>Celecoxib vs. Diclofenac</i>				
-	<b>0.75 (0.62, 0.90)</b>	0.95 (0.85, 1.04)	<b>0.54 (0.36, 0.79)</b>	<b>0.36 (0.21, 0.60)</b>
<b>Rofecoxib vs. NSAIDs for OA</b>				
<i>Watson 2000<sup>226</sup> (Manufacturer-funded meta-analysis)</i>				
6-month	-	<b>0.86 (0.78, 0.95)</b>	-	<b>0.68 (0.50, 0.92)</b>
12-month	-	<b>0.88 (0.80, 0.97)</b>	-	<b>0.70 (0.52, 0.94)</b>
<i>Garner 2005c<sup>77</sup> (Cochrane Collaboration Systematic Review)</i>				
<i>Rofecoxib vs. Diclofenac</i>				
No differences (RR range: 0.98-1.01)	-	-	<b>12.5 mg: 0.71 (0.52, 0.97)</b> <b>25 mg: 0.70 (0.51, 0.95)</b>	-
<i>Rofecoxib vs. Ibuprofen</i>				
NS (RR range: 0.98-1.04)	-	-	↓ risk in 2 of 3 RCTs	No differences in 3 of 4 RCTs
<i>Rofecoxib vs. Naproxen</i>				
No differences	0.55 (0.42, 0.73)	-	No differences	↓ risk in 2 of 3 RCTs
<i>Rofecoxib vs. Nabumetone</i>				
NR	NR	-	No differences	No differences
<b>Rofecoxib vs. Naproxen in RA</b>				
<i>Garner 2005b<sup>78</sup> (Cochrane Collaboration Systematic Review)</i>				
-	-	-	1.02 (0.92, 1.12)	<b>0.74 (0.64, 0.85)</b>

A manufacturer-funded meta-analysis found that tolerability of valdecoxib relative to NSAIDs appeared to be time-dependent.<sup>227</sup> Significant increases in overall adverse event incidence (RR 1.1; 95% CI 1.04, 1.2) and incidence of GI adverse events (RR 1.4; 95% CI 1.2, 1.6) for valdecoxib relative to NSAIDs did not lead to increased risk of discontinuation in RCTs

of 6-12 weeks' duration. By 12-26 weeks, however, valdecoxib was associated with significantly lower rates of overall adverse events (RR 0.9; 95% CI 0.85, 0.93) and GI-related adverse events (RR 0.7; 95% CI 0.7, 0.8) relative to non-selective NSAIDs, as well as lower rates of discontinuation due to any adverse event (RR 0.9; 95% CI 0.85, 0.93) and due to GI-related adverse events (RR 1.4; 95% CI 1.2, 1.6).

**Comparison between COX-2 inhibitors.** Incidence of and withdrawals due to overall or GI-related adverse events were similar for celecoxib and rofecoxib across a manufacturer-funded meta-analysis<sup>62</sup> and a good-quality Cochrane review.<sup>77</sup> The manufacturer-funded meta-analysis reported that rofecoxib and celecoxib were associated with similar risks of any adverse event (RR 0.97; 95% CI 0.84, 1.1), any GI-related adverse event (RR 0.87, 95% CI 0.74, 1.03), and GI-adverse event discontinuation (RR 0.7; 95% CI 0.5, 1.2) using data from five 6- to 12-week RCTs of patients with either OA or RA.<sup>62</sup> The Cochrane review of rofecoxib for osteoarthritis<sup>77</sup> found no differences for either the total number of withdrawals (RR 0.93, 95% CI 0.76 to 1.14) or the number of withdrawals due to adverse events (RR 1.03, 95% CI 0.77 to 1.39) in five trials that compared celecoxib to rofecoxib.

**Acetaminophen.** We identified four systematic reviews that evaluated the efficacy and safety of acetaminophen compared with NSAIDs (selective or non-selective) for osteoarthritis.<sup>228-231</sup> The studies generally met all criteria for good-quality systematic reviews, except that three<sup>229-231</sup> did not provide sufficient detail about trials that were excluded. The overall conclusion from the reviews was that NSAIDs are modestly superior to acetaminophen for general or rest pain (Table 24). For pain on motion and overall assessment of clinical response, NSAIDs also appeared modestly superior, though the differences were not always statistically significant.<sup>229, 230</sup> Only two reviews assessed functional disability; neither found clear differences.<sup>229, 230</sup>

**Table 24. Pain relief in systematic reviews of acetaminophen versus NSAID**

Systematic review	Date of last search	Number of head-to-head trials included	Main results for outcome of general or rest pain
Towheed, 2005 <sup>229</sup>	Through 8/02	5 (1 trial evaluated a coxib)	NSAIDs superior for rest pain (SMD 0.32, 95% CI 0.08 to 0.56) and HAQ pain (SMD 0.27, 95% CI 0.05 to 0.48)
Zhang, 2004 <sup>231</sup>	Through 7/03	8 (3 trials evaluated coxibs)	NSAIDs superior using WOMAC scale (pooled ES 0.3, 95% CI 0.17 to 0.44) and clinical response rate (RR 1.24, 95% CI 1.08 to 1.41)
Lee, 2004 <sup>228</sup>	Through 2/03	6 (1 trial evaluated a coxib)	NSAIDs superior for rest pain (weighted mean difference -6.33, 95% CI -9.24 to -3.41)
Wegman, 2004 <sup>230</sup>	Through 12/01	3 (no trials evaluated coxibs)	NSAIDs superior for general/rest pain (standardized mean difference 0.33, 95% CI 0.15 to 0.51)

The risk of adverse events with acetaminophen versus NSAIDs was assessed in three systematic reviews (Table 25).<sup>228, 229, 231</sup> In two reviews, there were no differences in withdrawal due to any adverse event.<sup>229, 231</sup> However, acetaminophen was associated with fewer gastrointestinal side effects compared with non-selective NSAIDs (though not compared with coxibs)<sup>229, 231</sup> and fewer withdrawals due to gastrointestinal adverse events.<sup>229</sup>

**Table 25. Adverse events in systematic reviews of acetaminophen versus NSAID**

Systematic review	Withdrawal due to adverse events	GI adverse events
Towheed, 2005 <sup>229</sup>	No difference (8% vs. 9%)	Withdrawal due to GI adverse event Naproxen or ibuprofen vs. acetaminophen: RR 2.15 (95% CI 1.05 to 4.42)  Any GI adverse event Non-selective NSAID vs. acetaminophen: RR 2.24 (95% CI 1.23 to 4.08) Coxib vs. acetaminophen: RR 0.96 (95% CI 0.57 to 1.61)
Zhang, 2004 <sup>231</sup>	Not reported	GI discomfort Non-selective NSAID vs. acetaminophen: RR 1.39 (95% CI 1.07 to 1.80) Coxib vs. acetaminophen: RR 0.65 (95% CI 0.17 to 2.52)
Lee, 2004 <sup>228</sup>	NSAID vs. acetaminophen: OR 1.45, 95% CI 0.93 to 2.27)	Not reported

Results of recent, good-quality randomized trials (not included in any of the systematic reviews) were consistent with the systematic reviews. One two-week trial (N=222) found ibuprofen 1,200 mg/day more effective than paracetamol 3,000 mg/day for pain relief ( $p<0.005$ ) and functional disability using WOMAC scores (-20.8 versus -13.4,  $p<0.001$ ).<sup>232</sup> Two cross-over trials of identical design (N=524 and 556) found celecoxib modestly superior to acetaminophen for WOMAC scores (difference in WOMAC score improvements ranged from 2.8 to 5.0 points on a 100-point scale), visual analogue pain scales (mean difference in scores ranged from 3.5 to 7.7 mm on a 100 mm scale), and patient preferences (53% and 50% favored celecoxib, versus 24% and 32% favored acetaminophen).<sup>233</sup> In all three trials, tolerability and safety were equivalent.

Clinical trials of acetaminophen have not been large enough to assess serious but less common complications such as PUB, myocardial infarction, acute renal failure, or hypertension. However, observational studies provide some additional information about the safety of acetaminophen relative to NSAIDs. A good-quality nested case-control study of 1,197 cases and 10,000 controls from a population-based cohort of 458,840 persons in the General Practice Research Database found current acetaminophen use associated with a lower risk for symptomatic peptic ulcer (adjusted RR 1.9, 95% CI 1.5 to 2.3) than NSAID use (adjusted RR 4.0, 95% CI 3.2 to 5.1) when each was compared with non-use.<sup>234</sup> There was no clear relationship between higher acetaminophen dose and increased risk for symptomatic ulcers. An earlier analysis on the same database also found current acetaminophen use associated with a lower risk for upper gastrointestinal bleeds or perforations (adjusted RR 1.3, 95% CI 1.1 to 1.5) than current NSAID use (adjusted OR 3.9, 95% CI 3.4 to 4.6), each compared with non-use.<sup>184</sup> A retrospective cohort study of elderly patients found that patients using lower doses of acetaminophen (<2,600 mg/day) had lower rates of GI events (defined as GI-related hospitalizations, ulcers, and dyspepsia) compared with users of NSAIDs (RR 0.73, 95% CI 0.67 to 0.80 for 1,951 to 2,600 mg/day), but the risks were similar at higher doses (RR 0.93 to 0.98).<sup>235</sup> Although GI hospitalization rates were not reported separately, the authors noted that dyspepsia was responsible for most of the increase in GI events in the high-dose acetaminophen groups. A meta-analysis on individual patient data from three earlier retrospective case-control studies (2472 cases) was consistent with the above studies.<sup>236</sup> It found acetaminophen associated

with a minimal increase in the risk for serious upper gastrointestinal bleeding (OR 1.2, 95% CI 1.1 to 1.5). By contrast, non-selective NSAIDs were associated with higher risks, though estimates of risk varied considerably for different NSAIDs (OR 1.7 for ibuprofen to 34.9 for ketoprofen).

No randomized trial has evaluated the association between acetaminophen use and myocardial infarction or other thromboembolic cardiovascular events. However, a recent analysis from the large, prospective Nurses' Health Study found heavy use of acetaminophen (more than 22 days/month) associated with an increased risk of cardiovascular events (RR 1.35, 95% CI 1.14 to 1.59) similar to that with heavy use of NSAIDs (RR 1.44, 95% CI 1.27 to 1.65).<sup>237</sup> Dose- and frequency-dependent effects were both significant.

The association between renal failure and acetaminophen use has been evaluated in several case-control studies. Interpretation of these studies, however, is difficult because many had important flaws (such as failure to identify patients early enough in the course of their disease to insure that the disease had not led to a change in the use of analgesics, failure to specify diagnostic criteria, failure to adjust for the use of other analgesics, incompleteness of data on exposure, and use of proxy respondents) in the collection or analysis of data.<sup>238</sup> The largest (926 cases) case-control study was designed to try to avoid many of these flaws.<sup>239</sup> It found regular use of acetaminophen associated with an increased risk for chronic renal failure (Cr >3.8 for men and >3.2 for women) compared with non-use (OR 2.5, 95% CI 1.7 to 3.6). Use of NSAIDs was not associated with an increased risk (OR 1.0). A prospective cohort study of 1,697 women in the Nurses' Health Study found increased lifetime acetaminophen exposure associated with a higher risk of decline in glomerular filtration rate of 30% or greater (p<0.001), though NSAIDs were not (p=0.88).<sup>240</sup> The absolute risk of renal function decline, however, was modest, even in women reporting high amounts of lifetime acetaminophen use. Compared with women consuming less than 100 g of cumulative acetaminophen, the odds of a decline in GFR of at least 30 mL/min per 1.73 m<sup>2</sup> for women consuming more than 3,000 g was 2.04 (95% CI, 1.28 to 3.24). By contrast, analyses of men in the Physicians' Health Study found no association between acetaminophen or NSAIDs and change in kidney function.<sup>241, 242</sup>

The risk of heart failure associated with acetaminophen has not been well studied. In a single study using the General Practice Research Database, current use of acetaminophen was associated with a higher risk of newly diagnosed heart failure compared with non-use (RR 1.33, 95% CI 1.06 to 1.67), though the risk was lower compared with current use of NSAIDs (RR 1.59, 95% CI 1.23 to 2.05).<sup>212</sup>

The risk of hypertension has been evaluated using data from the Nurses' Health Studies<sup>243-245</sup> and the Physicians' Health Study.<sup>246</sup> In the Nurses' Health Studies, acetaminophen and NSAIDs were associated with similar increases in risk of incident hypertension (Table 26). In the Physicians' Health Study, on the other hand, there was no association between NSAID or acetaminophen use and hypertension.

**Table 26. Incidence of hypertension in the Nurses' Health Study and Physicians' Health Study according to use of acetaminophen or NSAIDs**

Study	Acetaminophen use versus non-use: odds ratio	NSAID use versus non-use: odds ratio
Nurses' Health Study I (women 51 to 77 years old) <sup>243</sup>	1.93 (1.30 to 2.88)	1.78 (1.21 to 2.61)
Nurses' Health Study II (women 34 to 53 years old) <sup>243</sup>	1.99 (1.39 to 2.85)	1.60 (1.10 to 2.32)
Physicians' Health Study <sup>246</sup>	1.08 (95% CI 0.87 to 1.34)	1.05 (95% CI 0.89 to 1.24)

Although overdoses with acetaminophen can lead to potentially life-threatening hepatotoxicity, it is not clear if hepatotoxicity is associated with therapeutic doses in patients without underlying liver disease.<sup>16</sup> We identified no studies comparing the incidence of hepatotoxicity with therapeutic doses of acetaminophen and NSAIDs. We also identified no studies comparing the incidence of myocardial infarctions in persons using acetaminophen compared with NSAIDs.

### Glucosamine and Chondroitin

Data regarding the comparative efficacy of glucosamine versus NSAIDs in patients with osteoarthritis are mixed. The most promising results have been observed in trials sponsored by Rotta Research Laboratories (based in Europe), which manufactures pharmaceutical grade glucosamine not available in the U.S. Because the content and purity of over-the-counter glucosamine preparations vary substantially, the results of the Rotta trials may not be directly applicable in the U.S.<sup>247</sup>

A recently updated (searches through November 2004), good-quality Cochrane review included four short-term (4 to 8 weeks) head-to-head trials of glucosamine versus an oral NSAID (ibuprofen or piroxicam).<sup>248</sup> Two of the trials were rated 5 out of 5 on the Jadad scale, and the other two were rated 3 or 4 out of 5. Rotta Research Laboratories sponsored three of the trials; the fourth<sup>249</sup> was also conducted in Europe, but funding information was not reported. One of the trials has only been published as an abstract,<sup>250</sup> and analyses were based on data from an unpublished manuscript. Two of the four trials found glucosamine superior to oral NSAIDs for efficacy,<sup>249, 250</sup> and two found no difference.<sup>251, 252</sup> In pooled analyses, glucosamine was superior to an oral NSAID for improving pain (three trials, standardized mean difference -0.40, 95% CI -0.60 to -0.19), but not for improving function using the Lequesne Index (two trials, SMD -0.36, 95% CI -1.07 to 0.35). Glucosamine was also associated with fewer adverse events (RR 0.29, 95% CI 0.19 to 0.44) and withdrawals due to toxicity (RR 0.06, 95% CI 0.01 to 0.25). Two small (N=40 and N=45), 12-week Canadian trials, neither funded by Rotta Research Laboratories, have also recently been published. Neither found differences between glucosamine and ibuprofen for general osteoarthritis pain<sup>253</sup> or for temporomandibular joint osteoarthritis.<sup>254</sup> Only limited details of the study design were reported for the first trial, though the second met all criteria for a good-quality study.

Evidence regarding the efficacy of glucosamine compared with placebo has also been mixed. The Cochrane review found glucosamine no better than placebo when the analysis was restricted to the eight trials with adequate allocation concealment.<sup>248</sup> By contrast, when all placebo-



controlled trials were included in the analysis, glucosamine was superior for both pain and function using the Lequesne index. The benefits of glucosamine also varied substantially depending on the preparation being studied. Specifically, glucosamine performed better in the seven trials evaluating the Rotta preparation (a prescription formulation available in Europe) (SMD  $-1.31$ , 95% CI  $-1.99$  to  $-0.64$ ) compared with the eight trials using non-Rotta preparations (SMD  $-0.15$ , 95% CI  $-0.35$  to  $0.05$ ). In fact, all of the five trials that found no benefit from glucosamine evaluated a non-Rotta brand of glucosamine and also had limited or no affiliation with a manufacturer of glucosamine. Older systematic reviews found glucosamine superior to placebo, but did not include several newer and higher quality trials that demonstrated no effect, and also noted important methodological flaws that could have exaggerated estimates of effect.<sup>255, 256</sup> The Cochrane review<sup>248</sup> and one other recent, good-quality systematic review<sup>257</sup> included two trials (one fair-quality and one good-quality) that found glucosamine (Rotta brand) superior to placebo for reducing progression of knee joint space narrowing over 3 years (SMD  $0.24$ , 95% CI  $0.04$  to  $0.43$ <sup>248</sup> and RR  $0.46$ , 95% CI  $0.28$  to  $0.73$ <sup>257</sup>). Other trials were too short in duration (mean 9 weeks) to assess joint space narrowing as an outcome. In all of the systematic reviews, rates of adverse events were no different between glucosamine and placebo.

We identified no trials comparing chondroitin sulfate to oral NSAIDs. Three systematic reviews evaluated the efficacy and safety of chondroitin compared with placebo. The most recent, fair-quality systematic review found indistinguishable efficacy for glucosamine and chondroitin and combined the results of the trials.<sup>256</sup> When all trials were pooled, active treatment was associated with an increased likelihood of being a responder (RR  $1.59$ , 95% CI  $1.39$  to  $1.83$ ) compared with placebo. The results of the chondroitin trials were not reported separately. The chondroitin trials also received lower quality ratings than the glucosamine trials, but the effects of quality scores on the findings were not evaluated. Assessment of the effects of quality on assessments of estimates of benefit are important because an earlier, good-quality systematic review found pooled effect sizes for pain relief substantially lower for chondroitin trials with quality scores below the median (effect size  $1.7$ , 95% CI  $0.7$  to  $2.7$ ) compared with trials with quality scores above the median (ES  $0.8$ , 95% CI  $0.6$  to  $1.0$ ).<sup>255</sup> Smaller chondroitin trials also reported higher effects. The third systematic review was also rated fair quality because it did not evaluate the effects of study quality on results.<sup>258</sup> It found chondroitin superior to placebo for pain and function, but longer and larger studies were needed. All three systematic reviews found chondroitin tolerated as well as placebo, with only mild adverse events.

Results of a large (N=1,583), NIH-funded, randomized trial (Glucosamine/chondroitin Arthritis Intervention Trial) comparing placebo, celecoxib, glucosamine, chondroitin, and glucosamine plus chondroitin were recently published (Table 27).<sup>259</sup> Using pharmaceutical grade glucosamine hydrochloride (rather than the over-the-counter glucosamine sulfate commonly available in U.S. as supplements not regulated as pharmaceuticals by the FDA) and chondroitin under an investigational new drug application, the study randomized patients stratified according to baseline pain severity. It found no differences between glucosamine, chondroitin, or the combination relative to placebo among all patients for achieving a clinical response ( $>20\%$  improvement in WOMAC Pain score after 24 weeks), though the combination was superior to placebo for achieving a clinical response in an analysis of a small (20% of enrollees) subgroup of patients with moderate to severe (WOMAC 301 to 400 mm) baseline pain (79% vs. 54.3%,  $p=0.002$ ). There were no statistically significant differences between celecoxib and any of the other active treatment arms (glucosamine alone, chondroitin alone, or glucosamine plus chondroitin) or placebo and either glucosamine or chondroitin alone. The

authors postulated that lack of effect in the mild baseline pain group could have been due in part to floor effects. High placebo response rates were also observed. All of the interventions were well tolerated.

**Table 27. Response rates in the Glucosamine/chondroitin Arthritis Intervention Trial (GAIT)**

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Intervention	All patients	Moderate-severe baseline pain (WOMAC pain score 301-400 mm)	Mild baseline pain (WOMAC pain score 125-300)
Placebo	60.1%	54.3%	61.7%
Celecoxib	70.1% (p=0.008 vs. placebo)	69.4% (p=0.06 vs. placebo)	70.3% (p=0.04 vs. placebo)
Glucosamine	64.0% (p=0.30 vs. placebo)	65.7% (p=0.17 vs. placebo)	63.6% (p=0.67 vs. placebo)
Chondroitin	65.4% (p=0.17 vs. placebo)	61.4% (p=0.39 vs. placebo)	66.5% (p=0.27 vs. placebo)
Glucosamine + chondroitin	66.6% (p=0.09 vs. placebo)	79.2% (p=0.002 vs. placebo)	62.9% (p=0.80 vs. placebo)

**Key Question 1b. How do these benefits and harms change with dosage and duration of treatment, and what is the evidence that alternative dosage strategies, such as intermittent dosing and drug holidays, affect the benefits and harms of oral medication use?**

Duration of exposure and dose may have an influence on the benefits and harms associated with selective and non-selective NSAIDs, though data are limited and somewhat inconsistent. For rofecoxib, the VIGOR trial found that an increased risk of cardiovascular events appeared to become apparent only after 8 months of treatment.<sup>106</sup> Similarly, initial reports of the APPROVe trial appeared to show a duration-dependent effect, as the cardiovascular event rate curves for rofecoxib and placebo diverged only after about 18 months.<sup>132</sup> However, a re-analysis that included originally censored events (occurring 14 days or more after discontinuation of study drug) suggests that the curves began to diverge after only 4 to 6 months, with no evidence of deviation from the proportional hazard over time.<sup>133</sup> The lack of an association with shorter duration of exposure in VIGOR could have been due in part to lack of power to detect differences due to small numbers of events. Supporting this hypothesis are two recent meta-analyses that found that risk of cardiovascular events with rofecoxib<sup>124</sup> or COX-2 inhibitors in general<sup>129</sup> did not vary according to duration of treatment. One of the meta-analyses also found that cardiovascular risk of rofecoxib did not vary according to dose.<sup>124</sup> However, the presence or absence of dose-dependent cardiovascular effects are difficult to analyze because 85% (84/98) of the events in patients allocated to rofecoxib in placebo-controlled trials occurred at a dose of 25 mg/day.<sup>129</sup>

Observational data also suggests that increased cardiovascular risk with rofecoxib may occur at lower doses<sup>145</sup> and with shorter-term exposure.<sup>152, 261</sup> Odds of acute MI were greater overall for rofecoxib relative to celecoxib in a case-control study of low-income Medicare beneficiaries

(mean age 79 years) exposed to treatment for  $\leq 90$  days.<sup>145</sup> The risk estimate for those taking rofecoxib  $> 25$  mg (OR 1.70; 95% CI 1.07, 2.71) was greater than for those taking  $\leq 25$  mg (OR 1.21; 95% CI 1.01, 1.44), however.<sup>145</sup> Risk of CV events was similar for rofecoxib and meloxicam, regardless of duration, in a cohort study in which data was ascertained from an England National Health Services database using a Prescription Event Monitoring system.<sup>262</sup> In a case-control study of elderly patients in Quebec, the risk of acute myocardial infarction was highest following the first prescription of rofecoxib (adjusted RR 1.64, 95% CI 1.20 to 2.23 compared to non-use) and returned to baseline by the 8<sup>th</sup> prescription.<sup>261</sup>

Some studies also suggest that duration of exposure and dose could influence the cardiovascular safety of celecoxib. Celecoxib was not associated with excess cardiovascular risk when compared with diclofenac or ibuprofen in the CLASS trials<sup>60</sup> or in meta-analyses<sup>105, 135</sup> of mostly short-term trials of patients with arthritis. The long-term (33 months) APC polyp prevention trial was the first trial to clearly show an increased risk of cardiovascular events relative to placebo with celecoxib.<sup>108</sup> However, even though it's possible that the lack of an association in CLASS and earlier meta-analyses could be due in part to less risk with shorter duration of exposure, an alternative explanation is lack of power due to small numbers of events. Regarding dose-dependent effects, one recent meta-analysis<sup>129</sup> of 41 placebo-controlled trials found higher doses associated with greater cardiovascular risks relative to placebo ( $p=0.03$ ), though most of the events at the highest dose (800 mg/day) came from two long-term polyp prevention trials.<sup>108, 263</sup>

Analysis of the CLASS data also suggests that celecoxib was more effective at reducing GI events at 6 months compared with longer duration of exposure.<sup>60</sup> In fact, effects on pre-defined, serious GI complications were no longer present after 12 months, though interpretation of final results is problematic because of high withdrawal rates.<sup>97</sup> By contrast, in VIGOR, the GI benefit of rofecoxib compared to naproxen was seen early and sustained over the duration of the trial (median 9 months).<sup>19</sup>

One good-quality systematic review of eight trials found that higher doses of non-selective and partially selective NSAIDs were generally associated with greater efficacy for some measures of pain relief when directly compared to lower doses.<sup>264</sup> Higher doses were also associated with greater withdrawals due to adverse events in two of four trials. In observational studies, the risk for GI bleeding with non-selective NSAIDs also appears to increase with higher doses.<sup>11, 191, 236</sup> By contrast, the risk of bleeding associated with acetaminophen was not associated with dose in one meta-analysis of three case-control studies,<sup>236</sup> though there was a modest dose response in another case-control study of elderly patients.<sup>235</sup> At low over-the-counter doses, the risk of GI hospitalizations associated with aspirin, acetaminophen, and ibuprofen were similar to background rates in patients with rheumatoid arthritis or osteoarthritis in the ARAMIS database.<sup>265</sup> A systematic review of observational studies found that use of aspirin and non-aspirin NSAIDs at over-the-counter doses is associated with an increased risk of GI bleeding, though the risk is lower than observed at prescription doses (approximately twofold greater risk at over-the-counter doses and sixfold or higher increases at heavy prescription levels.<sup>11</sup> One recent analysis of the Nurses' Health Study found that the risk of cardiovascular events was dose-related for both NSAIDs and acetaminophen.<sup>237</sup>

We found no studies evaluating the effects of alternative drug strategies such as intermittent dosing or drug holidays on risks and benefits of oral medication use. Although one difference between the APC trial (which found an increased risk of CV events with celecoxib) and the PreSAP trial (which reported no association) was twice-daily (APC) versus once-daily (PreSAP)

dosing, no study has directly compared such dosing strategies.<sup>109</sup> Furthermore, other studies of twice-daily dosing with celecoxib (such as CLASS<sup>60</sup> and ADAPT<sup>111</sup>) reported no increase in CV risk.

## Key Question 2. Do the comparative benefits and harms of oral treatments for osteoarthritis vary for certain demographic and clinical subgroups?

### Demographic Subgroups Include Age, Sex, and Race

In general, the risk of cardiovascular, cardiorenal, and gastrointestinal adverse events associated with NSAIDs increase with age.<sup>13</sup> In one UK population, for example, the risk of adverse gastrointestinal outcomes in patients taking selective or non-selective NSAIDs was 1.36 per 1,000 patient-years for all patients 25 years or older, but 4.03 per 1,000 patient-years in patients aged 65 or more.<sup>138</sup> Similarly, the risk of myocardial infarction was 1.71 per 100 person-years for all patients 25 years or older, but 4.57 per 100 person-years for those 65 or older.<sup>146</sup> We found no trial designed to assess whether the relative harms and benefits associated with different NSAIDs for osteoarthritis varies according to age. However, even if the relative benefits and harms associated with different drugs are consistent across age groups, the absolute effects would increase with age because of greater baseline CV and GI risk.

Studies that evaluated the efficacy and safety of selective and non-selective NSAIDs in average-risk elderly patients have generally reported similar findings compared with studies in populations with younger adults. An individual patient data meta-analysis of three celecoxib trials, for example, found effects of celecoxib 200 mg/day or 400 mg/day and naproxen 1,000 mg/day similar in elderly patients when evaluating WOMAC and SF-36 scores.<sup>266</sup> For the SF-36, there were no statistically significant differences: naproxen scored better than celecoxib 200 mg on four of 10 components of the SF-36, while celecoxib 200 mg scored better on six, including general health. Celecoxib 200 mg was significantly better than placebo on nine of the 10 components, while naproxen was significantly better than placebo on seven. The study also confirmed that the overall incidence of GI adverse events was lower with celecoxib; the difference was about one event in 20 patients for celecoxib 200 mg and one in 10 for celecoxib 400 mg. Similarly, a meta-analysis of three rofecoxib trials reported similarly consistent efficacy for rofecoxib 12.5 mg or 25 mg daily compared to placebo among various subgroups defined by age, gender, race, location of osteoarthritis, baseline symptoms, and baseline functional status.<sup>267</sup> Another meta-analysis found that trials of NSAIDs in patients over the age of 60 reported similar risks for GI complications compared to trials of patients under the age of 60.<sup>183</sup>

Data suggesting differential effects of oral medications for osteoarthritis according to gender, ethnicity, or race are scant. In most of the published trials, a majority of subjects were women. As noted in the discussion of acetaminophen, results from the Nurses' Health Studies suggest that acetaminophen is associated with modest reductions in renal function in women,<sup>243</sup> but results from the Physicians' Health Study have found no association between acetaminophen use and renal dysfunction in men.<sup>246</sup> The effects of different NSAIDs in specific ethnic minorities have only been evaluated in small studies. In a randomized crossover study of 25 black and

Hispanic patients on ACE inhibitors, peak increases in blood pressure were similar in patients on diclofenac compared with celecoxib.<sup>268</sup> An observational study of 120 Native American patients seen in an Indian Health Service clinic in Phoenix who were switched to rofecoxib found that mean systolic blood pressure increased by 2.9 mm Hg overall (p=0.015) and by 4.8 mm Hg (p=0.009) in hypertensive patients.<sup>269</sup> We did not find any other publications focusing on the differential efficacy or safety of coxibs in African-Americans, Hispanics, or other ethnic minorities.

## Co-Existing Diseases Include History of Previous Bleeding Ulcer Due to NSAIDs; Hypertension, Edema, Ischemic Heart Disease, and Heart Failure.

Rates of recurrent ulcer bleeding were similar for celecoxib 200 mg and the combinations of extended-release diclofenac 75 mg BID plus omeprazole 20 mg QD<sup>270</sup> or naproxen 250 mg TID plus lansoprazole 30 mg QD<sup>271</sup> in two fair-quality, 24-week, parallel trials involving a total of 529 patients who presented with a bleeding ulcer (Table 28). There were also no differences between celecoxib and either combination therapy in other adverse events including GI, renal, and cardiovascular symptoms or in rates of withdrawals due to adverse events. One exception was that celecoxib 200 mg QD was associated with a higher rate of dyspepsia than naproxen 250 mg TID plus lansoprazole 30 mg QD.<sup>271</sup> The high rates of recurrent bleeding in both the celecoxib-treated patients and in the combination therapy groups—over 10 times as high as the rate in the CLASS trial— suggest that NSAIDs and coxibs should be used with caution, if at all, in patients who have a recent history of a bleeding ulcer.

**Table 28. Celecoxib in patients with bleeding ulcer history**

Study Sample Size	Treatments	Recurrent ulcer bleeding at 6 months (difference; 95% CI)	Other adverse events	Withdrawals due to adverse events
Chan 2002 <sup>270</sup> n=287	Celecoxib 200 mg BID Diclofenac 75 mg BID plus omeprazole 20 mg QD	4.9% vs. 6.3% (-1.5%, CI -6.8, 3.8%; NS)	No differences	13.3% vs. 11.9%, NS*
Lai 2005 <sup>271</sup> ** n=242	Celecoxib 200 mg QD Naproxen 250 mg TID plus lansoprazole 30 mg QD	3.7% vs. 6.3% (-2.6; CI -9.1, 3.7; NS)	No differences for all but dyspepsia: 15% vs. 5.7%, p=0.02	10% vs. 7.4%, NS

\*Includes withdrawals due to lack of efficacy

\*\*Open trial

We found no randomized controlled trial evaluating the risk of bleeding with rofecoxib compared with celecoxib in high-risk patients. A Danish population-based case-control study of high-risk patients with previous gastrointestinal diseases found that rofecoxib (OR 2.1, 95% CI 1.2 to 3.5) and non-selective NSAIDs (OR 3.3, 95% CI 2.4 to 4.4), but not celecoxib (OR 1.3, 95% CI 0.7 to 2.8),<sup>272</sup> were associated with higher risks of upper gastrointestinal bleeding.

We found no randomized trials designed to assess whether the relative harms and benefits associated with different oral treatments for osteoarthritis vary according to underlying cardiovascular or renal risk. One recent analysis of three large polyp prevention trials of celecoxib or rofecoxib<sup>109, 132</sup> and one observational study of rofecoxib<sup>273</sup> found consistent risks for cardiovascular events among users at low and high baseline cardiovascular risk. However,

even if the relative risk of cardiovascular harms is consistent across risk groups, the absolute effects with any specific drug would be greater in patients at higher baseline risk. This is strikingly illustrated by a recent, good-quality population-based study of a very high risk group of 58,000 Danish patients with previous myocardial infarction that found hazard ratios for death of 2.80 (95% CI 2.41 to 3.25) for rofecoxib, 2.57 (95% CI 2.15 to 3.08) for celecoxib, 1.50 (95% CI 1.36 to 1.67) for ibuprofen, 2.40 (95% CI 2.09 to 2.80) for diclofenac, and 1.29 (95% CI 1.16 to 1.43) for other NSAIDs compared to non-use of NSAIDs.<sup>274</sup> Because of high rates of death in this population (95 per 1000 person-years in those not using NSAIDs), the estimated number of patients needed to treat with an NSAID for one year to cause one additional death was very low, at 13 (95% CI 10-20) for rofecoxib, 14 (95% CI 10-24) for celecoxib, 45 (95% CI 29-102) for ibuprofen, and 24 (95% CI 16-45) for diclofenac.

Only a few trials have evaluated the effects of different medications on cardiovascular and cardiorenal events specifically in high-risk patients. Three randomized trials sponsored by the manufacturer of celecoxib found higher rates of hypertension or blood pressure increases in patients randomized to rofecoxib compared with patients randomized to celecoxib, but no differences in discontinuations due to adverse events or for episodes of heart failure.<sup>84, 85, 207</sup> As noted earlier, the results of these trials must be interpreted cautiously because they evaluated possibly non-equivalent doses of rofecoxib and celecoxib, and because one of the trials<sup>84</sup> had important baseline differences suggesting inadequate randomization.

A meta-analysis funded by the manufacturer of rofecoxib found that in a high-risk subgroup of patients in whom aspirin was indicated (history of cardiovascular disease), rofecoxib was not associated with an increased risk of myocardial infarction compared with either placebo or non-selective NSAIDs.<sup>123</sup> However, the duration of the included trials may have been too short (median 3½ months) to detect an increased risk, few events were observed, and only a minority of patients received the high dose of rofecoxib evaluated in the VIGOR trial.

We found no trials evaluating comparative risks of different oral medications in patients with known congestive heart failure. A recent, good-quality population based retrospective cohort study, however, found that the risk of death and recurrent congestive heart failure was higher in patients prescribed NSAIDs (HR 1.26, 95% CI 1.00 to 1.57) or rofecoxib (HR 1.27, 95% CI 1.09 to 1.49), each compared with those prescribed celecoxib.<sup>211</sup> We also found no trials comparing the risks and benefits of different oral medications in patients with known renal failure.

## **Concomitant Anticoagulant or Aspirin Use**

***Concomitant anticoagulants.*** Concomitant use of anticoagulants and non-selective NSAIDs increases the risk of GI bleeding three- to six-fold compared to anticoagulants alone.<sup>275, 276</sup> Several observational studies have evaluated whether COX-2 selective agents are associated with a lower risk for bleeding compared with non-selective agents in patients on anticoagulation.

A good-quality nested case-control study of elderly (>66 years old) patients on warfarin in Ontario, Canada, evaluated the association between hospitalization for upper gastrointestinal bleeding (361 cases) and use of selective or non-selective NSAIDs.<sup>277</sup> It found that after adjustment for potential confounders (antiplatelet agents, hypoglycemic agents, glucocorticoids, gastroprotective agents, history of previous bleed, and comorbidities), recent use of non-selective NSAIDs (OR 1.9, 95% CI 1.4 to 3.7), celecoxib (1.7, 95% CI 1.2 to 3.6), and rofecoxib (2.4, 95% CI 1.7 to 3.6) were all associated with increased and overlapping risks for upper gastrointestinal bleeding, compared with non-use. Because this study relied on pharmaceutical

databases to identify exposures prior to hospitalization, it could not assess the confounding effects of over-the-counter use of aspirin, other NSAIDs, or acid suppressive medications. It also was unable to control for variations in INR level and the risk for bleeding.

A smaller, fair-quality nested case-control study of patients in the Netherlands evaluated the risk of bleeding in anticoagulated patients receiving partially selective (meloxicam or nabumetone) COX-2 inhibitors or non-selective NSAIDs.<sup>278</sup> No case (N=154) received either celecoxib or rofecoxib. This study also differed from the Ontario study in that it included all cases of minor visible bleeding, hematoma, or black tarry stools. It used a questionnaire to assess exposure status and comorbidities. Patients were interviewed over the phone if answers were incomplete or unclear. The response rates were significantly higher in the cases (approximately 70%) compared with controls (approximately 31%). The study found that non-selective NSAIDs were associated with an increased risk of bleeding compared with partially selective NSAIDs after adjustment for duration of use and INR level (OR 3.07, 95% CI 1.18 to 8.03).

An open, crossover trial compared celecoxib 200 mg and rofecoxib 25 mg in 18 patients with OA, RA, or chronic pain who were stable (three consecutive INRs within 15% of each other) on warfarin therapy.<sup>279</sup> The trial was designed to measure mean change in INR and safety parameters. Similar rates of edema, heart failure and other adverse events were found for celecoxib and rofecoxib. The INR increased by 5% to 15% between weeks one and three for both coxibs. Four minor bleeds were reported; none were associated with a significant decrease in hemoglobin concentration.

Postmarketing case reports of serious bleeding events, some fatal, have also been reported with concomitant anticoagulation and both rofecoxib and celecoxib. Most of these events occurred in elderly patients.<sup>135, 280</sup>

We found no studies evaluating risks and benefits of concomitant anticoagulants and aspirin in patients with arthritis. Combination therapy has been studied in patients with indications for thromboembolic prophylaxis. However, the results of those studies are not directly applicable to patients with arthritis because of important differences in the populations (particularly with regard to cardiovascular risk), and because aspirin was used in lower, prophylactic doses (rather than anti-inflammatory and analgesic doses). One fair-quality meta-analysis (did not evaluate quality of included trials) found major bleeding risk increased with warfarin plus aspirin versus warfarin alone (at the same intensity) in patients with mechanical heart valves (3 trials, RR 1.58, 95% CI 1.02 to 2.44).<sup>281</sup> In patients with recent myocardial infarction or atrial fibrillation (one trial each), the increase in risk was not statistically significant (RR 3.07, 95% CI 0.33 to 28.38 and RR 2.13, 95% CI 0.20 to 23.03, respectively). In patients with mechanical heart valves, the increase in bleeding risk was offset by a reduction in thromboembolic events (RR 0.33, 95% CI 0.19 to 0.58), and there was no difference in all-cause mortality (RR 0.78, 95% CI 0.29 to 1.83). Other evidence on the risks and benefits of combination therapy has focused on comparing warfarin plus aspirin to aspirin alone. A recent good-quality meta-analysis of 10 trials, for example, found that the combination of warfarin plus aspirin increased the risk of major bleeding compared with aspirin alone following myocardial infarction or the acute coronary syndrome (RR 2.5, 95% CI 1.7 to 3.7).<sup>282</sup> However, the increase in bleeding risk was offset by lower risks for myocardial infarction, ischemic stroke, and revascularization. Mortality did not differ.

No study evaluated risk of bleeding in anticoagulated patients on acetaminophen compared with those on NSAIDs. A small, randomized controlled trial found acetaminophen associated with greater increases in INR levels compared with placebo.<sup>283</sup> Several observational studies

have also found an association between excess anticoagulation and use of acetaminophen.<sup>284, 285</sup> However, changes in INR are not the only important factor for predicting increased risk of bleeding. NSAIDs, for example, also affect platelet function and disrupt the gastric mucosal lining. Studies evaluating actual bleeding complications are necessary to better assess the comparative risks from acetaminophen and other NSAIDs.

No studies evaluated risk of bleeding in anticoagulated patients on glucosamine, chondroitin, or topical agents.

**Concomitant aspirin.** Beneficial effects of COX-2 selective inhibition on GI complication rates may be attenuated or eliminated by the concomitant use of aspirin. In the 20 per cent of patients in the CLASS trial who took aspirin in addition to their study drug, there was no difference in ulcer complications or ulcer complications plus symptomatic ulcers in patients randomized to celecoxib versus those randomized to diclofenac, ibuprofen, or the two NSAID comparators combined.<sup>96</sup> Similarly, a meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials found that beneficial effects of celecoxib on risk of endoscopically detected ulcers were reduced in patients on prophylactic aspirin (RR 0.49, 95% CI 0.28 to 0.86) compared with those not on aspirin (RR 0.27, 95% CI 0.16 to 0.48).<sup>61</sup> This analysis excluded the results of the CLASS trials because they did not evaluate endoscopic ulcers as an outcome and because of high, differential withdrawal rates. A re-analysis that included the full CLASS trials results found no benefit (rather than a reduced benefit) from celecoxib in patients on aspirin (RR 0.96, 95% CI 0.63 to 1.46),<sup>286</sup> but the appropriateness of combining data from trials reporting endoscopic ulcers with data from the CLASS trials on withdrawal rates, symptomatic ulcers, and ulcer complications, is disputed.<sup>287</sup> Another meta-analysis found that use of aspirin increased the rate of endoscopic ulcers by about 6% in patients randomized to celecoxib (4.2% without aspirin and 9.9% with aspirin) and in those randomized to a non-selective NSAID (17.6% and 23.8%).<sup>62</sup> In the TARGET trial, no reduction in ulcer complications with lumiracoxib compared to non-selective NSAIDs was observed in the subgroup of patients on aspirin (HR 0.79, 95% CI 0.40, 1.55).<sup>175</sup>

There is less evidence on the effects of aspirin on the GI risk associated with rofecoxib. A recent trial that randomized osteoarthritis patients to placebo, enteric-coated aspirin (81 mg/day), rofecoxib 25 mg/day + aspirin 81 mg/day, or ibuprofen 2,400 mg/day found similar rates of endoscopic ulcers in the rofecoxib + aspirin arm (16.1%) and the ibuprofen alone arm (17.1%); both rates were significantly higher than the placebo (5.8%) and aspirin alone (7.3%) arms.<sup>288</sup> A meta-analysis of aspirin users in two trials comparing celecoxib 200 mg daily and rofecoxib 25 mg daily found celecoxib associated with a lower rate of withdrawals due to GI adverse events than rofecoxib (0.7% vs. 3.9%,  $p < 0.05$ ), as well as with GI symptoms.<sup>289</sup> However, there were no reported serious GI events. Interpretation of these results is limited by nonequivalent dosing of the COX-2 inhibitors, pooling of data across trials, and post-hoc subgroup analyses of the aspirin-users data.

Concomitant aspirin use has not been shown to eliminate or reduce excess cardiovascular risks associated with COX-2 inhibitors. In large polyp prevention trials of rofecoxib<sup>132</sup> and celecoxib,<sup>109</sup> use or non-use of low-dose aspirin did not affect the observed increased risk of thrombotic events.<sup>132</sup> A recent meta-analysis of 84 placebo-controlled trials that permitted aspirin (including the polyp prevention trials) found a very similar risk of vascular events among those using aspirin (RR 1.57, 95% CI 0.90 to 2.72) and aspirin non-users (RR 1.51, 95% CI 1.14 to 2.01), though the absolute rate of events was higher in aspirin users (1.9%/year versus 1.1%/year).<sup>129</sup> Consistent with these findings, two large observational studies using the UK



GPRD<sup>185</sup> and QRESEARCH<sup>146</sup> databases found no significant interaction between concurrent NSAID and aspirin use and the risk of myocardial infarction. One observational study found that in patients with known cardiovascular disease, there was a higher rate of overall mortality (adjusted hazard ratio 1.93, 95% CI 1.30 to 2.87) and cardiovascular death among users of ibuprofen plus aspirin compared with users of aspirin alone, suggesting that ibuprofen (or other NSAIDs) could interfere with the cardioprotective effects of aspirin.<sup>290</sup> However, this study only evaluated small numbers of patients on NSAIDs, and did not adjust for important comorbidities.

### Key Question 3. What are the comparative effects of co-prescribing of H2-antagonists, misoprostol, or proton pump inhibitors (PPIs) on the gastrointestinal harms associated with NSAID use?

Misoprostol, standard- and double-dose H2 blockers and PPIs were all effective in reducing the risk of NSAID-associated endoscopic gastric and duodenal ulcers relative to placebo in three good-quality systematic reviews (Table 29)<sup>291-293</sup> of numerous randomized controlled trials of OA/RA patients.<sup>9, 69, 291, 294-321</sup> H2 blockers,<sup>320-330</sup> misoprostol (RR 0.36, 95% CI 0.20 to 0.67), and PPIs (RR 0.09, 95% CI 0.02 to 0.47) also reduced NSAID-associated symptomatic ulcers, but not serious cardiovascular or renal illness or death.<sup>293</sup>

Misoprostol has been studied most extensively and is the only agent proven to decrease risk of ulcer complications (MUCOSA).<sup>317</sup> In a large, good-quality trial, misoprostol was associated with a rate of definite ulcer complications of 25/4404 (0.6%) compared to 44/4439 (0.9%) with placebo (p=0.049).<sup>317</sup> However, misoprostol is also the only agent to be associated with a significant risk of treatment withdrawal due to nausea (RR=1.30, 95% CI 1.08 to 1.55), diarrhea (RR=2.40, 95% CI: 2.05 to 2.81), and abdominal pain (RR=1.36, 95% CI 1.20 to 1.55).

Table 29. Placebo-controlled trials of gastroprotective agents<sup>291-293</sup>

Treatment	# PCT studies Duration	Prevention of endoscopic ulcers		Prevention of clinical GI events*
		Gastric	Duodenal	
Misoprostol	1-1.5 months: 8 ≥ 3 months: 11	1-1.5 months: RR=0.17, 95% CI: 0.09 to 0.31 3 months: RR=0.26; 95% CI 0.17 to 0.39	1-1.5 months: RR=0.28; 95% CI 0.09-0.31 3 months: RR=0.47, 95% CI 0.33 to 0.69	Silverstein 1995 (MUCOSA): OR 0.598; 95% CI 0.364 to 0.982
H2 blockers	<b>Standard doses (150 mg):</b> 7 <b>Double doses (300 mg):</b> 3 1-3 months	<b>Standard dose:</b> insignificant effect <b>Double dose:</b> RR=0.44, 95% CI: 0.026 to 0.74	<b>Standard dose at 1 and 3 months:</b> RR=0.24, 95% CI: 0.10 to 0.57 and RR=0.36, 95% CI: 0.18 to 0.74 <b>Double dose:</b> 0.26, 95% CI 0.11 to 0.65	None
PPIs	4 Duration NR	RR=0.40, 95% CI 0.32 to 0.51	RR 0.19, 95% CI 0.09 to 0.37	None

\*Upper GI hemorrhage, perforation, pyloric obstruction, death)

Table 30 reflects the results from five trials<sup>306, 309, 314, 319, 321</sup> that directly compare one gastroprotective agent with another, as reported in the Canadian Coordinating Office for Health Technology Assessment review.<sup>292</sup> Both misoprostol and omeprazole were superior to ranitidine for the prevention of gastric ulcers. Omeprazole and lansoprazole also appeared superior to misoprostol and ranitidine for the prevention of duodenal ulcers.

Table 30. Head-to-head trials of gastroprotective agents<sup>292</sup>

Comparison	Reductions in ulcer risk	
	Gastric	Duodenal
Misoprostol vs. ranitidine* (2 trials; n=600)	RR=0.12 95% CI 0.03 to 0.89	No differences
Omeprazole 20 mg vs. ranitidine 150 mg (1 trial, n=425)	RR=0.32 95% CI 0.17 to 0.62	RR=0.11 95% CI 0.01 to 0.89
PPI** vs. misoprostol***	No differences	RR=0.29 95% CI 0.15 to 0.56

\*standard dose

\*\*omeprazole or lansoprazole

\*\*\*secondary prophylaxis trials

A good-quality meta-analysis of 26 trials found co-administration of a PPI with a non-selective NSAID associated with a greater reduction in dyspepsia, epigastric pain and nausea than a selective COX-2 inhibitor alone, when each was compared to a non-selective NSAID alone (relative risk reduction 66% and absolute risk reduction 9% for the PPI + non-selective NSAID versus RRR 12% and ARR 3.7% with COX-2 inhibitor).<sup>331</sup>

**Key Question 4. What are the comparative benefits and harms of treating osteoarthritis with oral medications as compared with topical preparations?**

### Topical NSAIDs - Efficacy

Four trials directly compared topical and oral NSAIDs for osteoarthritis. Two recent good-quality systematic reviews<sup>332, 333</sup> included three<sup>334-336</sup> of these trials (an older systematic review was excluded because its results appear outdated.<sup>337</sup>). One systematic review (by Lin et al<sup>332</sup>) only included osteoarthritis trials, while the other systematic review (by Mason et al<sup>333</sup>) included osteoarthritis and other chronic pain conditions. The systematic reviews also used different methods for abstracting and pooling efficacy data. Specifically, the primary outcome in Mason et al was a dichotomous outcome: the proportion of patients with clinical success (defined as approximately a 50% reduction in pain) at the end of the trial. By contrast, the primary outcome used by Lin et al was continuous: the difference in standardized effect sizes for the outcomes of pain, function, or stiffness measured at the end of each week of treatment. Two<sup>335, 336</sup> of the trials received 5 out of 5 points on the Jadad quality scale; the third<sup>334</sup> received a score of 3.<sup>333</sup> Mason et al found topical and oral NSAIDs equivalent for clinical success after 3 to 4 weeks

(pooled relative risk 1.1; 95% CI 0.9 to 1.3).<sup>333</sup> Although Lin et al found topical NSAIDs inferior to oral NSAIDs for pain and function after one week of treatment, this finding was based on data from only one RCT (effect size –0.38 for pain, 95% CI –0.66 to –0.10 and ES –0.32 for function, 95% CI –0.60 to –0.04).<sup>332</sup> There were no significant differences between topical and oral NSAIDs after 2 (one RCT), 3 (two RCTs) or 4 (one RCT) weeks. Effect sizes could not be calculated for one of the three RCTs.<sup>334</sup>

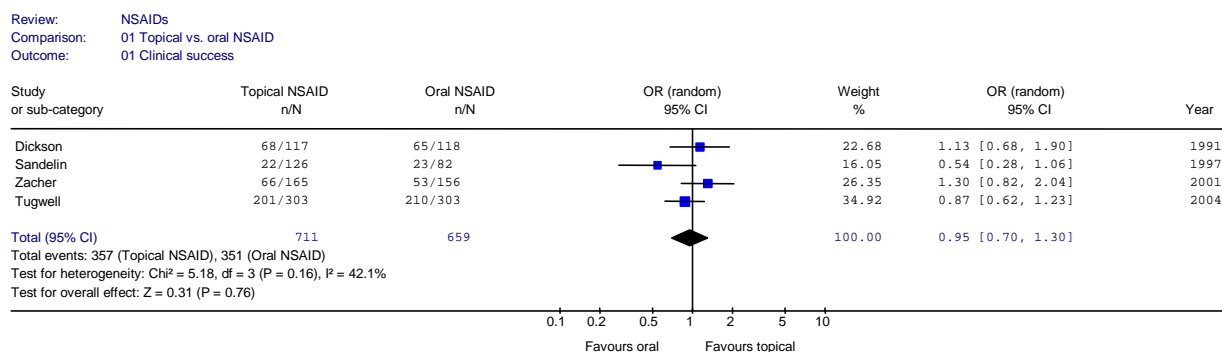
The largest and longest trial (by Tugwell et al) comparing topical and oral NSAIDs was published in 2004—too late to be included in the systematic reviews.<sup>338</sup> This good-quality study found the proportion of responders (as defined by Outcomes Measures in Arthritis Clinical Trials and the Osteoarthritis Research Society VI recommendations) at 12 weeks similar in patients randomized to topical or oral diclofenac (66% vs. 70%, p=0.37). There were also no clinically relevant differences for the outcomes of mean change in pain scores, physical function, or patient global assessment. The topical diclofenac evaluated in this trial was a proprietary formulation with DMSO (a drug not approved for topical use in humans by the FDA) not available in the U.S.

We pooled rates of clinical response from the four trials (including Tugwell et al) comparing topical and oral NSAIDs, using intention-to-treat (missing values=failure) results and methods similar to the Mason meta-analysis. We found no differences between topical and oral NSAIDs (OR=0.95, 95% CI 0.70-1.30). It should be noted that the Sandelin study, which reported the lowest efficacy for topical versus oral NSAIDs, evaluated topical eltenac, a drug that is no longer being investigated for use in humans.<sup>335</sup>

**Table 31. Head-to-head trials of topical versus oral NSAID for osteoarthritis**

Author, year	Condition Number enrolled	Comparison	Duration of study	Definition of clinical success
Dickson, 1991 <sup>334</sup>	OA of knee 235	Piroxicam 0.5% Ibuprofen 400 mg po tid	4 weeks	Patient global assessment 'good' or 'excellent'
Sandelin, 1997 <sup>335</sup>	OA of knee 208	Eltenac 1% gel Diclofenac 50 mg bid	4 weeks	Physician global assessment 'good'
Zacher, 2001 <sup>336</sup>	OA of fingers 321	Diclofenac 1% gel Ibuprofen 400 mg po tid	3 weeks	>=40% improvement in pain on 100 mm VAS
Tugwell, 2004 <sup>338</sup>	OA of knee 622	Diclofenac 1.5% in carrier with 45.5% DMSO Diclofenac 50 mg po tid	12 weeks	OMERACT VI criteria <sup>38</sup> for clinical responder

**Figure 1. Clinical success in trials comparing a topical versus an oral NSAID**



Only three small (sample sizes 40, 85, and 129), short-term (2- to 4-week) trials directly compared different topical NSAIDs for chronic pain conditions. They found no differences between topical diclofenac and indomethacin,<sup>339</sup> topical flurbiprofen and piketoprofen,<sup>340</sup> or topical ketoprofen and diclofenac.<sup>341</sup>

The two systematic reviews came to somewhat different conclusions regarding the efficacy of topical NSAIDs compared with placebo. Lin et al found that topical NSAIDs were effective only during the first 2 weeks of treatment.<sup>332</sup> However, their conclusions at 3 and 4 weeks were entirely based on three trials that evaluated eltenac gel (no longer produced or studied for human use) or a topical salicylate (no longer classified as a topical NSAID). Mason et al, on the other hand, found NSAIDs superior to placebo (relative risk for improvement in symptoms 1.9, 95% CI 1.7 to 2.2) from 14 placebo-controlled trials of varying duration, with a number needed to treat for one case of clinical success (approximate 50% reduction in pain) of 4.6 (95% CI 3.8 to 5.9).<sup>333</sup> Results were not sensitive to quality ratings, trial sample size, outcome measured, or condition (knee osteoarthritis versus other musculoskeletal conditions).

Four placebo-controlled trials of topical NSAIDs for osteoarthritis<sup>342-345</sup> have been published since the systematic reviews were conducted. Three of these trials lasted longer than 4 weeks, and all found topical NSAIDs effective. The results of these trials are summarized in Table 32 for the dichotomous outcome “clinical success.” The longest trial of topical versus oral NSAIDs—a 2-year study of topical versus oral ibuprofen funded by the UK Health Technology Assessment Program—will not be completed until 2007.<sup>346</sup>

**Table 32. Clinical success rates in recent placebo-controlled trials of topical NSAIDs**

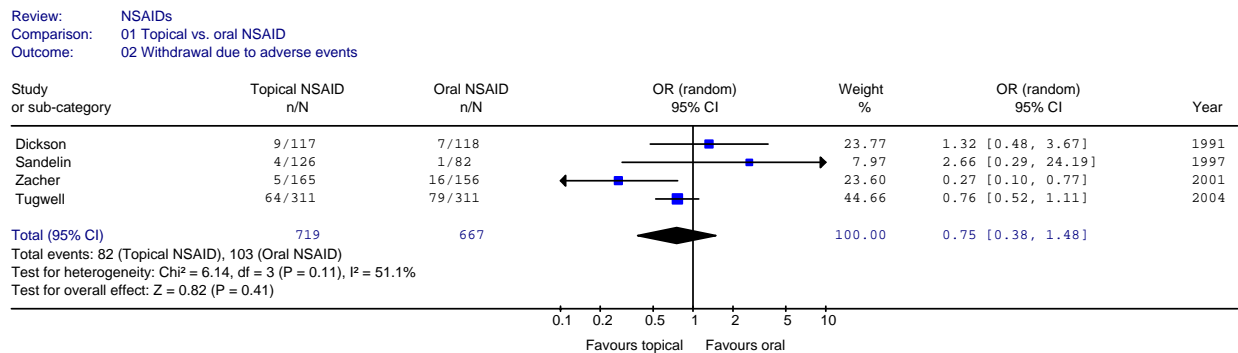
Study	Duration	Definition of ‘clinical success’	Treatment group	Proportion of subjects classified as ‘clinical success’ at end of study period
Bookman, 2004 <sup>343</sup>	4 weeks	>50% reduction in pain	Diclofenac Vehicle-control Placebo	44/84 (52.4%) 26/79 (32.9%) 28/84 (33.3%)
Roth, 2004 <sup>344</sup>	12 weeks	>50% reduction in pain	Diclofenac Vehicle-control	79/163 (48.5%) 55/159 (34.6%)
Baer, 2005 <sup>342</sup>	6 weeks	>50% reduction in pain	Diclofenac Vehicle-control	46/105 (43.8%) 27/107 (25.2%)
Trnavsky, 2004 <sup>345</sup>	7 days	Reduction of >18 mm in VAS or >23% from baseline for pain	Ibuprofen Placebo	21/25 (84.0%) 10/25 (40.0%)

Placebo-controlled trials also suggest that topical NSAIDs differ with regard to efficacy. Topical diclofenac, which has been evaluated in the most (eight) trials, was consistently superior to placebo or associated with a trend towards superiority.<sup>333, 342-344</sup> Several of these trials evaluated a proprietary compound (not available in the U.S.) of topical diclofenac in a carrier containing DMSO (Pennsaid®).<sup>347</sup> Ibuprofen was superior to placebo for chronic pain conditions in three RCTs.<sup>333, 345</sup> By contrast, evidence regarding the efficacy of other topical NSAIDs for chronic conditions is much more scant (see Mason,<sup>333</sup> Additional Files 4 and 5). Four trials found topical piroxicam no better than placebo, homeopathic gel, or glyceryl trinitrate 1% cream. One RCT found topical ketoprofen no better than placebo. Topical felbinac, flufenamate, and indomethacin have only been evaluated in one or two small trials each. Evidence on topical flurbiprofen was mixed: one trial found topical flurbiprofen superior to placebo, but another found no differences.

## Topical NSAIDs – Safety

Topical NSAIDs were associated with increased local adverse events (skin reactions such as rash, itch, and burning) compared with oral NSAIDs in two recent systematic reviews.<sup>332, 333</sup> However, there were no differences for total adverse events, systemic adverse events, withdrawal due to adverse events, gastrointestinal events, or central nervous system events. For the outcome of withdrawal due to adverse events, we found no differences when we pooled the three trials included in the earlier reviews and a fourth,<sup>338</sup> more recent trial.

**Figure 2. Withdrawal due to adverse events in trials comparing a topical to an oral NSAID**



Among the head-to-head trials, Tugwell et al provides the most information about adverse events because it has the largest sample size, the longest duration of follow-up, and used pre-specified definitions for adverse events and adverse-event severity.<sup>338</sup> Topical diclofenac was associated with more local skin reactions but with fewer systemic and laboratory adverse events (Table 33).

**Table 33. Adverse events from a trial comparing topical to oral diclofenac<sup>338</sup>**

Adverse event	Topical diclofenac in DMSO carrier (n=311)	Oral diclofenac (n=311)	P value for difference
Withdrawal due to adverse event	21%	25%	0.15
Increase in mean blood pressure $\geq$ 5 mm Hg	24%	28%	0.30
Dry skin	27%	1%	<0.0001
Rash	12%	2%	<0.0001
Pruritus	6%	0.6%	<0.0001
Gastrointestinal events (abdominal pain, constipation, diarrhea, dyspepsia, flatulence, melena, nausea, vomiting)	35%	48%	0.0006
Severe gastrointestinal event (defined as producing significant impairment of functioning and definite hazard to patient's health)	2.6%	10.2%	0.0003
Melena	1%	2%	0.36
Asthma	3%	0.6%	0.02
Dizziness	0.6%	4%	0.002
Dyspnea	0%	2%	0.01
Hemoglobin went from normal to abnormal	2%	10%	<0.0001
Alanine transaminase increase to >3 times the upper limit or normal	1.1%	4.7%	0.01
Creatinine clearance went from normal to abnormal	4%	10%	0.01

No RCT was adequately designed to assess risks for serious but uncommon adverse events such as myocardial infarction, renal failure, or gastrointestinal bleeding. We identified one case-control study (1,103 cases) that evaluated the risk of hospital admission for upper gastrointestinal bleeding and perforation in patients taking topical NSAIDs.<sup>348</sup> After adjusting for the confounding effects of exposure to oral NSAIDs and ulcer healing drugs, there was no association between exposure to topical NSAIDs within 45 days of an upper GI bleed (OR 1.45, 95% CI 0.84 to 2.50 with community controls and OR 1.06, 95% CI 0.60 to 1.88 with hospital controls). By contrast, oral NSAIDs were associated with increased risk (OR 2.59, 95% CI 2.12 to 3.16 for community controls and 2.00, 95% CI 1.60 to 2.50 for hospital controls). In a nested case-control study of the General Practice Research Database, topical NSAID use was not associated with symptomatic peptic ulcer (RR=1.0 versus non-use, 95% CI 0.6 to 1.7), though oral NSAID use was associated with increased risk (RR=4.0, 95% CI 3.2 to 5.1).<sup>234</sup>

We identified one case-control study of similar design that found exposure to topical NSAIDs not associated with acute renal failure (adjusted OR 1.33, 95% CI 0.79 to 2.24 using community controls and 1.04, 95% CI 0.60 to 1.83 using hospital controls).<sup>349</sup> Recent exposure to oral NSAIDs, on the other hand, was associated with increased risk of renal failure using either community (adjusted OR 2.20, 95% CI 1.49 to 3.25) or hospital (adjusted OR 1.84, 95% CI 1.15 to 2.93) controls. We identified no studies comparing the risk of cardiovascular events in persons on topical versus oral NSAIDs.

### Topical Salicylates (Including Capsaicin)

We identified no trials comparing topical salicylates to oral or topical NSAIDs. One recent good-quality systematic review found topical salicylates superior to placebo for pain relief when data from six trials were pooled (relative benefit 1.5, 95% CI 1.3 to 1.9; NNT 5.3, 95% CI 3.6 to

10.2).<sup>32</sup> However, the three higher quality trials found no significant benefit (relative benefit 1.3, 95% CI 0.98 to 1.6). Local adverse events were rare, but the quality of adverse-event reporting was poor.

We identified no trials comparing topical capsaicin to oral or topical NSAIDs. One recent good-quality systematic review found that for chronic musculoskeletal pain, capsaicin was superior to placebo for achieving clinical success (defined as approximately a 50% reduction in pain), with a relative benefit of 1.5 (three trials, 95% CI 1.1 to 2.0) and number needed to treat of 8.1 (4.6 to 34).<sup>350</sup> About 54% of patients had local adverse events with capsaicin, compared with 15% with placebo (relative risk 3.6, 95% CI 2.6 to 5.0). Withdrawals due to adverse events were also significantly more likely with capsaicin (13% vs. 3%, relative risk 4.0, 95% CI 2.3 to 6.8). An older systematic review was excluded because it appears outdated.<sup>351</sup>

## Chapter 4. Summary and Discussion

The table below summarizes the strength of evidence and results for each key question. Publication bias is an issue for all of these questions, because we do not know the complete details or results of unpublished trials submitted to the FDA or trials that have been conducted but not published or submitted to the FDA

**Table 34. Summary of findings with strength of evidence**

Key Question	Level of Evidence	Conclusion
<b>1a. What are the comparative benefits and harms of treating osteoarthritis with oral medications or supplements?</b>		
Efficacy: Non-selective NSAID vs. non-selective NSAID	Non-selective NSAID vs. non-selective NSAID: <i>good</i> . Consistent evidence from several good-quality systematic reviews and published trials. Salsalate vs. aspirin. <i>Poor</i> . One short-term trial. Salsalate or aspirin vs. non-aspirin NSAIDs. <i>Poor</i> .	No difference in efficacy between various non-aspirin, non-selective NSAIDs or partially selective NSAIDs (meloxicam, nabumetone, etodolac). No difference between salsalate and aspirin in one short-term trial. There were no trials or eligible observational studies of salsalate or aspirin vs. non-aspirin NSAIDs.
Efficacy: COX-2 selective vs. non-selective NSAID	Good. Consistent evidence from many published trials	No difference.
Efficacy: COX-2 selective vs. COX-2 selective	Good. Consistent evidence from six published trials.	No clinically significant differences at comparable doses.
GI and CV safety: Rofecoxib	Good. One large published trial, multiple meta-analyses and systematic reviews of published and unpublished trials, multiple observational studies.	In a pivotal, long-term trial (VIGOR) of patients with rheumatoid arthritis, rofecoxib 50 mg daily reduced symptomatic ulcers and serious ulcer complications compared with naproxen. After an average of 9 months, rofecoxib use was associated with 1 fewer symptomatic ulcer for every 62 patients treated; one fewer serious GI complication for every 191; and one additional MI for every 333 patients. The overall rate of serious adverse events, however, was higher with rofecoxib than naproxen. Higher-quality systematic reviews and observational studies are generally consistent with these findings (about 3.5 additional myocardial infarctions for every 1000 patients treated for one year). One long-term placebo-controlled polyp prevention trial also found an increased risk of MI.
GI and CV safety: Celecoxib	Fair: Multiple meta-analyses and systematic reviews of mostly short-term published and unpublished trials, multiple observational studies.	In the only published large, long-term study (CLASS), celecoxib was no better than diclofenac or ibuprofen for complicated or symptomatic ulcers at the end of follow-up. In subgroup analyses of patients not on aspirin, celecoxib was superior to ibuprofen but not to diclofenac for ulcer complications. There was no increase in the rate of cardiovascular events for celecoxib in CLASS. The overall rate of serious adverse events was similar



Key Question	Level of Evidence	Conclusion
		with celecoxib compared to ibuprofen and diclofenac. Systematic reviews and other meta-analyses of primarily short-term, unpublished data and lower doses found celecoxib superior to non-selective NSAIDs for ulcer complications. Observational studies are generally consistent with the short-term trials. However, recent meta-analyses found an increased risk of myocardial infarction with celecoxib compared with placebo (about 3.5 myocardial infarction for every 1000 patients treated for one year), with much of the evidence for increased risk coming from two large polyp prevention trials.
GI and CV safety: Valdecoxib	Fair: Fair quality meta-analyses of published and unpublished trials	Compared to non-selective NSAIDs, valdecoxib was associated with one fewer upper GI complication with valdecoxib for every 78 patients treated for 3 to 6 months. There was no association between valdecoxib and myocardial infarction in primarily short-term chronic pain trials. However, two short-term trials in a high-risk post-coronary artery surgery setting found that valdecoxib was associated with an acute two- to three-fold higher risk of cardiovascular events compared with placebo.
GI and CV safety: Etoricoxib	Fair: Several fair quality meta-analyses of published and unpublished trials	GI safety: Etoricoxib was associated with fewer perforations, symptomatic ulcers, and bleeds than diclofenac, ibuprofen, and naproxen (rate/100 patient-years 1.00 vs. 2.47).  CV safety: Based on limited data from short-term trials, etoricoxib has a cardiovascular safety profile similar to non-selective NSAIDs, with the possible exception of naproxen.
GI and CV safety: Lumiracoxib	Fair: One large, long-term trial	GI safety: In patients not taking low-dose aspirin, lumiracoxib was associated with a lower risk of ulcer complications compared to naproxen and ibuprofen (1-year incidence 0.25% vs. 1.09%, p<0.0001).  CV safety: There were no differences in the risk of serious CV events (rates ranged from 0.11% to 0.38% after 1 year).
GI and CV safety: Partially selective NSAIDs	GI safety: Fair for meloxicam (short-term RCTs, meta-analyses, observational studies); poor for nabumetone and etodolac  CV safety: Poor for all; two observational studies for meloxicam	GI safety: Meloxicam and non-selective NSAIDs were generally associated with similar risks of serious GI events; evidence was insufficient to make reliable judgments about GI safety of nabumetone and etodolac  CV safety: Very sparse evidence that meloxicam and non-selective NSAIDs were associated with similar risks of serious CV events; no evidence for nabumetone and etodolac
GI and CV safety: Non-selective NSAIDs	Good for GI safety. Consistent evidence from many published trials, systematic reviews, and observational studies	No clear difference in GI safety between non-selective NSAIDs at commonly used doses. Naproxen was associated with a modest cardiovascular protective effect compared to other NSAIDs in a good-quality systematic

Key Question	Level of Evidence	Conclusion
	Fair for CV safety. No large, long-term controlled trials. Almost all evidence from observational studies	review of observational studies, but methodological issues could have affected the results.  Comparative CV safety of other non-aspirin NSAIDs is not clear. A large systematic review of RCTs addressing this issue has not yet been published.
GI and CV safety: Aspirin	Fair. Many trials and systematic reviews, but almost exclusively in patients receiving aspirin at doses used for cardiovascular prophylaxis.	Aspirin is associated with a lower risk of thromboembolic events and a higher risk of GI bleeds when given in prophylactic doses. There is insufficient evidence to assess safety of aspirin in doses used for pain control compared with non-aspirin NSAIDs.
GI and CV safety: Salsalate	Poor. Flawed observational data	Salsalate was associated with a lower risk of adverse events using broad composite endpoints in older, poor-quality observational studies. In a more recent observational study, salsalate had a similar rate of complications compared with other NSAIDs. Almost no data is available on CV safety.
Mortality	Fair. Individual trials not large enough to detect differences in mortality. One meta-analysis of celecoxib using unpublished information, and one fair-quality observational study of non-selective NSAIDs.	No difference between celecoxib and non-selective NSAIDs, but few deaths occurred. In one cohort study, nabumetone was associated with lower all-cause mortality compared with diclofenac and naproxen, but this finding has not been replicated.
HTN, CHF, edema, and impaired renal function	Fair. Multiple systematic reviews, clinical trials, and observational studies, but analyses limited by inconsistent reporting of results and probable publication bias	All NSAIDs are associated with deleterious effects on blood pressure, edema, and renal function. Indirect evidence and observational data suggests that rofecoxib is associated with a greater risk of hypertension, CHF, and edema compared to celecoxib. Rofecoxib was also associated with more cardiorenal events than celecoxib in three head-to-head trials of high-risk patients, but possible nonequivalent dosing limits interpretation of these results. No clear differences between celecoxib, partially selective, and non-selective NSAIDs.
Hepatotoxicity	Good. Systematic reviews of multiple trials and observational studies	Clinically significant hepatotoxicity was rare. Several NSAIDs associated with high rates of hepatotoxicity have been removed from the market. Among currently marketed NSAIDs, diclofenac was associated with a higher rate of liver-related discontinuations compared with placebo (2.17%).
Tolerability	Good for coxibs and non-selective NSAIDs (consistent results from multiple systematic reviews); fair for partially selective NSAIDs, aspirin, and salsalate (few meta-analyses and short-term trials)	Relative to non-selective NSAIDs, coxibs and partially selective NSAIDs were at least as well tolerated and aspirin was less tolerated; salsalate was less well tolerated than non-selective NSAIDs in 2 of 3 trials, but less toxic in flawed observational studies; no clear differences among coxibs or among non-selective NSAIDs
Acetaminophen	Good overall. Consistent results from multiple systematic reviews for efficacy and GI adverse events. Poor for cardiovascular safety	Acetaminophen is modestly inferior to NSAIDs for reducing pain and improving function. Acetaminophen is superior to NSAIDs for GI side effects (clinical trials data) and GI complications (observational studies).

Key Question	Level of Evidence	Conclusion
	(no evidence on myocardial infarctions) and fair for renal safety (observational studies)	Acetaminophen may be associated with modest increases in blood pressure and renal dysfunction (observational studies). Acetaminophen does not appear to be associated with an increased risk of hepatotoxicity at therapeutic doses in patients without underlying liver disease.
Glucosamine and chondroitin	Fair. Inconsistent evidence from clinical trials. The most promising results have been obtained in trials funded by a European manufacturer of pharmaceutical grade glucosamine not approved in the U.S.	A recent large, good-quality NIH-funded trial found that pharmaceutical grade glucosamine hydrochloride and chondroitin sulfate alone or in combination were not superior to placebo among all patients studied. In a small subgroup of patients with at least moderate baseline pain, there appeared to be a modest benefit for pain relief from the combination, but this did not appear to be a preplanned analysis. In older trials, many with some flaws, glucosamine was superior to oral NSAIDs and placebo in trials evaluating pharmaceutical grade glucosamine and funded by its manufacturer. Other trials found no difference between glucosamine and placebo or glucosamine and oral NSAIDs. Chondroitin was superior to placebo in older, flawed trials. Data on the effects of glucosamine on slowing progression of disease are limited to two trials showing beneficial effects on progression of knee joint narrowing. Glucosamine and chondroitin were consistently well tolerated, with no serious adverse events reported in the trials.
<b>1b. How do these benefits and harms change with dosage and duration of treatment, and what is the evidence that alternative dosage strategies, such as intermittent dosing and drug holidays, affect the benefits and harms of oral medication use?</b>	Good for safety (consistent evidence from multiple clinical trials and observational studies), no evidence for alternative dosage strategies.	Risk of GI bleeding increases with higher doses of non-selective NSAIDs. Effects of dose and duration are somewhat inconsistent. Celecoxib was most effective for GI safety at 6 months and not after longer follow-up in the CLASS trials. A trend towards a dose-dependent CV risk of celecoxib was observed in a long-term prevention trial. CV risk of rofecoxib became most apparent after 8 months in VIGOR and after 18 months in the APPROVe prevention trial, but interpretation of earlier risk is imprecise because of small numbers of events. Most, but not all, observational studies suggest a dose-dependent effect of rofecoxib on MI risk.
<b>2. Do the comparative benefits and harms of oral treatments for osteoarthritis vary for certain demographic and clinical subgroups?</b>		
Demographic subgroups including age, sex, and race	Good (age, sex)  Poor (race)	Most studies included a majority of women. The risks of GI and CV events increase in older patients. The data that selective COX-2 inhibitors are safe and efficacious in different racial groups have been presented to the FDA. In the peer-reviewed literature, there is no evidence that the comparative efficacy of different selective and non-selective NSAIDs varies according to age, gender, or race.

Key Question	Level of Evidence	Conclusion
Pre-existing disease including history of previous bleeding due to NSAIDs or peptic ulcer disease; hypertension, edema, ischemic heart disease, and heart failure	Previous bleeding: Good Hypertension, edema: Fair Ischemic Heart Disease: Poor (no comparative studies) Heart failure: Fair	Risk of bleeding is higher in patients with prior bleeding or PUD. Two trials found high rates of recurrent ulcer bleeding in patients randomized either to celecoxib or a non-selective NSAID + PPI. Risk of CV and renal events is higher in patients with cardiac and renal co-morbidities. In a single observational study that examined mortality, rofecoxib and non-selective NSAIDs were associated with higher rates of death and recurrent heart failure than celecoxib.
Concomitant anticoagulant use	Fair overall: Primarily observational studies	Concomitant use of anticoagulants and non-selective NSAIDs increase the risk of GI bleeding three- to six-fold. Reliable conclusions about the safety of selective NSAIDs in the setting of anticoagulation could not be drawn from flawed observational studies, though there are case reports of serious bleeding events (primarily in the elderly). Warfarin plus aspirin (prophylactic doses) increased the risk of bleeding compared with warfarin alone in patients with indications for antithrombotic prophylaxis. Acetaminophen can increase INR levels, but effects on bleeding rates have not been studied.
Concomitant aspirin use	Good for GI safety: Consistent evidence from clinical trials and observational studies  Fair for CV safety: Subgroup analyses from few trials, few observational studies	Concomitant use of aspirin appears to attenuate or eliminate the GI benefits of selective NSAIDs. Concomitant low-dose aspirin increased the rate of endoscopic ulcers by about 6% in patients on celecoxib and those on non-selective NSAIDs in one meta-analysis. In one trial, rofecoxib plus low-dose aspirin and ibuprofen were associated with a similar risk of endoscopic ulcers (16-17%); both were significantly higher than placebo (6%) or aspirin alone (7%). Evidence regarding the effects of concomitant aspirin use on CV risk associated with selective or non-selective NSAIDs is limited, though three polyp prevention trials of rofecoxib or celecoxib found that concomitant aspirin use did not attenuate the observed increased risk of CV events.
<b>3. What are the comparative effects of co-prescribing of H2-antagonists, misoprostol, or proton pump inhibitors (PPIs) on the gastrointestinal harms associated with NSAID use?</b>	Good: Consistent evidence from good-quality systematic reviews and numerous clinical trials	Co-prescribing of misoprostol or PPIs with NSAIDs offers some advantages over full-dose H2-antagonists. PPIs are associated with the lowest rates of endoscopically detected <i>duodenal</i> ulcers. Misoprostol and PPIs are associated with similar rates of endoscopically detected <i>gastric</i> ulcers as PPIs. While misoprostol offers the advantage of being the only gastroprotective agent to reduce rates of clinical GI events, it is also associated with an increased risk of GI-related adverse event withdrawals. Full-dose H2 blockers were associated with lower ulcer risk than placebo, but head-to-head trials against PPIs and misoprostol are lacking. Endoscopic duodenal ulcer risk for <i>standard</i> dose H2

Key Question	Level of Evidence	Conclusion
		blockers was lower than placebo, similar to misoprostol, and higher than omeprazole; <i>standard</i> dosages of H2 blockers and placebo were associated with similar gastric ulcer risk
<b>4. What are the comparative benefits and harms of treating osteoarthritis with oral medications as compared with topical preparations?</b>		
Topical NSAIDs: efficacy	Good: Consistent evidence for selected topical NSAIDs from clinical trials	Topical NSAIDs are similar to oral NSAIDs for efficacy. Topical diclofenac is the best studied, though many trials evaluated a formulation using a DMSO carrier that is not available in the U.S. Topical ibuprofen was superior to placebo in several trials.
Topical NSAIDs: safety	Good: Consistent evidence from trials and systematic reviews and observational studies	Topical NSAIDs are associated with increased local adverse events compared with oral NSAIDs. Total adverse events and withdrawal due to adverse events are similar. Topical NSAIDs are superior for GI events, including severe events, and changes in hemoglobin (data from one good-quality trial).
Topical salicylates: (including capsaicin)	Fair: Only placebo-controlled trials, many of which were flawed	Topical salicylates were no better than placebo in higher-quality trials. Topical capsaicin was superior to placebo (NNT 8.1), but associated with increased local adverse events and withdrawals due to adverse events.

## Discussion

This report provides a comprehensive summary of the comparative efficacy and safety of oral nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) (selective, non-selective, aspirin, and salsalate), acetaminophen, certain over-the-counter supplements (chondroitin and glucosamine), and topical agents (NSAIDs and rubefacients, including capsaicin) that are commonly used for pain control and improvement of functional status in patients with osteoarthritis. At this time, no drug or supplement is known to modify the course of disease, though initial long-term trials of pharmaceutical grade glucosamine suggest an effect on radiologic evidence for disease progression.

Evidence regarding the benefits of oral NSAIDs from primarily short-term randomized controlled trials is abundant and demonstrates no clear, consistent differences for relieving pain or other osteoarthritis-related symptoms, or for superior tolerability. On the other hand, much of the uncertainty and confusion regarding NSAIDs centers on their comparative safety.

The trade-offs between reduced GI risk and increased CV harms was first clearly observed in VIGOR. In this trial, rofecoxib 50 mg daily significantly reduced symptomatic ulcers (NNT=62) and serious ulcer complications (NNT=191) compared with naproxen in patients with rheumatoid arthritis.<sup>19</sup> However, the GI-protective effects were accompanied by a more than four-fold increase in myocardial infarctions, or one additional myocardial infarction for every 333 patients treated with rofecoxib. When considering all “serious” adverse events, moreover,

rofecoxib was not associated with any clear benefit compared with naproxen.<sup>114</sup>

Rofecoxib became the focus of intense scrutiny following publication of VIGOR. Subsequently, multiple observational studies<sup>138-141, 143-152</sup> and systematic reviews<sup>124, 129</sup> of RCTs have reported findings largely consistent with an increased risk of cardiovascular events with exposure to rofecoxib. Rofecoxib was voluntarily withdrawn from the market in 2004, after a long-term placebo-controlled polyp prevention trial reported increased cardiovascular risk.<sup>132</sup> Valdecoxib was likewise voluntarily withdrawn from the market in 2005. Withdrawal was recommended by FDA based on their conclusion that valdecoxib associated with no clear GI benefit,<sup>117</sup> an increased risk of serious skin reactions,<sup>168</sup> and potential increased risk of CV events.<sup>165, 166</sup> As a result, celecoxib is the only selective NSAID currently available in the U.S.

The same concerns about the overall safety of rofecoxib have been directed at celecoxib. The evidence regarding the relative GI and CV safety of celecoxib, however, is less clear. In CLASS, the largest published study of GI complications, celecoxib was not significantly different than diclofenac or ibuprofen for either ulcer complications or myocardial infarctions by the end of follow-up.<sup>94</sup> Like the VIGOR trial, re-analysis of all serious adverse events in CLASS found no significant advantage for celecoxib.<sup>94</sup> On the other hand, systematic reviews and other meta-analyses of primarily short-term and frequently unpublished data found that celecoxib (primarily at lower doses than were used in CLASS) was associated with lower rates of ulcer complications than non-selective NSAIDs.<sup>62, 121</sup> These findings, in combination with earlier systematic reviews of primarily short-term trials that found no increased cardiovascular risk with celecoxib, suggested a possible advantage of celecoxib over non-selective NSAIDs.<sup>62, 134, 135</sup> More recent meta-analyses (including data from long-term polyp prevention trials) reporting an increased risk of myocardial infarctions with celecoxib (particularly at high doses) relative to placebo, however, raise additional questions about its appropriate use.<sup>129, 136</sup>

Well-designed, long-term observational studies could provide ‘real-world’ information not available from most RCTs, which are usually designed as short-term efficacy trials that evaluate selected populations and employ rigid dosing regimens (often at high doses) under carefully controlled conditions. Observational studies are generally consistent with the RCTs in that celecoxib is consistently GI protective<sup>139, 162</sup> or neutral<sup>138</sup> and not associated with higher risks of CV events relative to non-selective NSAIDs.<sup>144, 145, 150, 160</sup> Additionally, celecoxib is associated with lower risks of serious GI events than rofecoxib.<sup>139, 142</sup> Evidence from observational studies is less clear with regard to how celecoxib compares to rofecoxib in terms of CV risk due to differences in outcome reporting and in the number and type of factors adjusted for in outcome analyses.

An important drawback of the observational studies, however, is that they largely focus on individual adverse events in isolation. More informative analyses of the overall trade-off between risks and benefits would consider net harms from all serious adverse events. Our re-analysis of results from three studies<sup>139, 147, 163</sup> reporting myocardial infarctions, heart failure hospitalizations, and gastrointestinal bleeding in an elderly Canadian population receiving multiple prescriptions suggests that in everyday use, celecoxib may confer net advantages in terms of the number of these events compared with rofecoxib and non-selective NSAIDs. However, additional studies on original data are needed to confirm this finding in other settings.

The cardiovascular effects of naproxen and other non-selective NSAIDs have been the subject of considerable debate since the publication of the VIGOR trial. At this time, among NSAIDs with sufficient evidence to assess cardiovascular risk, naproxen appears to offer the most favorable cardiovascular safety profile. In a recent, comprehensive systematic review,

naproxen (even at high doses) was moderately superior to COX-2 inhibitors for cardiovascular safety.<sup>129</sup> In addition, naproxen was the only NSAID (selective or non-selective) associated with a neutral cardiovascular effect relative to placebo, though these analyses were primarily based on indirect comparisons. The cardiovascular risks of non-naproxen, non-selective NSAIDs were similar to the selective COX-2 inhibitors, though most of the evidence was limited to high-dose ibuprofen and diclofenac. At this time, there is insufficient evidence to reliably judge the relative cardiovascular safety of other non-selective NSAIDs or the partially selective drugs nabumetone, diclofenac, and meloxicam. For GI safety, no clear advantage for any particular partially selective or non-selective NSAIDs has been demonstrated.

Topical NSAIDs may offer the advantages of local analgesic and anti-inflammatory effects without the systemic side effects of oral administration. They would probably be most useful in patients with a limited number of affected joints. Although topical NSAIDs appear comparable to oral NSAIDs for pain relief in several trials, the most convincing evidence comes from a recent trial that evaluated a proprietary formulation of diclofenac with DMSO that has not been FDA-approved.<sup>338</sup> Topical NSAIDs appear safer than oral NSAIDs for GI safety, but data on comparative cardiovascular risks are not available. The relative benefits of topical rubefacients compared with topical or oral NSAIDs has not been adequately studied, and other than for capsaicin (which is sometimes classified separately from the rubefacients), there is insufficient evidence to prove that topical rubefacients are superior to placebo for osteoarthritis.

Acetaminophen is often considered an attractive alternative to NSAIDs because of its perceived safety profile. It was associated with GI-protective effects relative to non-selective NSAIDs,<sup>229, 231</sup> though at the expense of modestly inferior efficacy.<sup>234</sup> More evidence is needed to compare the effects of acetaminophen and NSAIDs on other important adverse events such as cardiovascular safety, renal dysfunction, blood pressure, and heart failure. However, one recent observational study found that heavy use of acetaminophen is associated with increased cardiovascular risks similar to that seen with NSAIDs.<sup>237</sup> Aspirin is another alternative that has the advantage of a cardiovascular protective effect. However, nearly all of the evidence on cardiovascular and GI safety of aspirin is from trials using lower, preventative doses rather than higher anti-inflammatory and analgesic doses.

Glucosamine and chondroitin are widely available as over-the-counter supplements. The highly variable content of currently available products, however, remains a significant issue in the U.S. Further, nearly all of the trials demonstrating benefits of glucosamine have been conducted using pharmaceutical grade preparations not currently available in the U.S.<sup>248</sup> Compared with the evidence for glucosamine, the evidence for chondroitin appears less promising. While these agents appear to be safe in the short term, high-quality, long-term safety data are sparse. A recent large, NIH-sponsored trial helps clarify the role of these supplements in management of osteoarthritis.<sup>259</sup> It found that the combination of pharmaceutical grade glucosamine and chondroitin was modestly superior to placebo only in an analysis of a small subgroup of patients with at least moderate severity of baseline disease. Neither glucosamine nor chondroitin alone was superior to placebo overall or in the subgroup of patients with greater baseline severity. Data on effects of glucosamine on osteoarthritis progression are limited to two trials showing a beneficial effect on knee joint space narrowing over three years using a pharmaceutical grade preparation.

Strategies to reduce the risk of GI complications in patients taking NSAIDs include co-prescription of misoprostol, standard- or double-dose H2 blockers, or PPIs. All of these strategies are effective in reducing the risk of NSAID-associated *endoscopic* gastric and

duodenal ulcers relative to use of non-selective NSAIDs alone. Misoprostol (RR 0.36, 95% CI 0.20 to 0.67) and PPIs (RR 0.09, 95% CI 0.02 to 0.47) also reduced NSAID-associated symptomatic ulcers.<sup>293</sup> Further, misoprostol is the only agent proven to decrease risk of clinical GI events, but is associated with an increased risk of withdrawals due to nausea, diarrhea, and/or abdominal pain.<sup>317</sup> In high-risk patients (those with a recent bleed), non-selective NSAIDs and the combination of a non-selective NSAID plus a PPI were both associated with similar, high rates of recurrent bleeding.<sup>270, 271</sup>

In summary, each of the analgesics evaluated in this report was associated with a unique set of risks and benefits. The role of selective and non-selective oral NSAIDs and alternative agents will continue to evolve as additional information emerges. At this time, although the amount and quality of evidence varies, no currently available analgesic reviewed in this report offers a clear overall advantage compared with the others, which is not surprising given the complex trade-offs between the many benefits (pain relief, improved function, improved tolerability, and others) and harms (cardiovascular, renal, GI, and others) involved. In addition, individuals are likely to differ in how they prioritize the importance of the various benefits and harms of treatment. Adequate pain relief at the expense of a small increase in CV risk, for example, could be an acceptable trade-off for many patients. Others may consider even a marginal increase in CV risk unacceptable. Factors that should be considered when weighing the potential effects of an analgesic include age (older age being associated with increased risks for bleeding and cardiovascular events), co-morbid conditions, and concomitant medication use (such as aspirin and anticoagulation). As in other medical decisions, choosing the optimal analgesic for an individual with osteoarthritis should always involve careful consideration and thorough discussion of the relevant trade-offs.





## Chapter 5. Future Research

- Nearly all of the clinical trials reviewed in this report were “efficacy” trials conducted in ideal settings and selected populations. “Pragmatic” trials that allow flexible dosing or medication switches and other clinical trials of effectiveness would be very valuable for learning the outcomes of different analgesic interventions in real-world settings.
- The cardiovascular safety of non-selective NSAIDs has not been adequately assessed in large, long-term clinical trials. Naproxen in particular may have a different cardiovascular safety profile than other NSAIDs and should be investigated in long-term, appropriately powered trials. The cardiovascular risks associated with the partially selective NSAIDs meloxicam, nabumetone, and diclofenac also have not been well studied.
- Large observational studies assessing the safety of NSAIDs have been helpful for assessing comparative benefits and harms, but have generally had a narrow focus on single adverse events. Observational studies that take a broader view of all serious adverse events would be substantially more helpful for assessing the overall trade-offs between benefits and harms.
- The cardiovascular risks and GI benefits associated with different COX-2 selective NSAIDs may vary. Large, long-term trials with active and placebo-controlled arms would be needed to assess the safety and benefits of any new COX-2 selective analgesic.
- Meta-analyses of the risks associated with selective COX-2 inhibitors need to better assess for the effects of dose and duration, as most of the cardiovascular risks have only occurred with prolonged use and at higher doses.
- Large, long-term trials of the GI and cardiovascular safety associated with full-dose aspirin, salsalate, or acetaminophen compared with non-aspirin NSAIDs or placebo are lacking.
- Given the large number of patients who meet criteria for aspirin prophylaxis for cardiovascular events, more trials evaluating the effects of low-dose aspirin on GI and CV risks are needed.
- Trials and observational studies evaluating comparative safety or efficacy should be sufficiently inclusive to evaluate whether effects differ by race or gender.
- Genetic testing could theoretically help predict patients who are at higher risk of cardiovascular complications from selective COX-2 inhibitors because of differences in the COX-2 gene promoter or other genes. This is a promising area of future research.

- The effects of alternative dosing strategies such as intermittent dosing or drug holidays have not been assessed. Studies evaluating the benefits and risks associated with such strategies compared with conventional dosing could help clarify the effects of these alternative dosing strategies. In addition, although there is speculation that once daily versus twice daily dosing of certain COX-2 inhibitors could affect CV risk, this hypothesis has not yet been tested in a clinical trial.
- Most trials showing therapeutic benefits from glucosamine were conducted using pharmaceutical grade glucosamine not available in the U.S. and may not be applicable to currently available over-the-counter preparations. Large trials comparing currently available over-the-counter preparations to oral NSAIDs are needed, as these are likely to remain available even if the FDA approves a pharmaceutical grade glucosamine. Additional long-term trials are also required to further evaluate effects of glucosamine on progression of joint space narrowing.
- No topical NSAIDs are FDA-approved in the U.S., yet compounding of NSAIDs is widely available. Although recent trials of topical NSAIDs are promising, most have been conducted using a proprietary formulation of diclofenac with DMSO. A UK trial of topical versus oral ibuprofen is currently in progress and will help clarify the benefits and safety of topical versus oral NSAIDs. However, cohort studies using large observational databases may be required to adequately assess cardiovascular risk.

## Addendum

As this report was going to press, two relevant meta-analyses on risks associated with NSAIDs were published. We were unable to fully incorporate these studies into our report, but their results generally appear consistent with our conclusions.

One meta-analysis evaluated risk of renal events (peripheral edema, hypertension, or renal dysfunction) and arrhythmias from 114 randomized trials of COX-2 selective NSAIDs [Zhang J, Ding EL, Song Y. Adverse effects of cyclooxygenase 2 inhibitors on renal and arrhythmia events. Meta-analysis of randomized trials. *JAMA*. 2006;296:(doi:10.1001/jama.296.13.jrv6001)]. It was rated fair-quality because it did not assess the quality of included studies. It found rofecoxib associated with increased risks of arrhythmia relative to control (placebo, other NSAID, or mixed/other) treatments (RR 2.90, 95% CI 1.07 to 7.88), though the number and rate of events was low (13/10126 or 0.1% in the rofecoxib arms, with 10 of the events ventricular fibrillation, cardiac arrest, or sudden cardiac death). The increase in risk was equivalent to about 1.1 additional arrhythmia events per 1000 patients treated with rofecoxib. Rofecoxib was also associated with an increased risk of peripheral edema (RR 1.43, 95% CI 1.23 to 1.66), hypertension (RR 1.55, 95% CI 1.29 to 1.85) and renal dysfunction (RR 2.31, 95% CI 1.05 to 5.07). For composite renal events (peripheral edema, hypertension, or renal dysfunction), risks were significantly higher with increased dose and increased duration of rofecoxib. Celecoxib was associated with lower risks of renal dysfunction (RR 0.61, 95% CI 0.40 to 0.94) and hypertension (RR 0.83, 95% CI 0.71 to 0.97) than control treatments, though there was no difference for composite renal events (RR 0.97, 95% CI 0.84 to 1.12) or arrhythmia (RR 0.84, 95% CI 0.45 to 1.57). There was no clear association between other COX-2 inhibitors (valdecoxib/parecoxib, etoricoxib, or lumiracoxib) and arrhythmia or renal events, though there was a trend towards increased renal events with valdecoxib/parecoxib (RR 1.24, 95% CI 1.00 to 1.55), and no arrhythmia events were reported in six trials of lumiracoxib.

Several factors complicate interpretation of estimates of arrhythmia risk from this meta-analysis. First, the rate of arrhythmias varied widely between control arms for different COX-2 selective inhibitors. For example, the rate of arrhythmias was fourteen-fold higher in the control arms of the celecoxib trials compared to the control arms of the rofecoxib trials (18/6568 or 0.3% vs. 2/10,126 or 0.01%). In addition, the proportion of specific arrhythmia events varied widely between drugs. For valdecoxib, over half (69/129 or 53%) of the arrhythmia events were atrial fibrillation, compared to 14% (3/22) for celecoxib and 8% (1/13) for rofecoxib. Finally, even though funnel plots and statistical tests did not suggest the presence of publication bias, only a minority of trials reported usable data on arrhythmia events. For example, only 10 of 37 included trials of celecoxib (accounting for about one-third of trial participants) had data that could be used in the analysis of arrhythmia events.

The second meta-analysis evaluated cardiovascular risk (primarily myocardial infarction) associated with NSAIDs from 23 observational studies (mostly of older populations) [McGettigan P, Henry D. Cardiovascular risk and inhibition of cyclooxygenase. A systematic review of the observational studies of selective and nonselective inhibitors of cyclooxygenase 2. *JAMA*. 2006;296:(doi:10.1001/jama.292.13.jrv60011)]. Its results are largely consistent with our

qualitative assessment of cardiovascular risk from the observational literature. This meta-analysis appears to meet criteria for a good-quality systematic review, but its interpretation is complicated by the presence of substantial ( $p \leq 0.001$ ), unexplained between-study heterogeneity for the main pooled analyses. It found rofecoxib associated with an increased risk of cardiovascular events at both lower (25 mg/day or less, RR 1.33, 95% CI 1.00 to 1.79) and higher ( $>25$  mg/day, RR 2.19, 95% CI 1.64 to 2.91) doses, with the increased risk observable during the first month of treatment. Of the other NSAIDs, diclofenac (RR 1.40, 95% CI 1.16 to 1.70) was associated with the greatest cardiovascular risk, followed by indomethacin (RR 1.30, 95% CI 1.07 to 1.60) and meloxicam (RR 1.25, 95% CI 1.00 to 1.55). Celecoxib (RR 1.06, 95% CI 0.91 to 1.23), naproxen (RR 0.97, 95% CI 0.87 to 1.07), piroxicam (RR 1.06, 95% CI 0.70 to 1.59), and ibuprofen (RR 1.07, 95% CI 0.97 to 1.18) were not associated with increased risks. Only 3 of the 23 included studies reported adjusting for over-the-counter aspirin or NSAID use; two other studies included patients shortly after myocardial infarction that were all prescribed or presumed to be on aspirin.

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## Appendix A. Pharmacokinetics, Indications and Dosing of Included Drugs

<b>Drug and Trade Name</b> (Trade names provided only for drugs under patent.)	<b>Half-life or other relevant pharmacokinetic feature</b>	<b>Labeled indications</b>	<b>Dosing (oral doses)</b>	<b>Dose adjustments for special populations</b>
acetaminophen	Elimination half-life normally 2-4 hours, longer in children and possibly elderly.	Fever; Pain	Pain: 650-1000 mg up to 4g/day	Peds: 10-15 mg/kg/dose up to 5 doses/day
aspirin	Elimination half-life 4.7 to 9 hours Low dose (< 1gm) shortens half-life to 2.5 to 7 hours, high dose of (>10gm) half-life increases to as much as 19 hours	Arthritis; Cerebrovascular accident; Transient ischemia; Coronary artery bypass graft; Disorder of joint of spine; Fever; Juvenile rheumatoid arthritis; Myocardial infarction; Myocardial infarction; Prophylaxis; Osteoarthritis; Pain; Percutaneous coronary intervention; Pleurisy; Systemic lupus erythematosus; Rheumatoid arthritis; Stable angina, chronic; Unstable angina	OA and RA: 3g/day divided into 4-6 doses	Peds: 40-130 mg/kg/day depending on condition
celecoxib (Celebrex®)	Elimination half-life - 11 hrs.	Ankylosing spondylitis; Familial multiple polyposis; syndrome Osteoarthritis; Pain; Primary dysmenorrhea; Rheumatoid arthritis	OA: 200mg/day RA: 200-400 mg/day	Renal impairment: reduce dosage by 50%; Elderly patients (weight <50 kg): initiate at lowest dosage
choline magnesium trisalicylate	Elimination half-life: 9-17 hrs	Rheumatoid arthritis; Osteoarthritis; Acute shoulder pain; Fever	OA and RA: 1,500 mg 2x/day or 3,000 mg 1x/day	Renal impairment: initiate with lowest recommended dosage, monitor closely
diclofenac	Elimination half-life - 2 hours	Ankylosing spondylitis; Extraction of cataract; Inflammatory disorder of the eye; Light intolerance; Pain in eye; Refractive	OA: Delayed-release, 100-150 mg/day in 2-3 doses; Extended-release, 100-200 mg/day RA: Delayed-release, 100-200 mg/day in 3- 4	Renal impairment: initiate with lowest recommended dosage, monitor closely

<b>Drug and Trade Name</b> (Trade names provided only for drugs under patent.)	<b>Half-life or other relevant pharmacokinetic feature</b>	<b>Labeled indications</b>	<b>Dosing (oral doses)</b>	<b>Dose adjustments for special populations</b>
		keratoplasty; Osteoarthritis; Pain; Rheumatoid arthritis	doses; Extended-release, 75-225 mg/day	
diflunisal	Elimination half-life: 8 - 12 hrs (dose dependent)	Osteoarthritis; Pain (Mild to Moderate); Rheumatoid arthritis	OA and RA: 500-1000 mg/day in 2 divided doses; max dose/day 1500 mg	Renal impairment and elderly: begin at lowest dose possible and monitor closely
etodolac	Elimination half-life - 6-7 hrs	Juvenile rheumatoid arthritis; Osteoarthritis; Pain, acute; Rheumatoid arthritis	OA and RA initial treatment: immediate release, 300 mg 2-3x/day or 400-500 mg 2x/day OA and RA maintenance: extended release, 400-1000 mg/day; immediate release, 600-1000 mg/day 2-4x/day with max. dose of 1200 mg/day	Juvenile RA: extended release- 20-30 kg: 400 mg once a day; 31-45 kg: 600 mg once a day; 46-60 kg: 800 mg once a day; greater than 60 kg: 1000 mg once a day
fenoprofen	Elimination half-life - 3 hrs	Migraine; Osteoarthritis; Pain (Mild to Moderate); Rheumatoid arthritis	OA and RA: 300 to 600 mg, divided 3-4x/day to max dose 3200 mg/day	Elderly: smaller dose recommended (300 mg 3x/day) Renal impairment: no dosage adjustment necessary
flurbiprofen	Elimination half-life range- 3.36 to 11.55 hrs	Constricted pupil, intraoperative prophylaxis; Osteoarthritis; Rheumatoid arthritis	OA and RA: 200-300 mg divided 2-4x/day; max 300 mg/day	Renal impairment, liver disease and geriatric patients: start with the lowest recommended dosage; monitor patient closely
ibuprofen	Elimination half-life 1.8 to 2 hrs (1.6 hrs peds); prolonged in patients with cirrhosis	Fever; Juvenile rheumatoid arthritis; Osteoarthritis; Pain, Minor; Pain (Mild to Moderate); Primary dysmenorrhea; Rheumatoid arthritis	OA and RA: 1200-3200 mg/day divided in 3-4 doses	Renal impairment: initiate with the lowest recommended dosage, monitor patient closely
indomethacin	Elimination half-life 4.5 hrs, 3.2 hrs in elderly	Ankylosing spondylitis; Bursitis of shoulder – Pain, acute – Shoulder pain; Gouty arthritis, acute; Osteoarthritis;	OA and RA: 25-50 mg 2-3x/day max 200 mg/day, 100 mg/dose; sustained-release product, 75 mg 1-2/day	Severe renal impairment: (CrCL less than 15 mL/min), liver disease (Child-Pugh Class III), elderly & peds: initiate with lowest recommended dosage, monitor patient closely

<b>Drug and Trade Name</b> (Trade names provided only for drugs under patent.)	<b>Half-life or other relevant pharmacokinetic feature</b>	<b>Labeled indications</b>	<b>Dosing (oral doses)</b>	<b>Dose adjustments for special populations</b>
		Pain, acute – Shoulder pain – Tendinitis; Patent ductus arteriosus; Rheumatoid arthritis		
ketoprofen	Elimination half-life – 2 to 4 hours. Controlled release, the elimination half-life is 5.4 +/- 2.2 hours. The half-life increases in elderly and in patients with decreased creatinine clearances	Fever; Osteoarthritis; Pain, Minor; Pain (Mild to Moderate); Primary impairment al; Rheumatoid arthritis	OA and RA: immediate-release: 150-300 mg/day divided 3-4x; extended-release: 100-200 mg 1x/day	Mild renal impairment(CrCl >25 mL/min) max 150 mg/day; Moderate renal impairment (CrCl <25 mL/min) max 100 mg/day; Geriatric(> 75 yrs) initiate with doses of 75-150 mg/day; Liver disease and serum albumin less than 3.5 g/dL maximum initial dose 100 mg/day
ketorolac	Elimination half-life – 5.6 hours. Elderly – 4.3 to 7.6 hours; Hepatic dysfunction – 1.6 to 7.6 hours; Renal impairment – 3.4 to 18.9 hours Pediatric (4-8yrs) – 6.1 hours	Extraction of cataract – Inflammatory disorder of the eye; Light intolerance – Pain in eye – Refractive keratoplasty; Pain, acute (Moderate to Severe); Seasonal allergic conjunctivitis	Pain, acute (Moderate to Severe); <65 yrs initiate with 20 mg followed by 10 mg every 4-6 hours, max 40 mg/day	Peds: use lowest effective dose for shortest possible duration >65 yrs or weight <50kg or renal mpairment: 10 mg every 4-6 hours as needed, max 40 mg/day
meclofenamate sodium	Elimination half-life : 0.8 – 5.3 hrs	Dysmenorrhea; Menorrhagia; Osteoarthritis; Pain; Rheumatoid arthritis	OA and RA: 200 – 400 mg/day in 3 to 4 equally divided doses, max 400 mg/day	Elderly and renal impairment: lowest effective dose for shortest possible duration
mefenamic acid	Elimination half-life: 2 - 3 hrs	Dysmenorrhea; Pain	Pain (children >14yrs and adults): 500mg initially, followed by 250 mg every 6 hours; use beyond one week is not recommended	Renal impairment: do not use Peds: use not studied
meloxicam	Elimination half-life: 15-20 hrs	Juvenile rheumatoid arthritis, polyarticular - Pauciarticular juvenile rheumatoid arthritis; Osteoarthritis; Rheumatoid arthritis	OA and RA: 7.5 mg 1x/day day, max 15 mg 1x/day	Elderly, renal impairment, liver disease (Child-Pugh Class III): initiate with the lowest recommended dosage, monitor patient closely,
nabumetone	Elimination half-life unknown	Osteoarthritis; Rheumatoid arthritis	OA and RA: initial 1000 mg/day;	Renal impairment and liver disease: monitor closely



<b>Drug and Trade Name</b> (Trade names provided only for drugs under patent.)	<b>Half-life or other relevant pharmacokinetic feature</b>	<b>Labeled indications</b>	<b>Dosing (oral doses)</b>	<b>Dose adjustments for special populations</b>
			maintenance 1000-2000 mg/day divided 1- 2 times	and reduce dosage if necessary
naproxen	Elimination half-life: 12-15 hrs	Ankylosing spondylitis; Bursitis; Fever; Gout, acute; Juvenile rheumatoid arthritis; Osteoarthritis; Pain; Pain, Minor; Primary dysmenorrheal; Rheumatoid arthritis; Tendinitis	OA and RA: 250- 500 mg 2x/day mAX 1500 mg/day for up to 6 months; over- the-counter dosing, do not take longer than 10 days	Juvenile RA: 10 mg/kg/day given in 2 divided doses; Renal impairment and liver disease: monitor patient closely and reduce dosage if necessary
oxaprozin	Elimination half-life: 24-69 hours	Juvenile rheumatoid arthritis; Osteoarthritis; Rheumatoid arthritis	OA and RA: 1200 mg 1x/day, max 1800 mg/day or 26 mg/kg/day	Juvenile RA: 22-31 kg, 600 mg 1x/ day; 32-54 kg, 900 mg 1x/day; >55 kg 1200 mg 1x/day Renal impairment or weight <50kg: initial, 600 mg 1x/day monitor closely
piroxicam	Elimination half-life: 30-86 hrs	Osteoarthritis; Rheumatoid arthritis	OA and RA: 20 mg/day 1x/day or divide and give 2x/day	Renal impairment or liver disease: monitor patient closely and reduce dosage if necessary
rofecoxib (Vioxx®)	Elimination half-life: 17 hrs	Migraine, with or without aura, acute treatment; Osteoarthritis Pain Primary dysmenorrhea Rheumatoid arthritis	OA: 12.5 mg 1x/day, max 25 mg/day RA: 25 mg 1x/day	Hepatic impairment and elderly: lowest possible dose up to 12.5mg/day for hepatic patients Peds: 0.6mg/kg/day to max of 25 mg/day
salsalate	Elimination half-life: 1 hr	Inflammatory disorder of musculoskeletal system, Rheumatic; Osteoarthritis; Rheumatoid arthritis	OA and RA: 3000 mg/day in 2-3 divided doses	Elderly: lower dosages may be required for elderly patients Peds: safety and efficacy not established in pediatric patients
sulindac	Elimination half-life: 7.8 hrs	Bursitis of shoulder - Pain, acute - Shoulder pain; Gouty arthritis, acute; Osteoarthritis; Pain, acute - Shoulder pain – Tendinitis; Rheumatoid arthritis	OA and RA: 150 mg 2x/day max 400 mg/day	Renal impairment and liver disease: monitor closely and reduce dosage if necessary
tolmetin	Elimination half-life: 5 hrs	Juvenile rheumatoid arthritis; Osteoarthritis; Rheumatoid arthritis	OA and RA: initial, 400 mg 3x/day for 1-2 weeks OA and RA:	Renal impairment: initiate with the lowest recommended dosage, monitor closely and reduce dosage if necessary

<b>Drug and Trade Name</b> (Trade names provided only for drugs under patent.)	<b>Half-life or other relevant pharmacokinetic feature</b>	<b>Labeled indications</b>	<b>Dosing (oral doses)</b>	<b>Dose adjustments for special populations</b>
			maintenance, 200-600 mg 3x/day max 1800 mg/day	Juvenile RA: 2 yrs and older- initial, 20 mg/kg/day divided in 3 or 4 doses; maintenance, 15-30 mg/kg/day divided in 3 or 4 doses
topical capsaicin	n/a	Arthritis; Diabetic neuropathy; Postherpetic neuralgia	Arthritis: apply thin film 3-5x/day	Peds (>2 yrs): apply thin film 3-4x/day
valdecoxib (Bextra®)	Elimination half-life: 8-11 hrs	Osteoarthritis; Rheumatoid arthritis; Dysmenorrhoea.	OA and RA: 10 mg 1x/day	Moderate hepatic impairment (Child-Pugh Class B): treat with the lowest possible dosage not exceeding 10 mg with close monitoring. Avoid use in patients with severe liver dysfunction.

## Appendix B. Cyclooxygenase Selectivity of NSAIDs

NSAID	Ratio*
Flurbiprofen	10.27
Ketoprofen	8.16
Fenoprofen	5.14
Tolmetin	3.93
Aspirin	3.12
Oxaprozin	2.52
Naproxen	1.79
Indomethacin	1.78
Ibuprofen	1.69
Ketorolac	1.64
Piroxicam	0.79
Nabumetone	0.64
Etodolac	0.11
Celecoxib	0.11
Meloxicam	0.09
Mefenamic acid	0.08
Diclofenac	0.05
Rofecoxib	0.05
Nimesulide	0.04

\*Expressed as the ratio of the 50% inhibitory concentration of cyclooxygenase-2 to the 50% inhibitory concentration of cyclooxygenase-1 in whole blood. NSAIDs with a ratio of <1 indicate selectivity for cyclooxygenase-2.

Adapted from: Feldman M, McMahon AT. Do cyclooxygenase-2 inhibitors provide benefits similar to those of traditional nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, with less gastrointestinal toxicity? *Annals of Internal Medicine* 2000;132:134-43.

## Appendix C. Comparable NSAID Dose Levels

<b>Non-selective NSAIDs</b>	<b>Low Dose</b>	<b>Medium Dose</b>	<b>High or Max Dose</b>
Diclofenac potassium	50mg bid	50mg tid	50mg qid (in OA/RA only)
Diclofenac sodium	50mg bid	75mg bid	50mg qid or 100mg SR bid (in RA only)
Fenoprofen	200-300mg qid	600mg tid-qid	800mg qid
Flubriprofen	50mg bid	50mg tid-qid	100mg tid
Ibuprofen	400mg tid	600mg tid-qid	800mg qid**
Ketoprofen	25-50mg tid	75mg tid	IR =300mg/day (divide), SR =200mg/day
Naproxen	250mg tid	500mg bid	1250mg/day (divided)
Naproxen sodium	275mg tid	550mg bid	1375mg/day (divided)
Oxaprozin	600mg qd	1200mg qd	1200mg qd
Sulindac	150mg bid	200mg bid	200g bid
Piroxicam	10mg qd	20mg qd	40mg per day (not indicated for OA or RA)
<b>Partially-selective NSAIDs</b>	<b>Low Dose</b>	<b>Medium Dose</b>	<b>High or Max Dose</b>
Etodolac	200mg tid	400mg bid	1200mg max (IR or SR divided doses)
Meloxicam/Mobic	7.5mg qd	7.5mg qd	15mg qd
Nabumetone	1000mg qd	1000mg bid	2000mg/day (qd or divided bid)
<b>Cox-2 inhibitors</b>	<b>Low Dose</b>	<b>Medium Dose</b>	<b>High or Max Dose</b>
Celecoxib/Celebrex	200mg qd	200mg bid	200mg bid
Rofecoxib/Vioxx	12.5mg qd	25mg qd	50mg qd for max of 5 days (acute pain)
Valdecoxib/Bextra	10mg qd	10mg qd	20mg bid (primary dysmenorrhea only)

\*This table does not represent exact or equivalent dosing conversions. It is based on FDA approved dosing ranges and comparative doses from clinical trials.

Source: <http://www.ashp.org/emplibrary/NSAIDsConversiontools.pdf>

## Appendix D. Exact Search Strings

### Ovid MEDLINE® searches (1966 to July Week 3 2005)

#### I. Search Strategy: NSAIDs, focus on efficacy (OA)

- 1 exp OSTEOARTHRITIS/ (26153)
- 2 limit 1 to (humans and english language) (18162)
- 3 celecoxib.mp. (1545)
- 4 choline magnesium trisalicylate.mp. (38)
- 5 DICLOFENAC/ (3399)
- 6 DIFLUNISAL/ (380)
- 7 ETODOLAC/ (284)
- 8 FENOPROFEN/ (257)
- 9 FLURBIPROFEN/ (1184)
- 10 IBUPROFEN/ (4177)
- 11 INDOMETHACIN/ (23527)
- 12 KETOPROFEN/ (1443)
- 13 KETOROLAC/ (723)
- 14 meclofenamate sodium.mp. (51)
- 15 Mefenamic Acid/ (764)
- 16 meloxicam.mp. (522)
- 17 nabumetone.mp. (350)
- 18 NAPROXEN/ (2378)
- 19 oxaprozin.mp. (121)
- 20 PIROXICAM/ (1920)
- 21 salsalate.mp. (74)
- 22 SULINDAC/ (923)
- 23 TOLMETIN/ (1255)
- 24 valdecoxib.mp. (183)
- 25 3 or 4 or 5 or 6 or 7 or 8 or 9 or 10 or 11 or 12 or 13 or 14 or 15 or 16 or 17 or 18 or 19 or 20 or 21 or 22 or 23 or 24 (40472)
- 26 limit 25 to (humans and english language) (17770)
- 27 2 and 26 (1094)
- 28 Comparative Study/ (1202473)
- 29 Cohort Studies/ (57012)
- 30 Randomized Controlled Trials/ (38090)
- 31 27 and (28 or 29 or 30) (532)
- 32 from 31 keep 1-532 (532)

#### II. Search Strategy: NSAIDs, focus on adverse events (OA & RA)

- 1 Arthritis, Rheumatoid/ (53548)
- 2 limit 1 to (humans and english language) (37493)
- 3 celecoxib.mp. (1545)
- 4 choline magnesium trisalicylate.mp. (38)
- 5 \*DICLOFENAC/ae [Adverse Effects] (374)

- 6 \*DIFLUNISAL/ae [Adverse Effects] (27)
- 7 \*ETODOLAC/ae [Adverse Effects] (19)
- 8 \*FENOPROFEN/ae [Adverse Effects] (41)
- 9 \*FLURBIPROFEN/ae [Adverse Effects] (41)
- 10 \*IBUPROFEN/ae [Adverse Effects] (356)
- 11 \*INDOMETHACIN/ae [Adverse Effects] (678)
- 12 \*KETOPROFEN/ae [Adverse Effects] (109)
- 13 \*KETOROLAC/ae [Adverse Effects] (16)
- 14 meclofenamate sodium.mp. (51)
- 15 \*Mefenamic Acid/ae [Adverse Effects] (67)
- 16 meloxicam.mp. (522)
- 17 nabumetone.mp. (350)
- 18 \*NAPROXEN/ae [Adverse Effects] (269)
- 19 oxaprozin.mp. (121)
- 20 \*PIROXICAM/ae [Adverse Effects] (130)
- 21 salsalate.mp. (74)
- 22 \*SULINDAC/ae [Adverse Effects] (116)
- 23 \*TOLMETIN/ae [Adverse Effects] (74)
- 24 valdecoxib.mp. (183)
- 25 3 or 4 or 5 or 6 or 7 or 8 or 9 or 10 or 11 or 12 or 13 or 14 or 15 or 16 or 17 or 18 or 19  
or 20 or 21 or 22 or 23 or 24 (4875)
- 26 limit 25 to (humans and english language) (3433)
- 27 2 and 26 (357)
- 28 Cohort Studies/ (57012)
- 29 Comparative Study/ (1202473)
- 30 Randomized Controlled Trials/ (38090)
- 31 27 and (28 or 29 or 30) (128)
- 32 from 31 keep 1-128 (128)

### III. Search Strategy: Aspirin/acetaminophen

- 1 exp OSTEOARTHRITIS/ (26153)
- 2 limit 1 to (humans and english language) (18162)
- 3 ASPIRIN/ (26642)
- 4 ACETAMINOPHEN/ (8992)
- 5 2 and (3 or 4) (323)
- 6 exp Arthritis, Rheumatoid/ (71858)
- 7 limit 6 to (humans and english language) (50057)
- 8 \*ASPIRIN/ae [Adverse Effects] (2386)
- 9 \*ACETAMINOPHEN/ae [Adverse Effects] (719)
- 10 7 and (8 or 9) (81)
- 11 5 or 10 (400)
- 12 Cohort Studies/ (57012)
- 13 Comparative Study/ (1202473)
- 14 Randomized Controlled Trials/ (38090)
- 15 11 and (12 or 13 or 14) (158)
- 16 from 15 keep 1-158 (158)

#### IV. Search Strategy: Topical analgesics

- 1 exp OSTEOARTHRITIS/ (26153)
- 2 limit 1 to (humans and english language) (18162)
- 3 (topical and capsaicin).mp. [mp=title, original title, abstract, name of substance word, subject heading word] (614)
- 4 (topical and diclofenac).mp. [mp=title, original title, abstract, name of substance word, subject heading word] (356)
- 5 (topical and ibuprofen).mp. [mp=title, original title, abstract, name of substance word, subject heading word] (137)
- 6 (topical and ketoprofen).mp. [mp=title, original title, abstract, name of substance word, subject heading word] (114)
- 7 (topical and salicylate).mp. [mp=title, original title, abstract, name of substance word, subject heading word] (160)
- 8 2 and (3 or 4 or 5 or 6 or 7) (40)
- 9 exp Arthritis, Rheumatoid/ (71858)
- 10 9 and (3 or 4 or 5 or 6 or 7) (11)
- 11 8 or 10 (49)
- 12 from 11 keep 1-49 (49)

#### **CDSR/CRCT searches (through 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2005)**

##### I. Search Strategy: NSAIDs, focus on efficacy (OA)

- 1 exp OSTEOARTHRITIS/ (1546)
- 2 limit 1 to (humans and english language) (1546)
- 3 celecoxib.mp. (219)
- 4 choline magnesium trisalicylate.mp. (29)
- 5 DICLOFENAC/ (878)
- 6 DIFLUNISAL/ (90)
- 7 ETODOLAC/ (70)
- 8 FENOPROFEN/ (35)
- 9 FLURBIPROFEN/ (272)
- 10 IBUPROFEN/ (776)
- 11 INDOMETHACIN/ (1224)
- 12 KETOPROFEN/ (299)
- 13 KETOROLAC/ (279)
- 14 meclufenamate sodium.mp. (37)
- 15 Mefenamic Acid/ (92)
- 16 meloxicam.mp. (133)
- 17 nabumetone.mp. (141)
- 18 NAPROXEN/ (645)
- 19 oxaprozin.mp. (47)
- 20 PIROXICAM/ (447)
- 21 salsalate.mp. (31)
- 22 SULINDAC/ (119)
- 23 TOLMETIN/ (360)
- 24 valdecoxib.mp. (56)

- 25 3 or 4 or 5 or 6 or 7 or 8 or 9 or 10 or 11 or 12 or 13 or 14 or 15 or 16 or 17 or 18 or 19 or 20 or 21 or 22 or 23 or 24 (5040)
- 26 limit 25 to (humans and english language)(5040)
- 27 2 and 26 (555)
- 28 Comparative Study/ (96540)
- 29 Cohort Studies/ (2139)
- 30 Randomized Controlled Trials/ (4538)
- 31 27 and (28 or 29 or 30) (402)

## II. Search Strategy: NSAIDs, focus on adverse events (OA & RA)

- 1 Arthritis, Rheumatoid/ (2385)
- 2 limit 1 to (humans and english language) (2385)
- 3 celecoxib.mp. (219)
- 4 choline magnesium trisalicylate.mp. (29)
- 5 \*DICLOFENAC/ae [Adverse Effects] (39)
- 6 \*DIFLUNISAL/ae [Adverse Effects] (6)
- 7 \*ETODOLAC/ae [Adverse Effects] (3)
- 8 \*FENOPROFEN/ae [Adverse Effects] (2)
- 9 \*FLURBIPROFEN/ae [Adverse Effects] (5)
- 10 \*IBUPROFEN/ae [Adverse Effects] (40)
- 11 \*INDOMETHACIN/ae [Adverse Effects] (61)
- 12 \*KETOPROFEN/ae [Adverse Effects] (9)
- 13 \*KETOROLAC/ae [Adverse Effects] (6)
- 14 meclufenamate sodium.mp. (37)
- 15 \*Mefenamic Acid/ae [Adverse Effects] (0)
- 16 meloxicam.mp. (133)
- 17 nabumetone.mp. (141)
- 18 \*NAPROXEN/ae [Adverse Effects] (62)
- 19 oxaprozin.mp. (47)
- 20 \*PIROXICAM/ae [Adverse Effects] (19)
- 21 salsalate.mp. (31)
- 22 \*SULINDAC/ae [Adverse Effects] (11)
- 23 \*TOLMETIN/ae [Adverse Effects] (0)
- 24 valdecoxib.mp. (56)
- 25 3 or 4 or 5 or 6 or 7 or 8 or 9 or 10 or 11 or 12 or 13 or 14 or 15 or 16 or 17 or 18 or 19 or 20 or 21 or 22 or 23 or 24 (846)
- 26 limit 25 to (humans and english language) [Limit not valid in: CDSR,ACP Journal Club,DARE,CCTR; records were retained] (846)
- 27 2 and 26 (98)
- 28 Cohort Studies/ (2139)
- 29 Comparative Study/ (96540)
- 30 Randomized Controlled Trials/ (4538)
- 31 27 and (28 or 29 or 30) (73)

## III. Search Strategy: Aspirin/acetaminophen

- 1 exp OSTEOARTHRITIS/ (1546)



- 2 limit 1 to (humans and english language) (1546)
- 3 ASPIRIN/ (3028)
- 4 ACETAMINOPHEN/ (1128)
- 5 2 and (3 or 4) (115)
- 6 exp Arthritis, Rheumatoid/ (2730)
- 7 limit 6 to (humans and english language) (2730)
- 8 \*ASPIRIN/ae [Adverse Effects] (271)
- 9 \*ACETAMINOPHEN/ae [Adverse Effects] (32)
- 10 7 and (8 or 9) (10)
- 11 5 or 10 (124)
- 12 Cohort Studies/ (2139)
- 13 Comparative Study/ (96540)
- 14 Randomized Controlled Trials/ (4538)
- 15 11 and (12 or 13 or 14) (90)

#### IV. Search Strategy: Topicals

- 1 exp OSTEOARTHRITIS/ (1546)
- 2 limit 1 to (humans and english language) (1546)
- 3 (topical and capsaicin).mp. [mp=ti, ab, tx, kw, ct, ot, sh, hw] (123)
- 4 (topical and diclofenac).mp. [mp=ti, ab, tx, kw, ct, ot, sh, hw] (199)
- 5 (topical and ibuprofen).mp. [mp=ti, ab, tx, kw, ct, ot, sh, hw] (69)
- 6 (topical and ketoprofen).mp. [mp=ti, ab, tx, kw, ct, ot, sh, hw] (46)
- 7 (topical and salicylate).mp. [mp=ti, ab, tx, kw, ct, ot, sh, hw] (44)
- 8 2 and (3 or 4 or 5 or 6 or 7) (18)
- 9 exp Arthritis, Rheumatoid/ (2730)
- 10 9 and (3 or 4 or 5 or 6 or 7) (6)
- 11 8 or 10 (22)

## Appendix E. Quality Assessment Methods

The methods outlined in this document ensure that the products created in this process are methodologically sound, scientifically defensible, reproducible, and well-documented. This document has been adapted from the Procedure Manual developed by the Methods Work Group of the United States Preventive Services Task Force (version 1.9, September 2001), with additional material from the NHS Centre for Reviews and Dissemination (CRD) report on *Undertaking Systematic Reviews of Research on Effectiveness: CRD's Guidance for Carrying Out or Commissioning Reviews* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2001) and "The Database of Abstracts of Reviews of Effects (DARE)" in *Effectiveness Matters*, vol. 6, issue 2, December 2002, published by the CRD.

All studies or systematic reviews that are included are assessed for quality, and assigned a rating of "good", "fair" or "poor". Studies that have a fatal flaw in one or more criteria are rated poor quality; studies which meet all criteria, are rated good quality; the remainder are rated fair quality. As the "fair quality" category is broad, studies with this rating vary in their strengths and weaknesses: the results of some fair quality studies are *likely* to be valid, while others are only *probably* valid. A "poor quality" trial is not valid—the results are at least as likely to reflect flaws in the study design as the true difference between the compared drugs.

### ***For Controlled Trials:***

#### Assessment of Internal Validity

1. Was the assignment to the treatment groups really random?

Adequate approaches to sequence generation:

Computer-generated random numbers

Random numbers tables

Inferior approaches to sequence generation:

Use of alternation, case record numbers, birth dates or week days

Not reported

2. Was the treatment allocation concealed?

Adequate approaches to concealment of randomization:

Centralized or pharmacy-controlled randomization

Serially-numbered identical containers

On-site computer based system with a randomization sequence that is not readable until allocation

Other approaches sequence to clinicians and patients

Inferior approaches to concealment of randomization:

Use of alternation, case record numbers, birth dates or week days

Open random numbers lists

Serially numbered envelopes (even sealed opaque envelopes can be subject to manipulation)

Not reported

3. Were the groups similar at baseline in terms of prognostic factors?
4. Were the eligibility criteria specified?
5. Were outcome assessors blinded to the treatment allocation?
6. Was the care provider blinded?
7. Was the patient kept unaware of the treatment received?
8. Did the article include an intention-to-treat analysis, or provide the data needed to calculate it (i.e., number assigned to each group, number of subjects who finished in each group, and their results)?
9. Did the study maintain comparable groups?
10. Did the article report attrition, crossovers, adherence, and contamination?
11. Is there important differential loss to followup or overall high loss to followup? (give numbers in each group)

#### Assessment of External Validity (Generalizability)

1. How similar is the population to the population to whom the intervention would be applied?
2. How many patients were recruited?
3. What were the exclusion criteria for recruitment? (Give numbers excluded at each step)
4. What was the funding source and role of funder in the study?
5. Did the control group receive the standard of care?
6. What was the length of followup? (Give numbers at each stage of attrition.)

#### ***For Studies Reporting Complications/Adverse Effects***

#### Assessment of Internal Validity

1. Was the selection of patients for inclusion non-biased (Was any group of patients systematically excluded)?
2. Is there important differential loss to followup or overall high loss to followup? (Give numbers in each group.)
3. Were the events investigated specified and defined?
4. Was there a clear description of the techniques used to identify the events?
5. Was there non-biased and accurate ascertainment of events (independent ascertainment; validation of ascertainment technique)?
6. Were potential confounding variables and risk factors identified and examined using acceptable statistical techniques?
7. Did the duration of followup correlate to reasonable timing for investigated events? (Does it meet the stated threshold?)

#### Assessment of External Validity

1. Was the description of the population adequate?
2. How similar is the population to the population to whom the intervention would be applied?
3. How many patients were recruited?
4. What were the exclusion criteria for recruitment? (Give numbers excluded at each step)
5. What was the funding source and role of funder in the study?

### ***Systematic Reviews:***

1. Is there a clear review question and inclusion/exclusion criteria reported relating to the primary studies?

A good quality review should focus on a well-defined question or set of questions, which ideally will refer to the inclusion/exclusion criteria by which decisions are made on whether to include or exclude primary studies. The criteria should relate to the four components of study design, indications (patient populations), interventions (drugs), and outcomes of interest. In addition, details should be reported relating to the process of decision-making, i.e., how many reviewers were involved, whether the studies were examined independently, and how disagreements between reviewers were resolved.

2. Is there evidence of a substantial effort to search for all relevant research?

This is usually the case if details of electronic database searches and other identification strategies are given. Ideally, details of the search terms used, date and language restrictions should be presented. In addition, descriptions of hand-searching, attempts to identify unpublished material, and any contact with authors, industry, and research institutes should be provided. The appropriateness of the database(s) searched by the authors should also be considered, e.g. if MEDLINE is searched for a review looking at health education, then it is unlikely that all relevant studies will have been located.

3. Is the validity of included studies adequately assessed?

A systematic assessment of the quality of primary studies should include an explanation of the criteria used (e.g., method of randomization, whether outcome assessment was blinded, whether analysis was on an intention-to-treat basis). Authors may use either a published checklist or scale, or one that they have designed specifically for their review. Again, the process relating to the assessment should be explained (i.e. how many reviewers involved, whether the assessment was independent, and how discrepancies between reviewers were resolved).

4. Is sufficient detail of the individual studies presented?

The review should demonstrate that the studies included are suitable to answer the question posed and that a judgement on the appropriateness of the authors' conclusions can be made. If a paper includes a table giving information on the design and results of the individual studies, or includes a narrative description of the studies within the text, this criterion is usually fulfilled. If relevant, the tables or text should include information on study design, sample size in each study group, patient characteristics, description of interventions, settings, outcome measures, follow-up, drop-out rate (withdrawals), effectiveness results and adverse events.

5. Are the primary studies summarized appropriately?

The authors should attempt to synthesize the results from individual studies. In all cases, there should be a narrative summary of results, which may or may not be accompanied by a quantitative summary (meta-analysis).

For reviews that use a meta-analysis, heterogeneity between studies should be assessed using statistical techniques. If heterogeneity is present, the possible reasons (including chance) should be investigated. In addition, the individual evaluations should be weighted in some way (e.g., according to sample size, or inverse of the variance) so that studies that are considered to provide the most reliable data have greater impact on the summary statistic.

Appendix F. Evidence Table1. 01 [1]. Trials of NSAIDs vs NSAIDs

Author year	Subjects	Comparison		Number of subjects*	Duration (weeks)	Aspirin permitted?	Efficacy measures	Withdrawals**		Other outcomes
		Meloxicam (mg)	NSAID (mg)					Meloxicam	NSAID	
Dequeker (SELECT) †	OA hip, knee, hand, or spine	7.5	piroxicam 20	8656	4	unclear	pain, PGA, withdrawals	<u>1.7%</u>	<u>1.6%</u>	No difference
Furst	RA	7.5, 15, 22.5	diclofenac 150	894	12	no	PGA, pain, painful/tender joints, physical functioning	<u>25.7% (7.5 mg);</u> <u>24.5% (15 mg);</u> <u>20.9% (22.5 mg)</u>	<u>14.4%</u>	No differences
Goei The	OA knee	7.5	diclofenac 100	258	6	yes	pain during active movement, PGA, acetaminophen use	<u>3.9%</u>	<u>2.3%</u>	No difference, trend favored meloxicam
Hawkey (MELISSA)	OA hip, knee, hand, or spine	7.5	diclofenac 100	9323	4	unclear	pain, PGA, withdrawals	<b><u>1.7%</u></b>	<b><u>1.0%</u></b>	No difference, trend slightly favored meloxicam
Hosie 1996	OA hip or knee	7.5	diclofenac 100	336	24	unclear	pain, quality of life	<u>4%</u>	<u>4%</u>	No difference
Hosie 1997	OA hip or knee	15	piroxicam 20	455			overall pain, pain on movement, joint stiffness, global efficacy and quality of life			No difference
Linden	OA hip	15	piroxicam 20		6			-	-	No difference
Valat	OA lumbar spine	7.5	diclofenac 100	229	2	unclear	pain on motion	<u>0.0%</u>	<u>0.0%</u>	No difference
Wojtulweski	RA	7.5	naproxen 750	379	24	no	PGA, several others	<b><u>23.6%</u></b>	<b><u>14.4%</u></b>	No difference, trend favored naproxen

\* Excludes subjects randomized to placebo

\*\*If underlined, for lack of efficacy; otherwise for all reasons

†design identical to Hawkey et al

Bold type - statistically significant; OA - osteoarthritis; PGA - patient global assessment; RA - rheumatoid arthritis

Appendix F. Evidence Table1. 01 [1]. Trials of NSAIDs vs NSAIDs

*Internal Validity*

Author Year	Randomization adequate?	Allocation concealment adequate?	Groups similar at baseline?	Eligibility criteria specified?	Outcome assessors masked?	Care provider masked?	Patient masked?	Reporting of attrition, crossovers, adherence, and contamination	Loss to follow-up: differential/high	Intention-to-treat (ITT) analysis
Dequeker (SELECT)	method NR	NR	yes	no	unclear, reported as double-blind	unclear, reported as double-blind	yes	no/no/no/no	no	no
Furst	method NR	NR	yes	yes	unclear, reported as double-blind	unclear, reported as double-blind	unclear, reported as double-blind	no/no/no/no	no	no
Hawkey (MELISSA)	method NR	NR	yes	yes	unclear, reported as double-blind	unclear, reported as double-blind	unclear, reported as double-blind	no/no/no/no	no	unclear, only mean values reported
Hosie 1996	method NR	NR	yes	yes	unclear, reported as double-blind	unclear, reported as double-blind	unclear, reported as double-blind	no/no/no/no	no	yes
Linden	method NR	NR	yes	yes	unclear, reported as double-blind	unclear, reported as double-blind	unclear, reported as double-blind	no/no/no/no	no	no
Valat	method NR	NR	yes	yes	unclear, reported as double-blind	unclear, reported as double-blind	unclear, reported as double-blind	no/no/no/no	no	yes
Wojtulewski	method NR	NR	yes	yes	unclear, reported as double-blind	unclear, reported as double-blind	unclear, reported as double-blind	no/no/no/no	no	yes

Appendix F. Evidence Table1. 01 [1]. Trials of NSAIDs vs NSAIDs

<i>External Validity</i>								
<b>Author Year</b>	<b>Post-randomization exclusions</b>	<b>Quality Rating</b>	<b>Number screened/ eligible/ enrolled</b>	<b>Exclusion criteria</b>	<b>Run-in/ Washout</b>	<b>Class naïve patients only</b>	<b>Control group standard of care</b>	<b>Funding</b>
Dequeker (SELECT)	yes (n=630)	fair	NR/NR/9286	NR	NR/NR	no	NA	Boehringer Ingelheim
Furst	NR	fair	NR/NR/894	NR	NR/12hrs (acetaminophen)	no	yes	Boehringer Ingelheim
Hawkey (MELISSA)	NR	fair	NR/NR/10,051	Active peptic ulcer; hypersensitivity to analgesics, antipyretics or NSAIDs; asthma; nasal polyps; angioneurotic oedema or urticaria following NSAID administration; concomitant anticoagulants; lithium, methotrexate, other NSAIDs or analgesic agents; significant impairment of renal function; severe liver injury; hemotological disorder; pregnant or breastfeeding; any disease which could interfere with the evaluation of efficacy or tolerability/ corticosteroid treatment within 2 mos of study; prior replacement of, trauma to, or infection of evaluated joint; previous participation in this or other clinical study within previous month.	NR/washout 3 days	no	NA	NR
Hosie 1996	NR	fair	NR/NR/336	Pregnant, lactating or of childbearing potential not using contraception; concomitant clinically unstable disease; clinically relevant lab test abnormalities; clinical evidence of peptic ulceration within previous 6 mos; hypersensitivity to analgesics, antipyretics and/or NSAIDs; required or recently received treatment with any drug or procedure that may interact or obscure the action of the study medication.	NR/washout 3 days	no	NA	NR

Appendix F. Evidence Table1. 01 [1]. Trials of NSAIDs vs NSAIDs

<i>External Validity</i>								
<b>Author Year</b>	<b>Post-randomization exclusions</b>	<b>Quality Rating</b>	<b>Number screened/ eligible/ enrolled</b>	<b>Exclusion criteria</b>	<b>Run-in/ Washout</b>	<b>Class naïve patients only</b>	<b>Control group standard of care</b>	<b>Funding</b>
Linden	yes (n=29)	fair	NR/NR/285	NR	NR/washout 3-7 days	no	NA	NR
Valat	no	fair	NR/NR/232	Symptoms of invertebrate disk herniation with pressure on the nerve roots; former surgery, fracture or trauma in the area of the lumbar spine; severe cardiac, hepatic, renal, hematological or metabolic disease, cancer of mental disturbance; any disease that could potentially interfere with the evaluation of safety or efficacy; treatment of the current lumbar spine osteoarthritis flare with other NSAIDs (without appropriate washout) muscle relaxants or physical therapy; previous concomitant treatment with corticosteroids or with more than 4g/day acetaminophen; evidence of peptic ulcer during the previous 6 mos; bronchial asthma inducible by NSAIDs; known hypersensitivity to analgesics; pregnant or lactating women and women of child-bearing potential who were not using adequate contraception.	NR/washout 3-7 days	no	NA	NR
Wojtulewski	NR	fair	NR/NR/379	Previous participation in meloxicam trial; clinical evidence of peptic ulceration; presence of any other rheumatological or non-rheumatological disease which would interfere with the evaluation of efficacy and safety.	NR/washout 3-11 days	no	NA	NR



Appendix F. Evidence Table 02[1]. Trials of celecoxib vs NSAIDs

Author year	Subjects	Celecoxib doses (mg)	NSAIDs (mg)	Number of subjects*	Duration (weeks)	Aspirin permitted?	Efficacy measures	Results
Bensen/Zhao	OA of the knee with flare	50, 100, or 200 bid	naproxen 500 bid	1004	12	Yes	PGA, WOMAC, withdrawals	No difference
Goldstein	OA and RA with no ulcer on EGD; many had a history of GI disease	200 bid	naproxen 500 bid	537	12	Yes	PGA, withdrawals	No difference
Kivitz	OA	100-400 mg daily	naproxen 1000 mg daily	1061	12	Yes	PGA, WOMAC	No difference
McKenna	OA of the knee with flare	100 bid	diclofenac 50 tid	400	6	Yes	Index joint pain, WOMAC	No difference
Silverstein (CLASS)	OA and RA	400 bid	ibuprofen 800 tid or diclofenac 75 bid	7968	24	Yes	No efficacy measures reported except withdrawal	Not reported

\*Excludes subjects randomized to placebo

PGA - patient global assessment; WOMAC - Western Ontario and McMaster Universities Osteoarthritis Index; OA - osteoarthritis;

RA -rheumatoid arthritis; EGD - esophagogastroduodenoscopy; GI - gastrointestinal

Appendix F. Evidence Table 02[1]. Trials of celecoxib vs NSAIDs

<i>Internal Validity</i>										
<b>Author</b>	<b>Randomization adequate?</b>	<b>Allocation concealment adequate?</b>	<b>Groups similar at baseline?</b>	<b>Eligibility criteria specified?</b>	<b>Outcome assessors masked?</b>	<b>Care provider masked?</b>	<b>Patient masked?</b>	<b>Reporting of attrition, crossovers, adherence, and contamination</b>	<b>Loss to follow-up: differential/high</b>	<b>Intention-to-treat (ITT) analysis</b>
Bensen/Zhao	method NR	NR	yes	yes	NR	NR	NR	no/no/no/no	no	yes
Goldstein	yes	NR	yes	yes	NR	NR	NR	no/no/no/no	no	yes
Kivitz	yes	NR	yes	yes	unclear, reported as "double-masked"	unclear, reported as "double-masked"	yes	no/no/no/no	no	yes
McKenna (pooled analysis of three trials)	method NR	NR	yes	yes	NR	NR	NR	no/no/no/no	no	yes
Silverstein (CLASS)	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	unclear	yes	no/no/no/no	no	no

Appendix F. Evidence Table 02[1]. Trials of celecoxib vs NSAIDs

<i>External Validity</i>								
<b>Author</b>	<b>Post-randomization exclusions</b>	<b>Quality Rating</b>	<b>Number screened/ eligible/ enrolled</b>	<b>Exclusion criteria</b>	<b>Run-in/ Washout</b>	<b>Class naïve patients only</b>	<b>Control group standard of care</b>	<b>Funding</b>
Bensen/Zhao	no	fair	NR/NR/1003	Concomitant GI, renal hepatic or coagulation disorder; malignancy; esophageal or gastroduodenal ulceration w/in 30 days; inflammatory arthritis, gout acute trauma of the knee; known hypersensitivity to NSAIDs or sulfonamides.	run-in NR/2-7day washout	no	NA	GD Searle
Goldstein	no	fair	NR/NR/537	Inflammatory arthritis other than OA/RA; gout; GI disease; upper GI ulceration within 30 days of study; naproxen use within 30 days of study; endoscopically confirmed ulcer (>= 3mm)	run-in NR/1-7day washout	no	NA	GD Searle; Pfizer
Kivitz	yes (n=1)	good	NR/NR/1061	Pregnancy; oral, intramuscular, intra-articular, or soft-tissue injections of corticosteroids within 4 wks of study; know hypersensitivity to COX-2s, sulfonamides or NSAIDs; any other investigational medication within 30 days of study; any NSAID or analgesic use within 48 hrs of baseline assessment; concomitant GI, renal, hepatic or coagulation disorder; malignancy within 5 years; esophageal/GI ulceration within 30 days; inflammatory arthritis; gout; acute joint trauma at hip; anticipated need for surgery during study period.	run-in NR/ 2-4 day washout	no	NA	Pharmacia; Pfizer
McKenna (pooled analysis of three trials)	no	fair	NR/NR/1940	Recent treatment with disease-modifying drugs, oral corticosteroids or corticosteroid injections; presence of other rheumatic condition; acute trauma of the joints, peptic ulceration, GI bleeding, inflammatory bowel disease, renal or hepatic failure, significant coagulation defect; malignancy.	NR/NR	no	NA	NR (Pharmacia?)
Silverstein (CLASS)	yes (n=89)	good	NR/NR/8059	Active GI, renal hepatic or coagulation disorder; malignancy within 5 yrs; esophageal or gastroduodenal ulceration within 30 days of study; know hypersensitivity to COX-2s, sulfonamides, ibuprofen or diclofenac; pregnant or lactating.	NR/NR	no	NA	Pharmacia

Evidence Table 03[1]. Trials of rofecoxib vs NSAIDs

Author year	Subjects	Comparison		Number of subjects*	Duration (weeks)
		Rofecoxib dose (mg)	NSAIDs (mg)		
Acevado	OA, negative FOBT	12.5	diclofenac 50/misoprostol 200 mcg bid	483	6
Bombardier (VIGOR)	RA, negative FOBT	50	naproxen 500 bid	8076	52
Cannon (035)	OA of knee or hip and flare (for NSAID users) or acetaminophen user.	12.5, 25	diclofenac 50 tid	784	52
Chrubasik	Low back pain	12.5	Assalix 1 qid †	228	4
Day	OA of knee or hip and flare (for NSAID users) or acetaminophen user.	12.5, 25	ibuprofen 800 tid	735	6
Geusens 2002	RA	25, 50	naproxen 500 bid	1023	12
Hawkey	OA with no ulcer on EGD	25, 50	ibuprofen 800 tid	581	24
Kivitz 2004	OA of knee	12.5	nabumetone 1000	1042	6
Laine	OA with no ulcer or esophagitis on EGD	25, 50	ibuprofen 800 tid	565	24
Lisse	OA of the knee, hip, hand, or spine	25	naproxen 500 tid	5557	12
Mylykangas-Luosujarvi	OA of knee or hip	12.5	naproxen 500 bid	944	6
Niccoli	OA of the hand, hip or knee	25	diclofenac 50 mg tid	90	2
Saag	OA of knee or hip and flare (for NSAID users) or acetaminophen user. Excluded aspirin 81mg users.	12.5, 25	ibuprofen 800 tid	667	6
Saag	OA of knee or hip and flare (for NSAID users) or acetaminophen user. Excluded aspirin 81mg users.	12.5, 25	diclofenac 50 tid	693	52
Truitt	OA of knee or hip	12.5, 25	nambumetone 1500 qd	341	6

Appendix F. Evidence Table 03[1]. Trials of rofecoxib vs NSAIDs

Author year	Aspirin permitted?	Efficacy measures	Withdrawals**		Outcomes
			Rofecoxib dose (mg)	NSAIDs (mg)	
Acevado	No	PGA	7%	10.80%	No difference
Bombardier (VIGOR)	No	PGA	<u>6.30%</u>	<u>6.50%</u>	No difference
Cannon (035)	No	WOMAC, PGA, pain while walking	<u>13.9% (12.5 mg)</u> <u>21.8% (25 mg)</u>	<u>16%</u>	Trend favoring diclofenac for 2 of 3 primary measures
Chrubasik	Yes	Pain	21%	18.0%	No difference
Day	No	WOMAC, PGA, pain while walking	<u>3.5% (12.5 mg)</u> <u>2.8% (25 mg)</u>	<u>3%</u>	No difference in 3 primary endpoints, but trend favored rofecoxib 25 mg for 2 of the 3.
Geusens 2002	No	Pain	nr	nr	No difference
Hawkey	No	PGA	<u>3% (12.5 mg)</u> <u>1.6% (25 mg)</u>	<u>5%</u>	No difference
Kivitz 2004	Yes	PGART, WOMAC, SF-36	17.50%	20.7%	Rofecoxib superior for PGART, WOMAC, and
Laine	No	PGA	<u>3% (12.5 mg)</u> <u>2.1% (25 mg)</u>	4.9%	No difference
Lisse	No	PGA, SF-36	11.30%	12.9%	No difference
Myllykangas-Luosujarvi	No	PGA, WOMAC	27.20%	28.4%	No difference
Niccoli	nr	PGA, pain	nr	nr	No difference
Saag	No	WOMAC, PGA, pain while walking	<u>7.8% (12.5 mg)</u> <u>4.0% (25 mg)</u>	8.6%	No difference
Saag	No	WOMAC, PGA, pain while walking	<u>12.1% (12.5 mg)</u> <u>11.2% (25 mg)</u>	7.0%	No difference
Truitt	No	PGA, WOMAC	1.7% (12.5 mg) 0% (25 mg)	1.7%	No differences

OA - osteoarthritis; FOBT - fecal occult blood test; PGA - patient global assessment; PGART Patient Global Response to Therapy Questionnaire  
WOMAC - Western Ontario and McMaster Universities Osteoarthritis Index; EGD - esophagogastroduodenoscopy; RA - rheumatoid arthritis

\* Excludes subjects randomized to placebo

\*\* If underlined, for lack of efficacy; otherwise, for all reasons

† Willow bark extract containing 15% salicin, total dose 240mg of salicin a day

Appendix F. Evidence Table 03[1]. Trials of rofecoxib vs NSAIDs

<i>Internal Validity</i>										
Author Year	Randomization adequate?	Allocation concealment adequate?	Groups similar at baseline?	Eligibility criteria specified?	Outcome assessors masked?	Care provider masked?	Patient masked?	Reporting of attrition, crossovers, adherence, and contamination	Loss to follow-up: differential/high	Intention-to-treat (ITT) analysis
Acevado	yes	yes	yes	yes	NR	NR	yes	no/no/no/no	no	yes
Bombardier (VIGOR)	method NR	NR	yes	yes	NR	NR	NR	no/no/no/no	no	no
Cannon (035)	yes	NR	yes	yes	NR	NR	NR	no/no/no/no	448/784 (57.1%) completed study - although no SS differences among the study groups in withdrawal rates	yes
Chrubasik	yes	NA	yes	yes	NA	NA	NA	no/no/no/no	no	no
Day	yes	yes	yes (placebo group smaller in number with similar characteristics)	yes	NR	NR	yes	no/no/no/no	no	unclear; mean % changes reported only
Geusens 2002	method NR	unclear - stratified according to concomitant corticosteroid use	yes (naproxen group smaller than placebo and rofecoxib groups: 114 vs 289/306/286)	yes	NR	NR	NR	no/no/no/no	no	no
Hawkey	method NR	allocation stratified by the presence or absence of history of GI events	yes	yes	NR	NR	yes	no/no/no/no	no	no

Appendix F. Evidence Table 03[1]. Trials of rofecoxib vs NSAIDs

<i>Internal Validity</i>										
Author Year	Randomization adequate?	Allocation concealment adequate?	Groups similar at baseline?	Eligibility criteria specified?	Outcome assessors masked?	Care provider masked?	Patient masked?	Reporting of attrition, crossovers, adherence, and contamination	Loss to follow-up: differential/high	Intention-to-treat (ITT) analysis
Kivitz 2004	method NR	NR	yes	yes	NR	NR	yes	no/no/no/no	no	unclear for efficacy; yes for safety
Laine	method NR	allocation stratified by the presence or absence of history of GI events	yes	yes	yes	NR	yes	no/no/no/no	no	no
Lisse	yes	yes	yes	yes	NR	NR	yes	no/no/no/no	no	no
Myllykangas-Luosujarvi	yes	NR	yes	yes	NR	NR	yes	no/no/no/no	no	unclear; only mean percentages reported
Niccoli	method NR	NR	yes	yes	NR	NR	NR	no/no/no/no	no	unclear; only mean values reported
Saag (2 studies)	yes	yes	yes	yes	NR	NR	yes	no/no/no/no	no	no for efficacy, yes for safety

Appendix F. Evidence Table 03[1]. Trials of rofecoxib vs NSAIDs

<i>External Validity</i>								
<b>Author Year</b>	<b>Post-randomization exclusions</b>	<b>Quality Rating</b>	<b>Number screened/ eligible/ enrolled</b>	<b>Exclusion criteria</b>	<b>Run-in/ Washout</b>	<b>Class naïve patients only</b>	<b>Control group standard of care</b>	<b>Funding</b>
Acevado	NR	good	NR/NR/483	Inflammatory or post-traumatic arthritis; GI associated diarrhea; infectious disease; malabsorption; uncontrolled diabetes or other serious conditions; bleeding disorder; allergic to NSAIDs/paracetamo; positive test for fecal occult blood; previous use of misoprostol; regular aspirin users; users of corticosteroids; history of sustained use of GI medication.	NR	no	NA	Merck Research Labs
Bombardier (VIGOR)	NR	fair	9539/NR/8076	History of inflammatory arthritis other than RA; upper GI surgery or inflammatory; estimated creatinine clearance of 30 ml or less/minute; an unstable medical condition; history of cancer or alcohol or drug abuse within five years of study; history of cerebrovascular events within two years of study; history of MI or coronary bypass in year before study; morbid obesity; patients who required or who had been receiving any of the following drugs: aspirin, ticlopidine, anticoagulants, cyclosporine, misprostol, sucralfate, PPIs, histamine H2-receptor agonists.	3-14 day NSAID washout	no	NA	Merck Research Labs



Appendix F. Evidence Table 03[1]. Trials of rofecoxib vs NSAIDs

<i>External Validity</i>								
<b>Author Year</b>	<b>Post-randomization exclusions</b>	<b>Quality Rating</b>	<b>Number screened/ eligible/ enrolled</b>	<b>Exclusion criteria</b>	<b>Run-in/ Washout</b>	<b>Class naïve patients only</b>	<b>Control group standard of care</b>	<b>Funding</b>
Cannon (035)	NR	fair	1,128/NR/784	Pregnancy or menopausal; significant renal impairment; clinically significant abnormalities on physical or lab exams at baseline; positive results on fecal occult blood test; class III/IV angina or uncontrolled CHF, uncontrolled hypertension, stroke or transient ischemic attack within 2 yrs of study; active hepatic disease; recent neoplastic disease; allergy to acetaminophen or NSAIDs; required use of aspirin, corticosteroids, warfarin, ticlopidine.	NR	no	NA	Merck Research Labs
Chrubasik	NR	fair	NR/NR/228	Any recent trauma; age >50 or <20; history of cancer or risk factors for spinal infection; unexplained weight loss or recent fever or chills; pain exacerbation when supine; severe nocturnal pain; perineal anesthesia; bladder dysfunction; severe or progressive neurological deficit in a lower extremity.	none	no	NA	NR
Day	yes (n=14)	fair	1023/NR/809	Significant renal impairment; clinically significant abnormal results of physical exam or lab screening; positive fecal occult blood test; malabsorption; class III/IV angina or CHF; uncontrolled hypertension; stroke or transient ischemic attack within 2 yrs of study; recent neoplastic disease; allergy of acetaminophen or NSAIDs; required use of aspirin, corticosteroids, warfarin sodium, ticlopidine.	yes - varied depending on NSAID use	no	yes	Merck & Co

Appendix F. Evidence Table 03[1]. Trials of rofecoxib vs NSAIDs

<i>External Validity</i>								
<b>Author Year</b>	<b>Post-randomization exclusions</b>	<b>Quality Rating</b>	<b>Number screened/ eligible/ enrolled</b>	<b>Exclusion criteria</b>	<b>Run-in/ Washout</b>	<b>Class naïve patients only</b>	<b>Control group standard of care</b>	<b>Funding</b>
Geusens 2002	yes (n=35)	fair/poor	1344/NR/1023	Presence of: systemic lupus, spondylarthropathy, polymyalgia rheumatica, gout, Paget's disease, active GI bleeding or ulceration, fecal occult blood, uncontrolled diabetes, MI, angioplasty, coronary bypass surgery within one year, stroke within 2 yrs, active hepatitis, malignancy, hepatic abnormalities, allergy to acetaminophen, aspirin, NSAIDs.	NR	no	yes	Merck Research Labs
Hawkey	NR	fair	1045/NR/775	Previous upper GI surgery; inflammatory bowel disease; elevated creatinine levels; fecal occult blood; unstable medical disease; malignancy within 5 yrs, pregnancy; CV events within 2 yrs; bleeding diathesis; anticoagulant therapy; use of corticosteroids, ticlopidine or aspirin.	2 wks NSAIDs	no	yes	Merck Research Labs
Kivitz 2004	no	fair	1495/NR/1042	Concurrent medical /arthritic disease; use of corticosteroids, misoprostol, sucralfate, histamine blockers, antacids, PPIs, analgesics, warfarin, ticlopidine, high-dose aspirin, appetite suppressants, other meds for chronic diseases.	yes - varied depending on NSAID use	no	yes	Merck & Co
Laine	no	fair/poor	1102/NR/742	Previous upper GI surgery; inflammatory bowel disease; elevated creatinine levels; fecal occult blood; unstable medical disease; malignancy within 5 yrs; CV events within 2 yrs; bleeding diathesis; anticoagulant therapy; use of corticosteroids, ticlopidine or aspirin.	2 wks NSAIDs	no	yes	Merck & Co
Lisse	yes (n=29)	fair	6018/NR/5557	Existence of potentially confounding concurrent disease (based on investigator opinion)	NR	no	NA	Merck & Co

Appendix F. Evidence Table 03[1]. Trials of rofecoxib vs NSAIDs

<i>External Validity</i>								
<b>Author Year</b>	<b>Post-randomization exclusions</b>	<b>Quality Rating</b>	<b>Number screened/ eligible/ enrolled</b>	<b>Exclusion criteria</b>	<b>Run-in/ Washout</b>	<b>Class naïve patients only</b>	<b>Control group standard of care</b>	<b>Funding</b>
Myllykangas-Luosujarvi	no	fair	1189/NR/944	Inflammatory or post-traumatic arthritis; uncontrolled diabetes or hypertension; angina or CHF; malabsorption; morbid obesity; history of inherited bleeding disorder; elevated creatinine levels; positive test for fecal occult blood; use of corticosteroids, misoprostol, H2 blockers, antacids, PPIs, warfarin, ticlopidine, aspirin >100 mg/day or low-dose aspirin for cardioprophylaxis; history of ulcer or upper GI bleeding.	yes - length NR	no	NA	Merck & Co
Niccoli	no	fair	96/NR/90	Patients who appeared unreliable/uncooperative; severe CV, hepatic or renal disorders; GI bleeding or peptic ulcer; history of hypersensitivity to NSAIDs; concomitant drugs use such as antihistamines, antibiotics, other NSAIDs, corticosteroids, mucolytics, anticoagulants, antiplatelets or other potentially nephrotoxic drugs; pregnant or lactating; previous abnormalities in renal function.	NR	no	NA	NR
Saag (2 studies)	no	good	2065/NR/1429	Use of corticosteroids, topical analgesics, low-dose aspirin, regular antacid, H2 blocker, PPIs, warfarin, or ticlopidine; significant renal impairment; active GI bleeding; GI malabsorption syndrome; class III/IV angina or CHF; uncontrolled hypertension; stroke; transient ischemic attack; active hepatic disease; allergy to acetaminophen or NSAIDs.	NR	no	NA	Merck & Co

Evidence Table 04[1]. VIGOR vs CLASS Trials

<b>a) Evidence table</b>								
<b>Trial</b>	<b>Sites</b>	<b>Patients</b>	<b>Aspirin use</b>	<b>Definition of significant GI events</b>	<b>Number screened/enrolled</b>	<b>Number analyzed</b>	<b>Withdrew for lack of efficacy (Coxib group / NSAID groups)*</b>	
VIGOR (rofecoxib 50mg qd)	301 centers, 22 countries	RA, over 50	Not allowed	Perforation, obstruction, upper GI bleeding, or symptomatic ulcer	9539/8076	8076	6.3% / 6.5%	
CLASS (celecoxib 400mg bid)	386 centers, US and Canada	RA or OA, 18 or older	20%	Perforation, obstruction, upper GI bleeding	9764/8059	7968	12.6% / 14.8%	
* In VIGOR, there was no difference								
<b>b) Comparison of outcomes</b>								
	<b>VIGOR NSAID group**</b>	<b>CLASS NSAID group†</b>	<b>VIGOR NNT</b>	<b>CLASS NNT †</b>				
ulcers	0.030	0.011	62	265				
perforation	0.001	0.000	no effect	no effect				
obstruction	0.000	0.000	no effect	no effect				
bleeding from an ulcer	0.008	0.008	268	199				
Complicated confirmed UGI events	0.009	0.008	191	199				

RA - rheumatoid arthritis; GI - gastrointestinal; OA - osteoarthritis; NNT - number needed to treat; UGI - upper gastrointestinal

\*\*average 9 months of followup

† adjusted to replicate 9 months of followup

Evidence Table 05[1]. GI Safety in observational studies

Author, Year Sample size	Population	Duration (days)	Celecoxib mean dose (mg)	Rofecoxib mean dose (mg)	NSAIDs dose (mg)	Aspirin permitted	Outcome
Garcia-Rodriguez 2001 UK General Practice Research Database Cases: 2,105	Patients with codes for upper GI complications	Mean NR	n/a	n/a	Dosage NR	NR	Codes for upper GI complications (bleed/perforation in stomach or duodenum; clinical diagnosis of peptic ulcer with referral to consultant or admitteospd to a hital); Adjusted relative risk (95% CI)
Hippisley-Cox 2005 Case-control QRESEARCH database (8/1/00- 7/31/04) Cases: 9407	Aged ≥ 25 with first ever upper GI event and ≥ 3 yrs of recorded medical data	Unclear	NR	NR	(A) Selective NSAIDs (B) Ibuprofen (C) Diclofenac (D) Naproxen (E) Non- selective	NR	Complicated GI event (those involving hemorrhage, perforation, or surgery): Adjusted Odds Ratio (95% CI)
Kasliwal 2006National Health Service prescription data (England)Rofe coxib n=15,268Celec oxib n=17,458	Patients for whom a completed questionnaire was returned among GP- dispensed prescriptions for rofecoxib between July and November 1999 (mean age=62.5 years) and for celecoxib between May and December 2000 (mean age=62.2 years)	Events occurring whilst taking drug or within 7 days of stopping drug during 9 months since start of treatment; when not known if patient was taking drug at the time of the event, only those events that had occurred within 30 days after treatment was started were included	NR	NR	n/a	Aspirin and antiplatelet/antico agulant agentsRofecoxib =35.3%Celecoxi b=21.9%p<0.000 1	Complicated upper GI conditions (perforations/bleeding)

Appendix F. Evidence Table 05[1]. GI Safety in observational studies

Author, Year Sample size	Population	Duration (days)	Celecoxib mean dose (mg)	Rofecoxib mean dose (mg)	NSAIDs dose (mg)	Aspirin permitted	Outcome
Laporte 2004Hospitals in Spain and ItalyCases=2,8 13	Patients aged > 18 years admitted with primary diagnosis of acute upper GI bleeding	NR	n/a	NR	(A) Diclofenac(B) Ibuprofen(C) Indomethacin( D) Ketoprofen(E) Ketorolac(F) Meloxicam(G) Naproxen(H) Nimesulide(I) Piroxicam	NR	Upper GI bleeding (odds ratio, 95% CI)
Layton 2003a National Health Service prescription data n=34,355	Patients exposed to meloxicam between 12/1996 and 3/1997 (mean age=60.4 yrs) and rofecoxib between 5/2000 and 12/2000 (mean age 62.5)	270	n/a	NR	Meloxicam	NR	Complicated upper GI conditions (perforations/bleeding) (Adjusted Rate Ratio, 95% CI)
Layton 2003aNational Health Service prescription data n=36,545	Patients exposed to meloxicam between 12/1996 and 3/1997 (mean age=60.4 yrs) and celecoxib between 5/2000 and 12/2000 (mean age 62.2)	264	≤ 200 mg taken by 83.9% pts with complicated upper GI events	n/a	Meloxicam	NR	Perforations/bleeding
Mamdani 2002 Cohort Ontario healthcare administrative database n=143,969	Aged ≥ 66 (mean=75.7), NSAID- naïve	141	NR >200 mg: 19%	NR >25 mg: 8%	Nonselective NSAIDs Diclofenac+mi soprostol	13.50%	Upper GI hemorrhage (adjusted risk ratio, 95% CI, NNH)

Appendix F. Evidence Table 05[1]. GI Safety in observational studies

Author, Year Sample size	Population	Duration (days)	Celecoxib mean dose (mg)	Rofecoxib mean dose (mg)	NSAIDs dose (mg)	Aspirin permitted	Outcome
Mann 2004 43 long-term care and assisted living facilities receiving consultative pharmacy services by Cornerstone Pharmacy Services n=1,198	Use of NSAID or COX-2 inhibitor therapy from 1/2002- 2/2003; mean age=81.2	352	NR	NR	(A) Ibuprofen(B) Naproxen(C) Nabumetone(D) ) Meloxicam(E) Salsalate	26.2% patients	Hospitalization due to GI bleed
Norgard 2004 County Hospital Discharge Registry of North Jutland County/Pharm aco- Epidemiologica l Prescription Database of North Jutland Cases: 780	First incident cases of upper gastrointestinal bleeding in patients with previous upper gastrointestinal disorders	Mean NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	First incident upper gastrointestinal bleeding (adjusted odds ratio)
Weideman 2004 Dallas Veterans Affairs Medical Center N=16,286	Patients who received naroxen or etodolac between 1/1/99 and 12/31/01; mean age=56.4 years; 89.5% male	NR	n/a	n/a	(A) Etodolac ≥ 800 mg (average=885 mg) (B) Naproxen ≥ 1000 mg (average=1054 mg)	≤ 325 mg	Clinically significant upper GI event (perforation, obstruction, bleeding, symptomatic ulcer) (Adjusted odds ratio; 95% CI)

Appendix F. Evidence Table 05[1]. GI Safety in observational studies

Author, Year Sample Size	Reference comparison	Celecoxib	Rofecoxib	NSAIDs	Subgroup information?	Notes
Garcia-Rodriguez 2001 UK General Practice Research Database Cases: 2,105	Nonuse	n/a	n/a	Etodolac: 2.2 (0.4-11.3) Ibuprofen: 2.5 (1.9, 3.4) Ketoprofen: 3.3 (1.9, 5.9) Nabumetone: 3.4 (1.1, 10.6) Tenoxicam: 3.4 (0.9, 13.1) Meloxicam: 3.8 (0.8, 17.2) Naproxen: 4.0 (2.8, 5.8) Diclofenac: 4.6 (3.6, 5.8) Flurbiprofen: 4.6 (2.0, 10.9) Indomethacin: 5.2 (3.2, 8.3) Piroxicam: 6.2 (3.7, 10.1)	Dose: All individual NSAIDs presented an RR < 4 when administered at low/medium doses and a greater RR with increasing dose	Etodolac, nabumetone, meloxicam: risk estimates compatible with average NSAID; data were scarce and this resulted in wide CI's
Hippisley-Cox 2005 Case-control QRESEARCH database (8/1/00-7/31/04) Cases: 9407	No NSAID use	1.25 (0.91, 1.72)	1.79 (1.42, 2.26)	(A) 1.72 (1.29, 2.29) (B) 1.58 (1.37, 1.83) (C) 2.07 (1.82, 2.35) (D) 1.97 (1.48, 2.61)	<u>Rofecoxib</u> Aspirin use: 2.98 (2.24, 3.99) No aspirin use: 1.22 (0.97, 1.54)	# pts taking celecoxib was low



Appendix F. Evidence Table 05[1]. GI Safety in observational studies

Author, Year Sample Size	Reference comparison	Celecoxib	Rofecoxib	NSAIDs	Subgroup information?	Notes
Kasliwal 2006 National Health Service prescription data (England) Rofecoxib n=15,268 Celecoxib n=17,458	Celecoxib	n/a	RR (95% CI) Crude: 1.52 (1.02, 2.27) Adjusted for age, age <sup>2</sup> and sex: 1.58 (0.96, 2.58) Adjusted for NSAIDs prescribed within 3 months before starting coxib: 1.55 (1.02, 2.38) Adjusted for age, age <sup>2</sup> , sex, NSAIDs prescribed within 3 months before starting coxib: 1.60 (0.95, 2.70)	n/a	Increased risk of bleeding with age and use of concomitant drugs that increase risk of bleeding	
Laporte 2004 Hospitals in Spain and Italy Cases=2,813	Nonuse	n/a	7.2 (2.3, 23.0)	(A) 3.7 (2.6, 5.4) (B) 3.1 (2.0, 4.9) (C) 10.0 (4.4, 22.6) (D) 10.0 (3.9, 25.8) (E) 24.7 (8.0, 77.0) (F) 5.7 (2.2, 15.0) (G) 10.0 (5.7, 17.6) (H) 3.2 (1.9, 5.6) (I) 15.5 (10.0, 24.2)	Risk increased with dose, history of peptic ulcer and/or upper GI bleeding, and use of antiplatelet drugs	Excluded patients on anticoagulants
Layton 2003a National Health Service prescription data n=34,355	Meloxicam	n/a	0.91 (0.59, 1.42)	n/a	Significant association with age, but not sex or past medical history of upper GI problems	

Appendix F. Evidence Table 05[1]. GI Safety in observational studies

Author, Year Sample Size	Reference comparison	Celecoxib	Rofecoxib	NSAIDs	Subgroup information?	Notes
Layton 2003a National Health Service prescription data n=36,545	Meloxicam	Adjusted RR=0.56, 95% CI 0.32, 0.96	n/a	n/a		
Mamdani 2002 Cohort Ontario healthcare administrative database n=143,969	(A) Treatment vs nonuse (B) Nonselective NSAIDs vs COX-2 (C) Diclofenac+misoprostol vs COX-2 (D) Rofecoxib vs celecoxib	(A) 1.0 (0.7, 1.6) (B) 4.4 (2.3, 8.5) (C) 3.2 (1.6, 6.5)	(A) 1.9 (1.3, 2.8); NNH=1389 (B) 1.9 (1.0, 3.5) (C) 1.4 (0.7, 2.7) (D) vs celecoxib 1.9 (1.2, 2.8)	Nonselective NSAIDs vs nonuse: 4.0 (2.3, 6.9); NNH=403 Diclofenac+misoprostol vs nonuse 3.0 (1.7, 5.5); NNH=592	Age, gender, and history of GI hemorrhage had no effect	Has income, previous GI hemorrhage info
Mann 2004 443 long-term care and assisted living facilities receiving consultative pharmacy services by Cornerstone Pharmacy Services n=1,198	None - crude rates only	6/679 (0.9%)	6/279 (2.2%)	(A) 0 (B) 5/63 (7.9%) (C) 1/22 (4.5%) (D) 0 (E) Salsalate (1/17 (5.6%))		% patients: Anticoagulant use=11.3% Cigarette smoking=4.6% Poor quality; no adjustment for baseline differences
Norgard 2004 County Hospital Discharge Registry of North Jutland County/Pharmaco-Epidemiological Prescription Database of North Jutland Cases: 780	Nonuse	1.3 (0.7, 2.8)	2.1 (1.2, 3.5)	"Other NSAIDs": 3.3 (2.4, 4.4)	Rofecoxib associated with significantly higher risk of GI bleed in men (OR 2.1; 95% CI 1.0, 4.6), but not women (OR 2.0; 95% CI 0.9, 4.4)	

Appendix F. Evidence Table 05[1]. GI Safety in observational studies

Author, Year Sample Size	Reference comparison	Celecoxib	Rofecoxib	NSAIDs	Subgroup information?	Notes
Weideman 2004 Dallas Veterans Affairs Medical Center N=16,286	n/a	n/a	n/a	Etodolac vs Naproxen: <u>Not taking aspirin</u> All: 0.24 (95% CI 0.09, 0.63) NSAID-naïve: 0.18 (0.05, 0.61) <u>Taking aspirin</u> All: 0.75 (0.28, 1.99) NSAID-naïve: 1.24 (0.35-4.42)	See previous cell	

Appendix F. Evidence Table 06[1]. CV Safety in observational studies

Author, Year Data source Sample size	Population	Exposure (days)	Celecoxib dose (mg)	Rofecoxib dose (mg)	Other NSAIDs dose (mg)	Aspirin permitted	Outcome
Andersohn 2006 UK General Practice Research Database (GPRD) Cases=3,643	Diagnosis of AMI, death from AMI, or sudden death from coronary heart disease (CHD); aged $\geq 40$ years; $\geq 1$ NSAID prescription between June 1, 2000 and October 31, 2004; with a practice with ensured quality standards of data recording for $\geq 1$ year	Average=542 days; exposure defined as quantity of prescribed tablets by the number of tablets to be taken daily; "current"=NSAID prescription lasting into 14-day period before index date; "recent" = supply ended 15-183 days before index date; "past" = supply ended between 184 days and 1 year before index	Mean NR	Mean NR	Etoricoxib Valdecoxib Diclofenac Ibuprofen Naproxen	NR	Diagnosis of AMI, death from AMI, or sudden death from coronary heart disease (CHD) (Adjusted RR; 95% CI)
Graham 2005 State of California Kaiser Permanente health care database Cases=8,143	Age 18-84 years who filled $\geq 1$ prescription for celecoxib, rofecoxib or any other non-selective NSAID; $\geq 12$ months of health plan coverage before index prescription date; 1/1/99-12/31/01; mean age=66.9; 62% male	Mean=113 days before event	NR	(A) all doses(B) $\leq 25$ mg(C) $> 25$ mg	(A) Ibuprofen(B) Naproxen(C) Other NSAIDs	Random sample of n=817 cases participated in phone interview and 23% reported using cc aspirin	Acute MI requiring admission or sudden cardiac death

Appendix F. Evidence Table 06[1]. CV Safety in observational studies

Author, Year Data source Sample size	Population	Exposure (days)	Celecoxib dose (mg)	Rofecoxib dose (mg)	Other NSAIDs dose (mg)	Aspirin permitted	Outcome
Harrison-Woolrych 2005 New Zealand Intensive Medicines Monitoring Programme (IMMP) <i>Interim</i> analysis of 11,149 of 58,849 for who follow-up was complete	All patients who received a prescription between 12/1/00 and 11/30/01; patients who changed medicines were included in both groups	Duration to event (through 11/30/04); period to last follow-up questionnaire; date of stopping medication; or expiration of final prescription	100 mg=7.1% 200 mg=81.6% 400 mg=10.9% Other=0.4%	12.5=24.3% 25 mg=64.5% 50 mg=11% Other=0.2%	n/a	NR	Thrombotic cardiovascular events identified from several different sources (questionnaires, hospital admission data, spontaneous reports, prescription data, national morbidity and mortality databases) (Hazard Ratio adjusted for age)
Hippisley-Cox 2005Case- controlQRESEARCH database (8/1/00- 7/31/04)Cases: 9218	All patients aged 25 to 100 with a first ever MI; <b>63.1% male</b>	NR	NR	NR	(A) Other selective NSAIDs(B) Ibuprofen(C) Diclofenac(D) Naproxen(E) Other non- selective NSAIDs	yes, but proportion NR	First ever MI (Adjusted odds ratio, 95% CI)
Hudson 2005Database of hospital discharge summaries (4/1/00- 3/31/02)n=1866	Aged > 66 with known heart failure (no hospitalizations in last 3 years)	352	NR	NR	Any NSAID	Yes, in 1006 (53.9%)	Hazard Ratio, 95% CI(A) Recurrent HF (B) Death(C) Death OR recurrent HF (Primary outcome)

Appendix F. Evidence Table 06[1]. CV Safety in observational studies

Author, Year Data source Sample size	Population	Exposure (days)	Celecoxib dose (mg)	Rofecoxib dose (mg)	Other NSAIDs dose (mg)	Aspirin permitted	Outcome
Johnson 2005 Denmark National Health Service registries Cases=10,280	First diagnosis of MI; living in counties for ≥ 1 year; aged ≥ 20 years (mean age=69.6 years); 60.4% male; 1/1/00- 12/31/03	NR	NR	NR	(A) Naproxen (B) other nonaspirin NSAID	6.9% high dose	Acute MI (Relative risk, 95% CI)
Kasliwal 2006 National Health Service prescription data (England) Rofecoxib n=15,268 Celecoxib n=17,458	Patients for whom a completed questionnaire was returned among GP- dispensed prescriptions for rofecoxib between July and November 1999 (mean age=62.5 years) and for celecoxib between May and December 2000 (mean age=62.2 years)	Events occurring whilst taking drug or within 7 days of stopping drug during 9 months since start of treatment; when not known if patient was taking drug at the time of the event, only those events that had occurred within 30 days after treatment was started were included	NR	NR	n/a	Aspirin and antiplatelet/anticoagulant agents Rofecoxib=35.3% Celecoxib=21.9% p<0.0001	(a) Cardiovascular TE (b) Cerebrovascular TE (c) Peripheral venous (DVT/PE)
Kimmel 2005 Hospitals in 5- county region (telephone interview)Cases: 1718	Persons aged 40 to 75 years hospitalized for first, nonfatal MI	NR	NR	NR	(A) Ibuprofen or diclofenac(B) Naproxen	33.60%	Nonfatal MI Odds ratio (95% CI)

Appendix F. Evidence Table 06[1]. CV Safety in observational studies

Author, Year Data source Sample size	Population	Exposure (days)	Celecoxib dose (mg)	Rofecoxib dose (mg)	Other NSAIDs dose (mg)	Aspirin permitted	Outcome
Langman 2004 MediPlus (UK) database of general clinical practices N=18,737	Men or women aged ≥ 50 years that were new users of any drug-of-interest (with ≥ 1 prescription) during the period 1/1/00 - 12/31/00	180	n/a	NR	(A) diclofenac (B) ibuprofen (C) naproxen	NR	Initiation of antihypertensive medication (odds ratio, 95% CI)
Layton 2003 National Health Service prescription data N=34,355	Patients exposed to meloxicam 12/96-3/97 (n=19,087); rofecoxib 7/99- 9/99 (n=15,268)	270	NR	NR	Meloxicam	NR	Thromboembolic events: (A) cardiovascular (B) cerebrovascular (C) peripheral venous thrombotic
Levesque 2005 Computerized health insurance and vital statistics databases of Quebec, Canada n=59724	≥ 66 years of age prescribed an NSAID or COX-2 who've never had an MI	844.8	(A) All (B) Low: ≤ 200 mg (C) High: >200 mg	(A) All (B) Low: ≤ 25 mg (C) High: > 25 mg	(A) Naproxen (B) Meloxicam	22.50%	Acute MI, fatal or nonfatal
Mamdani 2003 Ontario healthcare administrative database N=166,964	NSAID-naïve patients aged ≥ 66 years of age prescribed an NSAID or COX- 2	165.6	NR	NR	(A) Naproxen (B) Nonnaproxen nonselective NSAIDs	14.70%	Incidence of hospitalization for acute MI
Mamdani 2004 Ontario healthcare administrative database 4/17/00-3/31/01 N=145097	NSAID-naïve patients aged ≥ 66 years of age prescribed an NSAID or COX- 2	140	NR	NR	Non-selective NSAID users	NR	Admission for CHF (risk ratio, 95% CI)

Appendix F. Evidence Table 06[1]. CV Safety in observational studies

Author, Year Data source Sample size	Population	Exposure (days)	Celecoxib dose (mg)	Rofecoxib dose (mg)	Other NSAIDs dose (mg)	Aspirin permitted	Outcome
Ray 2002 Tennessee Medicaid program database 1/1/99-6/30/01	Aged 50-84 (mean=61.5); eligible for TennCare benefits for past 365 days; not in a nursing home; no history of non-CV life- threatening illness; new users	NR	NR	(A) ≤ 25 mg(B) > 25 mg	(A) Ibuprofen(B) Naproxen	NR	Serious CHD (hospital admission for AMI or death from CHD)
Schlienger 2002 UK General Practice Research Database (GPRD) Cases=3,315	First-time diagnosis of acute myocardial infarction (AMI) between January 1, 1992 and October 31, 1997; ≤ 75 years of age; free of metabolic or cardiovascular diseases predisposing to AMI; registered on the database for at least 3 years before the index date	NR	n/a	n/a	Ibuprofen Diclofenac Piroxicam Ketoprofen Indomethacin Flubiprofen Naproxen	Yes	First-time diagnosis of acute myocardial infarction (AMI) (Adjusted Odds Ratio; 95% CI)



Appendix F. Evidence Table 06[1]. CV Safety in observational studies

Author, Year Data source Sample size	Population	Exposure (days)	Celecoxib dose (mg)	Rofecoxib dose (mg)	Other NSAIDs dose (mg)	Aspirin permitted	Outcome
Shaya 2005 Medicaid database N=6,250	Enrollees who received $\geq 1$ prescription for an NSAID between 1/1/00 and 6/30/02; 70% female; 50% African American; 70% were aged 50 years or younger	$\geq 60$ prior to event	NR	NR	Other NSAIDs (excluding naproxen)	NR	Cardiovascular thrombotic events (odds ratio, 95% CI)
Solomon 2002 New Jersey Medicaid or Medicare and Pharmaceutical Assistance for the Aged and Disabled programs	Patient hospitalized with a main diagnosis of AMI with continuous use of the aforementioned benefit programs for $\geq 180$ days before index date; excluded patients with any diagnoses that might have been managed with aspirin	6 months prior to index date was primary exposure of interest	n/a	n/a	Naproxen, ibuprofen, ketorolac, indomethacin, sulindac, oxaprozin, diclofenac, fluriprofen, etodolac, ketoprofen, nabumetone, piroxicam, fenoprofen, tolmetin; dosages NR	No	Acute MI - Odds Ratio (95% CI)
Solomon 2004 Chart review of prescription drug benefit program participants Cases=10,895	Low-income, elderly, Medicare beneficiaries who had at least 1 healthcare visit in each 6-month period; mean age > 80 years	1-30 days 31-90 days > 90 days	$\leq 200$ mg >200 mg	$\leq 25$ mg > 25 mg	(A) Naproxen (B) Ibuprofen (C) Other NSAIDs	NR	Acute MI

Appendix F. Evidence Table 06[1]. CV Safety in observational studies

Author, Year Data source Sample size	Population	Exposure (days)	Celecoxib dose (mg)	Rofecoxib dose (mg)	Other NSAIDs dose (mg)	Aspirin permitted	Outcome
Solomon 2004 Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit Program databases through Pennsylvania Pharmaceutical Assistance Contract for the Elderly (PACE) or the New Jersey Pharmaceutical Assistance Program for the Aged and Disabled (PAAD) (both programs for elderly individuals with low- moderate income levels) Cases=3,915	Active users of prescription drug benefit program for 2 consecutive years out of the 3-year period (1998-2000) with no prior diagnosis of hypertension and no use of antihypertensive medications; mean age=79	Short=1-30 Long=31-90	Low: ≤ 200 mg High: >20 mg	Low: ≤ 25 mg High: > 25 mg	Nonspecific NSAID	NR	New onset hypertension and the filling of at least 1 antihypertensive medication prescription
Velentgas 2005 Insurance claims/administrative records of UnitedHealthcare N=424,584	Patients aged 40-64 who received at least one dispensing of rofecoxib, celecoxib, naproxen, ibuprofen, or diclofenac in oral tablet or capsul from 1/1/99 to 6/30/01	Mean=5.1 months	200 mg (modal)	25 mg (modal)	Naproxen 1000 mg (modal)	NR	Primary: Combined endpoint of acute coronary syndrome and myocardial infarction (adjusted rate ratio)

Appendix F. Evidence Table 06[1]. CV Safety in observational studies

Author, Year Data source Sample size	Reference comparison	Celecoxib	Rofecoxib	NSAIDs	Subgroup information?	Notes
Andersohn 2006 UK General Practice Research Database (GPRD) Cases=3,643	Nonuse	1.56 (1.23, 1.98)	1.33 (1.06, 1.67)	Etoricoxib: 2.02 (1.08, 3.80) Valdecoxib: 4.26 (0.60, 30.27) Diclofenac: 1.36 (1.17, 1.58) Ibuprofen: 1.00 (0.83, 1.21) Naproxen: 1.16 (0.86, 1.58)	Risk increased with dose for celecoxib, etoricoxib, and rofecoxib. No significant interaction with age, gender, or presence of risk factors	
Graham 2005 State of California Kaiser Permanente health care database Cases=8,143	Celecoxib	n/a	(A) 1.59 (1.10, 2.32)(B) 1.47 (0.99, 2.17)(C) 3.58 (1.27, 10.11)	(A) 1.26 (1.00, 1.60)(B) 1.36 (1.06, 1.75)(C) 1.35 (1.06, 1.72)	3.8% taking anticoagulants	
Harrison-Woolrych 2005 New Zealand Intensive Medicines Monitoring Programme (IMMP) <i>Interim</i> analysis of 11,149 of 58,849 for who follow-up was complete	Rofecoxib	0.94 (95% CI 0.51, 1.70)	n/a	n/a	No dose effect	
Hippisley-Cox 2005 Case- control QRESEARCH database (8/1/00-7/31/04) Cases: 9218	No use	1.21 (0.96, 1.54)	1.32 (1.09, 1.61)	(A) 1.27 (1.00, 1.61)(B) 1.24 (1.11, 1.39)(C) 1.55 (1.39, 1.72)(D) 1.27 (1.01, 1.60)(E) 1.21 (1.02, 1.44)	No interactions between any NSAID and aspirin use or coronary heart disease; smoking and BMI interacted only with naproxen; age 65 and over only interacted with other non-selective NSAIDs	Adjusted for smoking, obesity, deprivation, aspirin

Appendix F. Evidence Table 06[1]. CV Safety in observational studies

Author, Year Data source Sample size	Reference comparison	Celecoxib	Rofecoxib	NSAIDs	Subgroup information?	Notes
Hudson 2005 Database of hospital discharge summaries (4/1/00-3/31/02)n=1866	COX-2	NSAIDs vs celecoxib:(A) 1.21 (0.92, 1.60)(B) 1.54 (1.17, 2.04)(C) 1.26 (1.00, 1.57)	NSAIDs vs rofecoxib: (A) 1.04 (0.80, 1.36)(B) 1.07 (0.82, 1.39)(C) 0.99 (0.80, 1.22)	n/a	NR	
Johnson 2005 Denmark National Health Service registries Cases=10,280	Nonuser	Current user: 1.25 (0.97, 1.62); new user: 2.13 (1.45, 3.13)	Current user: 1.80 (1.47, 2.21); new user: 2.52 (1.45, 3.13)	(A) Current user: 1.50 (0.99, 2.29); new user: 1.65 (0.57, 4.83) (B) Current user: 1.68 (1.52, 1.85); new user: 2.65 (2.00, 3.50)	13.7% CV disease; 2.2% cc anticoagulant use; rofecoxib was associated with increased risk regardless of baseline risk status	
Kasliwal 2006 National Health Service prescription data (England) Rofecoxib n=15,268 Celecoxib n=17,458	Celecoxib	n/a	aRR (95% CI) (adjusted for age, age <sup>2</sup> , sex, and concomitant use of the combination of aspirin and/or antiplatelet/anticoagulant agents (a) 1.04 (0.50, 2.17) (b) 1.43 (0.86, 2.38) (c) 0.36 (0.01, 1.34)	n/a	(a) increased risk associated with age, sex, cc aspirin use, cc antiplatelet/anticoagulant agents (b) increased risk with all but sex (c) increased risk with the cc meds	
Kimmel 2005 Hospitals in 5-county region (telephone interview)Cases: 1718	Nonselective NSAIDS	(A) 0.77 (0.40, 1.48) (in aspirin and nonaspirin users - like CLASS)(B) 0.81 (0.37, 1.77)	(B) 3.30 (1.37, 8.40) (among nonaspirin users - like VIGOR)(A) 2.04 (1.16, 3.60)	n/a		

Appendix F. Evidence Table 06[1]. CV Safety in observational studies

Author, Year Data source Sample size	Reference comparison	Celecoxib	Rofecoxib	NSAIDs	Subgroup information?	Notes
Langman 2004 MediPlus (UK) database of general clinical practices N=18,737	Rofecoxib	n/a	Combined non-selective NSAIDs vs rofecoxib: Overall=0.93 (0.73, 1.18); chronic and persistent users=1.07 (0.71-1.61)			
Layton 2003 National Health Service prescription data N=34,355	Meloxicam	n/a	vs meloxicam: (A) 1.38 (0.71, 2.67) (B) 1.68 (1.15, 2.46) (C) 0.29 (0.11, 0.78)	n/a	Significant association between age, sex and time, respectively, and event rates	Only adjusted for age and sex
Levesque 2005 Computerized health insurance and vital statistics databases of Quebec, Canada n=59724	NSAID nonusers	(A) 0.99 (0.85, 1.16) (B) 0.98 (0.83, 1.17) (C) 1.00 (0.78, 1.29)	(A) 1.24 (1.05, 1.46) (B) 1.21 (1.02, 1.43) (C) 1.73 (1.09, 2.76)	Naproxen 1.17 (0.75, 1.84) Meloxicam 1.06 (0.49, 2.30)	aspirin mitigates risk for low- but not high-dose rofecoxib use	
Mamdani 2003 Ontario healthcare administrative database N=166,964	General non-NSAID using population (adjusted risk ratio, 95% CI)	0.9 (0.7, 1.4)	1.0 (0.8, 1.4)	(A) 1.0 (0.6-1.7) (B) 1.2 (0.9, 1.4)		
Mamdani 2004 Ontario healthcare administrative database 4/17/00-3/31/01 N=145097	COX-2	Non-selective NSAID vs celecoxib: 1.4 (1.0, 1.9)	Non-selective NSAID vs rofecoxib: 1.5 (1.1, 2.1)	vs non-NSAID users: 1.4 (1.0-1.9)	History of heart failure admission w/l past 3 years increased risk	
Ray 2002 Tennessee Medicaid program database 1/1/99-6/30/01	Nonusers	0.96 (0.76-1.21)	(A) 1.03 (0.78, 1.35)(B) 1.70 (0.98, 2.95)	(A) 0.91 (0.78, 1.06)(B) 0.93 (0.82, 1.06)	NR	

Appendix F. Evidence Table 06[1]. CV Safety in observational studies

Author, Year Data source Sample size	Reference comparison	Celecoxib	Rofecoxib	NSAIDs	Subgroup information?	Notes
Schlienger 2002 UK General Practice Research Database (GPRD) Cases=3,315	Nonuse	n/a	n/a	Ibuprofen: 1.17 (0.87, 1.58) Diclofenac: 1.38 (1.08, 1.77) Piroxicam: 1.65 (0.78, 3.49) Fenbufen: 2.06 (0.80, 5.30) Ketoprofen: 1.39 (0.77, 2.51) Indomethacin: 1.03 (0.58, 1.85) Fluriprofen: 2.26 (0.93, 5.46) Naproxen: 0.68 (0.42, 1.13)	Current use of aspirin at the index date and longer-term use of HRT in women interacted with AMI risk; exposure duration, age, and gender did not.	
Shaya 2005 Medicaid database N=6,250	Other NSAIDs (excluding naproxen)	1.19 (0.93, 1.51)	0.99 (0.76, 1.30)	n/a		
Solomon 2002 New Jersey Medicaid or Medicare and Pharmaceutical Assistance for the Aged and Disabled programs	Nonuser (control)	n/a	n/a	Comparison of specific NSAID use only reported for: Naproxen: OR 0.84 (0.72-0.98) Etodolac: OR 1.28 (1.00-1.64) Fenoprofen: OR 1.95 (1.16, 3.30) Ibuprofen: OR 1.02 (0.88, 1.18)	No dose- or duration-response relationship	
Solomon 2004 Chart review of prescription drug benefit program participants Cases=10,895	NSAID	(A) 0.95 (0.74, 1.21) (B) 0.98 (0.76, 1.26)	(A) 1.17 (0.90, 1.52) (B) 1.21 (0.92, 1.58)	n/a	Dose had an effect for rofecoxib but not celecoxib; couldn't adjust for aspirin use	

Appendix F. Evidence Table 06[1]. CV Safety in observational studies

Author, Year Data source Sample size	Reference comparison	Celecoxib	Rofecoxib	NSAIDs	Subgroup information?	Notes
Solomon 2004 Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit Program databases through Pennsylvania Pharmaceutical Assistance Contract for the Elderly (PACE) or the New Jersey Pharmaceutical Assistance Program for the Aged and Disabled (PAAD) (both programs for elderly individuals with low-moderate income levels) Cases=3,915	(A) nonspecific NSAID (B) no NSAID	(A) 0.9 (0.7, 1.1) (B) 1.0 (0.9, 1.2)	(A) 1.4 (1.1, 1.9) (B) 1.6 (1.3, 2.0)	n/a	Dose, duration had no effect; but presence of renal disease, liver disease, or congestive heart failure appeared in increase risk for rofecoxib users	
Velentgas 2005 Insurance claims/administrative records of UnitedHealthcare N=424,584	Ibuprofen or diclofenac	Current: 1.03 (0.83, 1.27) Recent: 0.91 (0.70, 1.17)	Current: 1.35 (1.09, 1.68) Recent: 1.15 (0.88, 1.50)	Naproxen Current: 1.15 (0.93, 1.39) Recent: 0.86 (0.70, 1.04)	No dose-relationship; increased risk for males and for individuals with a cardiac history, peripheral arterial disease, diabetes, beta blocker use, nitrate use	

Appendix F. Evidence Table 07[1]. Trials of etoricoxib and lumiracoxib (Safety only)

Author Year (Quality Score)	Eligibility criteria	Interventions (drug, dose, duration)	Run-in/Washout Period	Allowed other medications/ interventions	Method of Outcome Assessment
<b>Etoricoxib studies</b>					
Baraf, et al 2004 fair (abstract only)	Knee, hip, hand or spine OA patients	etoricoxib 90 mg/day vs diclofenac 50 mg tid	NR	use of "routine" medications allowed - definition of "routine" not specified	Primary: discontinuations due to clinical or lab GI AEs Secondary: patient global assessment using 4-point Likert scale
Curtis, et al 2005	<40 yrs with clinical and radiographic evidence of knee OA for at least 6 mos	etoricoxib 30, 60 or 90 mg/day diclofenac 150 mg/day	Discontinuation of previous therapy; time-frame not specified	NR	Efficacy: WOMAC and Investigator Global Assessment of Disease Status Safety: Clinical AEs determined by investigator
van der Heijde, et al 2004	AS patients meeting modified NY criteria; >18 yrs; diagnosis ≥ 6 mos prior to study; previous NSAID responder; routine NSAID use (25 of 30 days preceding study); use of approved antirheumatic therapy at a stable dose for 3-6 mos; experiencing AS flare	etoricoxib 90 or 120 mg/day naproxen 1000 mg/day	NSAID washout, time not specified	acetaminophen	Primary endpoints: VAS and Bath Ankylosing Spondylitis Functional Index Secondary endpoints: patient's assessment using 4 pt Likert
<b>Lumiracoxib</b>					



Appendix F. Evidence Table 07[1]. Trials of etoricoxib and lumiracoxib (Safety only)

Author Year (Quality Score)	Eligibility criteria	Interventions (drug, dose, duration)	Run- in/Washout Period	Allowed other medications/ interventions	Method of Outcome Assessment
Schnitzer, et al 2004 TARGET study good	Patients ≥ 50 yrs with hip, knee or hand OA according to ACR criteria or radiographically confirmed cervical or lumbar spine OA	lumiracoxib 400 mg/day naproxen 500 mg bid ibuprofen 800 mg tid 52 wks	NR	1) paracetamol ≤2g/day 2) up to 2 two-week periods of systemic corticosteroid therapy 3) one hyaluronic acid injection 4) up to 3 corticosteroid injections at least 8 wks apart and more than 4 wks prior to study assessment 5) up to 2 non-consecutive 3 wk courses of low-dose (equivalent of famotidine 30 mg/day) H2 receptor antagonists at least 4 wks between courses 6) up to 8 antacid tablets/day*	<p>Primary endpoint of study: time-to-event distribution of definite or probable upper GI complications in patients not taking low-dose aspirin Secondary GI endpoint: time-to-event in patients taking low-dose aspirin and time-to-event of other GI events including 1) complicated and symptomatic upper GI ulcers; 2) symptomatic upper GI ulcers; 3) major episodes of GI bleeding; 4) evidence of anemia*</p> <p>CV endpoint: time-to-event of Antiplatelet Trialists' Collaboration (APTC) endpoint (composite of nonfatal MI, nonfatal stroke or CV-related death, adjudicated as confirmed or probable)*</p> <p>Renal endpoint: time-to-event of clinically relevant lab abnormalities, defined as serum creatinine elevations ≥100% from baseline and/or proteinuria ≤ 3g/L*</p> <p>Hepatic endpoint: time-to-event of elevations in ALT &gt; 5 x ULN and/or AST &gt; 5 x ULN with total bilirubin elevations &gt; 30 mg/L, adjudicated as probably or possibly related to study medication*</p> <p>Tolerability endpoint: all serious and non-serious AEs, lab measures, time to discontinuation for any reason and time to discontinuation due to AEE*</p>

Appendix F. Evidence Table 07[1]. Trials of etoricoxib and lumiracoxib (Safety only)

Author Year (Quality Score)	Timing of Outcome Assessment	Age Gender Ethnicity	Other population characteristics (diagnosis, etc)	Number screened/ eligible/ enrolled	Number withdrawn/ lost to fu/ analyzed
<b>Etoricoxib studies</b>					
Baraf, et al 2004 fair (abstract only)	Baseline and months 1, 4, 8, 12	mean age 64 yrs gender NR ethnicity NR		NR/ NR/ 7111	NR/ NR/ NR
Curtis, et al 2005	During active-comparator phase (wks 6-52) assessed at wks 6, 8, 14, 20, 26, 34, 42, 52	mean age 61.8 yrs 72% women 89% white	67.4% of patients ARA Function Class II	NR/ 617/ 550	262/ NR/ 550
van der Heijde, et al 2004	Baseline and wks 2, 4, 6, 8, 16, 26, 34, 43, 52	mean age 43.6 yrs 22.2% women ethnicity NR	History of iritis 33.6%; chronic peripheral arthritis 40.1%; corticosteroid use 25.3%; concomitant DMARD use 22.25%	500/ 387/ 374* (number of patients who entered second long- term phase of study wks 6- 52)	90/NR/374
<b>Lumiracoxib</b>					
Schnitzer, et al 2004 TARGET study good	Study visits at wks 4. 13. 26. 39, 52 and 4 wks post-study Patient assessed pain using 5- point Likert scale at wks 13, 26, 39, 52; physician and patient assessed disease activity using 5- point Likert scale	mean age 63.5 yrs 76% women ethnicity NR		21,787/ 18,325/ 18,244	7161/ 40/ 18,244

Appendix F. Evidence Table 07[1]. Trials of etoricoxib and lumiracoxib (Safety only)

Author Year (Quality Score)	Results	Notes
<b>Etoricoxib studies</b>		
Baraf, et al 2004 fair (abstract only)	Cumulative discontinuations due to GI events lower with etoricoxib v diclofenac - 9.4 v 19.2 events/100 patient yrs (RR 0.5 95% CI: 0.43, 0.58; p < 0.001)	
Curtis, et al 2005	<p>A higher percentage of diclofenac patients (22.5%) reported GI symptoms and discontinued (4%) due to GI symptoms vs all etoricoxib doses (13.1% and 0% at 30mg/day, 14.7% and 1% at 60 mg/day, 13.5% and 1.4% at 90 mg/day respectively)</p> <p>Only other AE which showed difference was lower extremity edema: higher with etoricoxib- 30 mg/day 4.5%; 60 mg/day 3.9%; 90 mg/day 3.4% and lowest with diclofenac 2.0%</p>	
van der Heijde, et al 2004	Rates of serious AEs were similar (7.6%, 7.2% and 7.7% for etoricoxib 90mg, 120mg and naproxen 1000mg respectively) However, 2% of patients experienced serious CV AEs - all were etoricoxib patients (4, 90mg/day; 1, 120 mg/day)	
<b>Lumiracoxib</b>		
Schnitzer, et al 2004 TARGET study good	<p>GI: Risk of any upper GI AE - lumiracoxib v NSAIDS (naproxen and ibuprofen) in aspirin and non-aspirin patients: .32 lumiracoxib patients v .91 NSAID patients HR 0.34 (0.22-0.52) CI 95%; p &lt; 0.0001.</p> <p>CV: No SS differences, however lower risk of MI with naproxen v lumiracoxib (HR 1.77 (0.82-3.84); p=0.1471) and higher risk of MI with ibuprofen v lumiracoxib (HR 0.66 (0.21-2.09); p = 0.4833)</p> <p>Renal: No SS difference b/t lumiracoxib and NSAIDs for renal endpoint or serious liver AEs. SS difference in transaminase concentrations 3x above upper limit of normal between lumiracoxib and NSAIDs (HR 3.97 (2.96-5.32); p&lt;0.0001) Transaminase concentrations were reversed upon drug discontinuation.</p>	<p>Supratherapeutic dose of lumiracoxib used (2-4 x greater than typical OA dosage)</p> <p><i>Farkouh ME. Kirshner H. Harrington RA. Ruland S. Verheugt FW. Schnitzer TJ. Burmester GR. Mysler E. Hochberg MC. Doherty M. Ehram E. Gitton X. Krammer G. Mellein B. Gimona A. Matchaba P. Hawkey CJ. Chesebro JH. TARGET Study Group. Comparison of lumiracoxib with naproxen and ibuprofen in the Therapeutic Arthritis Research and Gastrointestinal Event Trial (TARGET), cardiovascular outcomes: randomised controlled trial.[see comment]. Lancet. 364(9435):675-84, 2004 Aug 21-27. provides a more detailed analysis of CV events, however same data is used.</i></p>

\* reported in: Hawkey CJ, Farkouh M, Gitton X, Ehram E, Huels J, Richardson P. Therapeutic arthritis research and gastrointestinal event trial of lumiracoxib - study design and patient demographics. *Alimentary Pharmacology & Therapeutics*. 20(1):51-63, 2004 Jul 1.

Appendix F. Evidence Table 07[1]. Trials of etoricoxib and lumiracoxib (Safety only)

Author Year	Randomization adequate?	Allocation concealment adequate?	Groups similar at baseline?	Eligibility criteria specified?	Outcome assessors masked?	Care provider masked?
<b>Etoricoxib studies</b>						
Curtis, et al 2005	yes	yes	yes	yes	unclear ("study staff" reported as blinded)	unclear ("study staff" reported as blinded)
van der Heijde, et al 2004	yes	yes	yes	yes	NR	NR
<b>Lumiracoxib</b>						
Schnitzer, et al2004TARGET study	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes

Appendix F. Evidence Table 07[1]. Trials of etoricoxib and lumiracoxib (Safety only)

Author Year	Patient masked?	Reporting of attrition, crossovers, adherence, and contamination	Loss to follow-up: differential/ high	Intention-to- treat (ITT) analysis	Post- randomization exclusions	Quality Rating	Funding
<b>Etoricoxib studies</b>							
Curtis, et al 2005	yes	no/yes/no/no	no	unclear, only mean percentages reported	no	fair	Merck & Co.
van der Heijde, et al 2004	yes	no/no/no/no	no	no	no	fair	NR
<b>Lumiracoxib</b>							
Schnitzer, et al2004TARGET study	yes	no/no/no/no	no	no for efficacy; yes for safety	no	good	Novartis Pharma AG, Switzerland

Appendix F. Evidence Table 07[1]. Trials of etoricoxib and lumiracoxib (Safety only)

Author Year	Number screened/ eligible/enrolled	Exclusion criteria	Run-in/ Washout	Class naïve patients only	Control group standard of care	Funding
<b>Etoricoxib studies</b>						
Curtis, et al 2005	NR/NR/550	Significant renal impairment; clinically significant abnormalities on screening physical or lab examinations; class III/IV angina or uncontrolled CHF; uncontrolled hypertension; stroke or transient ischemic heart disease within 2 yrs; active hepatic disease; recent neoplastic disease; acute meniscal injury to the study joint within 2 yrs; arthroscopy in study joint within 6 mos; weight in excess of 280 lbs; allergy to acetaminophen or NSAIDs; use of systemic corticosteroids, warfarin, low-dose aspirin, ticlopidine, intra-articular steroids; previous AE associated with topical analgesic use.	NR/NR	no	NA	Merck & Co.

Appendix F. Evidence Table 07[1]. Trials of etoricoxib and lumiracoxib (Safety only)

Author Year	Number screened/ eligible/enrolled	Exclusion criteria	Run-in/ Washout	Class naïve patients only	Control group standard of care	Funding
van der Heijde, et al 2004	NR/NR/374	Concurrent rheumatic disease that could confound efficacy; pts with acute peripheral articular disease; chronic peripheral arthritis; use of corticosteroid therapy within 1 mo; use of analgesics within 3 days through wk 6 of study; use of non-study NSAID or COX-2.	NR/washout length not specified	no	NA	NR
<b>Lumiracoxib</b>						
Schnitzer, et al 2004 TARGET study	21,787/NR/18,325	Use of PPIs, misoprostol or full-dose H2 agonists; active upper GI ulceration in previous 30 days; upper GI bleeding within 1 yr; history of gastroduodenal perforation or obstruction; history of MI, stroke, coronary bypass graft, invasive coronary revascularization, new-onset angina within previous 6 mos; ECG evidence of recent silent MI; severe CHF.	NR/NR	no	NA	Novartis Pharma AG, Switzerland

Appendix F. Evidence Table 08[1]. Systematic reviews of NSAIDs

<b>Author Year</b>	<b>(1) Aims</b>	<b>(2) Time period covered</b>	<b>(3) Eligibility criteria</b>	<b>(4) Number of patients</b>	<b>(5) Characteristics of identified articles: study designs</b>	<b>(6) Characteristics of identified articles: populations</b>
Rostom 2005	To determine the frequency of lab and clinical hepatic side effects associated with NSAID use.	MEDLINE, EMBASE and Cochrane through January 2004.	RCTs (>4 wks, >40 pts) in duration of adults with OA or RA including one of the following drugs: celecoxib, rofecoxib, valdecoxib, meloxicam, diclofenac, naproxen or ibuprofen.	total NR	64 RCTs: designs not specified	Patients age >18 with a diagnosis of OA or RA
Rubenstein 2005	To systematically review the published literature of population-based epidemiological studies reporting the incidence or comparative risk of NSAIDs for liver injury resulting in clinically significant events (defined as hospitalization or death)	MEDLINE, Pre-MEDLINE and EMBASE through 2004.	Case-control, controlled cohort, single cohort population-based studies.	total NR; 396,392 patient years included in analysis	1 case-control; 1 nested case-control; 2 retrospective single-cohort w/ nested case-control studies; 3 retrospective single-cohort w/out nested case-control.	Patients taking NSAIDs for any indication
Towheed 2004	To determine which NSAID is most effective and which is most toxic in the treatment of hip OA	1966 - August, 1994 MEDLINE Cochrane Musculoskeletal Group trials register and CCTR through August 1994	RCTs published in English; placebo-controlled comparative treatment w/analgesics or NSAIDs; single and double-blinded trials	Total number of patients not specified, however mean number of randomized patients per trial was 95, with a range from 9 to 455. Mean number of patients completing trial was 81, range of 9 to 397.	43 RCTs: 21 crossover study design and 22 parallel group design.	Eligible participants were any adult (>18) with a diagnosis of primary or secondary OA. 53% of trial participants were women, mean age 63.



Appendix F. Evidence Table 08[1]. Systematic reviews of NSAIDs

<b>Author Year</b>	<b>(1) Aims</b>	<b>(2) Time period covered</b>	<b>(3) Eligibility criteria</b>	<b>(4) Number of patients</b>	<b>(5) Characteristics of identified articles: study designs</b>	<b>(6) Characteristics of identified articles: populations</b>
Watson2004	To determine difference in efficacy of NSAIDs in treatment of knee OA.	1966 - November, 1996 MEDLINE1980-December, 1995 EMBASE	Double-blind RCTs published in English evaluating two NSAIDs	not stated	16 RCTs: All double-blind although most failed to report method used to achieve double-blind conditions	Patients age >16 with a confirmed diagnosis of OA of the knee.

Appendix F. Evidence Table 08[1]. Systematic reviews of NSAIDs

Author Year	(7) Characteristics of identified articles: interventions	(8) Main results
Rostom 2005	18 NSAID v placebo; 33 diclofenac studies; 12 ibuprofen studies; 14 naproxen studies; 5 meloxicam studies; 8 rofecoxib studies; 5 celecoxib studies; 1 valdecoxib study.	Safety: Among all comparisons, no NSAID had higher rates of renal serious adverse events, hospitalizations or death. Diclofenac and rofecoxib both showed higher rates of aminotransferase elevations (>3x ULN) when compared to all other NSAIDs (3.55% [95% CI, 3.12-4.03%] and 1.80%[95% CI, 1.52-2.13%] respectively, vs <0.43%)
Rubenstein 2005	6 studies: unspecified NSAIDs (including any of the following: diclofenac, diflunisal, fenbufen, fenoprofen, ibuprofen, indomethacin, ketoprofen, mefenamic acid, naproxen, nimesulide, sulindac, tenoxicam); 2 of these 6 included aspirin. 1 study: diclofenac, naproxen and piroxicam only.	Safety: No SS difference between current NSAID user and past NSAID users in hospitalization rates for liver injury (range 1.2-1.7) Incidence of liver injury resulting in hospitalization ranged from 3.1-23.4/100,000 patient years for current NSAID users, compared to 4.8-8.6/100,000 patient years for past NSAID users.
Towheed 2004	<p>Placebo v: etodolac, tenoxicam, ketoprofen, diacerhein</p> <p>Head to head: flurbiprofen v sulindac diclofenac v naproxen proquazone v naproxen piroxicam v naproxen diclofenac v ibuprofen sulindac v ibuprofen carprofen v diclofenac piroxicam v indomethacin naproxen v indomethacin tenoxicam v diacerhein</p>	<p>Efficacy</p> <p>When compared to placebo, all NSAIDs except diacerhein resulted in pain decrease and improvement of global assessment (no RR provided)</p> <p>In head to head trials, no SS difference amongst any of the compared interventions (no RR provided)</p> <p>Low-dose ibuprofen (&lt;1600 mg/day) and low-dose naproxen (&lt;750 mg/day) less efficacious than other NSAIDs</p> <p>An alternative, more sensitive technique of results analysis (Heller, et al) found that indomethacin was more effective than its comparators in 5 of 7 cases.</p> <p>Safety</p> <p>Out of 29 NSAID combinations, 9 revealed clinically relevant differences in toxicity. Indomethacin was found to be more toxic in 7 of these 9 combinations. However, only 6 of the 29 comparisons were tested for SS differences.</p>

Appendix F. Evidence Table 08[1]. Systematic reviews of NSAIDs

<b>Author Year</b>	<b>(7) Characteristics of identified articles: interventions</b>	<b>(8) Main results</b>
Watson2004	Etodolac (600 mg and 800 mg) v diclofenac (100-150 mg), naproxen (1000 mg), piroxicam (20 mg), indomethacin (150 mg), nabumetone (1500 mg) Nabumetone (1000 mg) v diclofenac (100 mg) Tenoxicam (20 mg) v piroxicam (20 mg) Tenoxicam (20 mg) v diclofenac (150 mg) Flurbiprofen (150 mg) v diclofenac (150 mg) Naproxen (750 mg) v diclofenac (150 mg)	Efficacy Withdrawal due to lack of efficacy: Meta-analysis of nine trials showed no SS differences between etodolac, diclofenac or naproxen. Patient Global Assessment: Favored etodolac in two trials however results are questionable due to inequivalent dose comparisons. Pain: Only 2 of 14 trials assessed pain measurement with adequate power (70%) to detect minimum clinical difference between treatments. Both trials favored etodolac over the comparator drug. Again, inequivalent dose comparisons resulted in questionable validity of results. Physical function: Only one trial showed a SS difference in favor of tenoxicam v diclofenac (OR 3.93 CI: 95% 1.07-14.44)

Appendix F. Evidence Table 08[1]. Systematic reviews of NSAIDs

<b>Author Year</b>	<b>(9) Subgroups</b>	<b>(10) Comments</b>
Rostom 2005	Use of high dose of diclofenac (>100mg/day) was associated with a higher proportion of patients having amniotransferase elevation >3x ULN. No SS differences for other subgroups (high dose rofecoxib; longer duration for all comparators including placebo)	Assessed adverse events only
Rubenstein 2005	not reported	Assessed adverse events only
Towheed 2004	not reported	SR limited by lack of standardization of OA diagnosis and OA outcomes  Results suggest that best NSAID varies widely depending on a particular patient
Watson2004	not reported	Poor methodology resulted in little SS evidence favoring one NSAID over anotherOnly 5 of 16 trials compared equivalent dosing of trial and comparators

Appendix F. Evidence Table 08[1]. Systematic reviews of NSAIDs

<b>Author Year</b>	<b>(1) Is there a clear review question?</b>	<b>(2) Were there explicit inclusion/exclusion criteria reported relating to selection of the primary studies?</b>	<b>(3) Is there evidence of a substantial effort to search for all relevant research?</b>	<b>(4) Was the literature search strategy stated?</b>	<b>(5) Is the validity of included studies adequately assessed?</b>	<b>(6) Is sufficient detail of the individual studies presented?</b>	<b>(7) Are there any important studies missing?</b>	<b>(8) Are the primary studies summarized appropriately?</b>	<b>(9) Quality rating</b>
Rostom 2005	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	good
Rubenstein 2005	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	good
Towheed 2004	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	good
Watson 2004	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	good

Appendix F. Evidence Table 09[1]. COX-2s vs NSAIDs - tolerability

<b>Trial</b>	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>Coxib dose</b>	<b>NSAIDs (mg)</b>	<b>Number of subjects*</b>	<b>Duration (weeks)</b>
<b><i>Celecoxib</i></b>						
Ekman	efficacy and tolerability	Ankle sprain	400 mg daily	ibuprofen 2400 mg daily	445	10 days
Bertin	efficacy and tolerability	Acute shoulder pain	400 mg daily	naproxen 100 mg daily	203	14 days
Dougados	efficacy	Ankylosing spondylitis with flare	100 bid	ketoprofen 100 bid	170	6
McKenna	efficacy and tolerability	OA of the knee with flare	100 bid	diclofenac 50 tid	400	6
Bensen/Zhao	efficacy	OA of the knee with flare	200 bid	naproxen 500 bid	1004	12
Goldstein	endoscopic ulcers	OA and RA with no ulcer on EGD	200 bid	naproxen 500 bid	537	12
Simon/Zhao	efficacy and endoscopic ulcers	RA with flare and no ulcer on EGD	100, 200, or 400 bid	naproxen 500 bid	918	12
Emery	endoscopic ulcers	RA	200 bid	diclofenac 75 bid	655	24
Silverstein (CLASS)	serious GI events	OA and RA	400 bid	ibuprofen 800 tid or diclofenac 75 bid	7968	24
Kivitz	efficacy and tolerability	OA	100-400 mg daily	naproxen 100 mg daily	1061	12
Simon	efficacy and tolerability	RA	100-400 mg bid	naproxen 500 mg bid	1149	12
<b><i>Etoricoxib</i></b>						
Baraf 2004						
Curtis 2005						
van der Heijde 2004						
<b><i>Lumiracoxib</i></b>						
Schnitzer 2004						

Appendix F. Evidence Table 09[1]. COX-2s vs NSAIDs - tolerability

<b>Trial</b>	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>Coxib dose</b>	<b>NSAIDs (mg)</b>	<b>Number of subjects*</b>	<b>Duration (weeks)</b>
<b>Rofecoxib</b>						
Niccoli	tolerability	OA of hand, hip or knee	25 mg	diclofenac 50 tid	90	2
Acevado	adverse events	OA, negative FOBT	12.5 mg	diclofenac 50 mg/misoprostol 200 mcg bid	483	6
Saag	efficacy and tolerability	OA of knee or hip with flare (for NSAID users) or acetaminophen user. Excluded aspirin 81mg users.	25 mg	ibuprofen 800 tid	667	6
Day	efficacy and tolerability	OA of knee or hip with flare (for NSAID users) or acetaminophen user	25	ibuprofen 800 tid	735	6
Truitt	efficacy and tolerability	OA knee or hip with flare, >80 years old	25	nabumetone 1500	250	6
Myllykangas-Luosujarvi	efficacy and tolerability	OA of the knee or hip	12.5	naproxen 500 bid	944	6
Lisse	efficacy and tolerability	OA of the knee, hip, hand, or spine	25	naproxen 500 bid	5557	12
Hawkey	tolerability	RA	50	naproxen 500 bid	660	12
Hawkey	endoscopic ulcers	OA with no ulcer on EGD	25	ibuprofen 800 tid	581	18
Laine (044)	endoscopic ulcers	OA with no ulcer or esophagitis on EGD	25, 50	ibuprofen 800 tid	565	24
Bombadier (VIGOR)	serious GI events	RA, negative FOBT	50	naproxen 500 bid	8076	52
Cannon (035)	efficacy	OA of knee or hip with flare (for NSAID users) or acetaminophen user	25	diclofenac 50 tid	784	52
Saag	efficacy and tolerability	OA of knee or hip with flare (for NSAID users) or acetaminophen user. Excluded aspirin 81 mg users.	25	diclofenac 50 tid	693	52

Appendix F. Evidence Table 09[1]. COX-2s vs NSAIDs - tolerability

<b>Trial</b>	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>Coxib dose</b>	<b>NSAIDs (mg)</b>	<b>Number of subjects*</b>	<b>Duration (weeks)</b>
<b>Valdecoxib</b>						
Makarowski	efficacy and tolerability	OA of the hip	5, 10	naproxen 500 bid	349	12
Pavelka	efficacy and tolerability	RA	20, 40	diclofenac 75 mg SR bid	722	26

GI - gastrointestinal; HTN - hypertension; CHF - congestive heart failure; NR - not reported; OA - osteoarthritis;  
 EGD - esophagogastroduodenoscopy; RA - rheumatoid arthritis; FOBT-fecal occult blood test; LFT - liver function test

\*Excludes subjects randomized to placebo

\*\*inadequately reported

§ Reported GI adverse events leading to discontinuation, but did not report total GI adverse events

†statistically significant

|| mean change (%); †only side effects not causing withdrawal





Appendix F. Evidence Table 09[1]. COX-2s vs NSAIDs - tolerability

Trial	Withdrawals due to adverse events		Total adverse events		GI adverse events		Elevated creatinine, HTN, CHF, or edema		Comment
Curtis 2005									
van der Heijde 2004									
<b>Lumiracoxib</b>									
Schnitzer 2004									
<b>Rofecoxib</b>									
Niccoli	11.7%	3.2%	33.3% <sup>!</sup>	26.6% <sup>!</sup>	nr	nr	24% <sup>  </sup> , nr, nr, nr	5.7% <sup>  </sup> , nr, nr, nr	
Acevado	4.1%	9.1%	52.9% <sup>†</sup>	73.0%	28.9%	48.5%	nr	nr	
Saag	no difference (numbers not given)		nr	nr	3.5%	3.2%	5.3%	2.3%	
Day	3.7%	8.4%	53.3%	51.8%	higher for NSAID (numbers not given)		no difference (numbers not given)		
Truitt	8.9%	7.0%	nr	nr	nr	nr	incompletely reported; probably no difference.		
Myllykangas-Luosujarvi	nr	nr	43.3%	48.2%	13.4% <sup>†</sup>	24.1%	nr; 1.9%; nr; 3.4%(lower extremity), 0.2% (peripheral)	nr; 1.7%; nr; 2.3%(lower extremity), 1.4% (peripheral)	
Lisse	nr	nr	30.0%	30.0%	5.9% <sup>§†</sup>	8.1% <sup>§</sup>	nr, 2.9%, nr, 3.5%	nr, 2.4%, nr, 3.8%	
Hawkey	5% <sup>†</sup>	9.1%	62.1%	66.4%	3.7% <sup>§</sup>	6.8% <sup>§</sup>	nr, 6.4%, 0.5%, 1.4%	nr, 0.9%, 0.0%, 0.0%	
Hawkey	5.6%	9.8%	80.1%	80.0%	no difference		nr	nr	
Laine (044)	10.3%	14.0%	78.3%	74.7%	nr	nr	nr	nr	
Bombadier (VIGOR)	16,4%	16.1%			3.5% <sup>§†</sup>	4.9%	1.2%	0.9%	

Appendix F. Evidence Table 09[1]. COX-2s vs NSAIDs - tolerability

Trial	Withdrawals due to adverse events		Total adverse events		GI adverse events		Elevated creatinine, HTN, CHF, or edema		Comment
Cannon (035)	12.5%	15.3%	84.0%	86.2%	no difference (numbers not given)		no differences		
Saag	significantly higher for NSAID (numbers not given)		nr	nr	5.2%	8.3%	no difference (numbers not given)		Discontinuation for elevated ALT higher in NSAID group.
<b>Valdecoxib</b>									
Makarowski	9%	12.70%	53%	60.20%	no difference		nr	nr	
Pavelka	9.8%, 10.5%	15.20%	67%, 65%	73.0%	39.4%†, 40.1%	49.4%	nr	nr	

Appendix F. Evidence Table 10[1]. Systematic reviews of COX-2 inhibitors

Author Year	(1) Aims	(2) Time period covered	(3) Eligibility criteria	(4) Number of patients	(5) Characteristics of identified articles: study designs	(6) Characteristics of identified articles: populations
<b>Celecoxib reviews</b>						
Garner 2004 (Celecoxib for RA)	To establish the efficacy and safety of celecoxib in the management of RA.	1966- July, 2002 MEDLINE 1980 - July, 2002 EMBASE CCTR through Issue 3: 2002	RCTs that used any accepted method to assess disease severity or progression, particularly ACR core set of disease activity measures for RA clinical trials endorsed by EULAR and/or OMERACT.	4465	5 RCTs: 2 placebo-controlled double-blinded studies; 3 active-comparator double-blinded studies	Patients with RA with no restrictions regarding age or sex. Studies that include both RA and OA patients were also eligible for inclusion.
Ashcroft 2001	To evaluate incidence of gastroduodenal ulcers in patients with RA or OA treated with celecoxib	1988-2000 MEDLINE, EMBASE and CCTR	RCTs of OA or RA patients treated with celecoxib who had scheduled endoscopies.	4632	5 RCTs: All parallel group double-blinded 12wks (4 studies) or 24 wks (one study) in duration. 2 published and 3 unpublished studies.	One unpublished study assessed OA patients only, 2 studies (both published) assessed RA patients only and two studies (both unpublished) assessed OA and RA patients. All patients had at least one endoscopic evaluation at 4, 8, 12 or 24 weeks. In all but one study patients also had baseline evaluation.
<b>Rofecoxib reviews</b>						

Appendix F. Evidence Table 10[1]. Systematic reviews of COX-2 inhibitors

Author Year	(1) Aims	(2) Time period covered	(3) Eligibility criteria	(4) Number of patients	(5) Characteristics of identified articles: study designs	(6) Characteristics of identified articles: populations
Juni 2004	To establish whether robust evidence, aside from the published findings of the VIGOR trial, on the adverse effects of rofecoxib was available prior to September, 2004.	from "inception" of database through September, 2004 MEDLINE EMBASE, CINAHL and CCTR	RCTs in adults with chronic musculoskeletal disorders that compared rofecoxib with other NSAIDs or placebo and cohort and case-control studies of CV risk and naproxen.	25,273	18 RCTs - 12 OA, 5 RA, 1 low back pain. 3 trails had 2 arms, 7 had 3 arms, 8 had four arms. 11 observational studies.	No restrictions based on age or sex.
Garner 2004 (Rofecoxib for RA)	To assess the efficacy and toxicity of rofecoxib in treating RA.	1966 - December, 2000 MEDLINE 1980 - December 2000 EMBASE CDSR, CCTR though Issue 4: 2000 HTA database (no date supplied)	Parallel design, placebo-controlled and comparative RCTs evaluating efficacy and/or toxicity of rofecoxib in RA. Outcome criteria had to be available to evaluate efficacy and/or toxicity, such as OMERACT outcomes.	8,734	2 RCTs: 1 parallel-group double-blinded placebo controlled and 1 parallel-group double-blinded active comparator	Both trials assessed patients diagnosed with RA with no restrictions based on age or sex.
Garner2004(Rofecoxib for OA)	To establish the efficacy and safety of rofecoxib in the management of OA.	1966-August, 2004 MEDLINE 1980-week 36, 2004 EMBASE CCTR through Issue 3: 2004	Published RCTs of parallel design that used any accepted method to assess OA severity or progression.	21551	26 published RCTs: 25 parallel- group double-blinded and 1 single-blinded study.	Patients with OA with no restrictions based on age or sex.
<b>Valdecoxib reviews</b>						

Appendix F. Evidence Table 10[1]. Systematic reviews of COX-2 inhibitors

Author Year	(1) Aims	(2) Time period covered	(3) Eligibility criteria	(4) Number of patients	(5) Characteristics of identified articles: study designs	(6) Characteristics of identified articles: populations
Eisen 2005	To compare incidence of upper GI disturbances (abdominal pain, dyspepsia or nausea) with valdecoxib, non-specific NSAIDs and placebo in patients with OA and RA.	All included studies were published in 2002. Method of identifying included studies was not specified.	Not reported	4,394	5 randomized, double-blind 12-week phase III trials; Three OA studies and 2 RA studies were included.	Patients were eligible if they met ACR criteria for RA or OA. Reasons for patient exclusion included serious concomitant GI, renal, hepatic or coagulation disorders, malignancy or diagnosis with other forms of inflammatory or secondary non-inflammatory arthritis.
<b><i>Etoricoxib (included for safety only)</i></b>						
Ramey, et al 2005	To determine the incidence of upper GI perforations, symptomatic gastroduodenal ulcers and upper GI bleeding (PUBs) in etoricoxib users compared to NSAID users	Trials completed by June 2003	NR	5441	10 RCTs 9 active-comparator and placebo-controlled, one active-comparator only	OA (4 studies), RA (3 studies), ankylosing spondylitis (1 study), endoscopy trials (2 12-wk studies)

Appendix F. Evidence Table 10[1]. Systematic reviews of COX-2 inhibitors

Author Year	(1) Aims	(2) Time period covered	(3) Eligibility criteria	(4) Number of patients	(5) Characteristics of identified articles: study designs	(6) Characteristics of identified articles: populations
<b><i>Lumiracoxib (included for safety only)</i></b>						
Matchaba, et al 2005	To determine the risk of CV events with lumiracoxib through meta-analysis	dates NR	All clinical studies >1wk and <52wks in Novartis Lumiracoxib Clinical Trial Database included	34,668	22 RCTs: 21 published trials, including 8 placebo-controlled and 1 unpublished (also placebo-controlled)	OA (15 trials) and RA (7 trials)
<b><i>Multiple COX-2s (reported adverse events only)</i></b>						
Kearney, et al 2006	To assess the effects of selective COX-2 inhibitors and traditional NSAIDs on the risk of vascular events	January 1966-April 2005 (MEDLINE and Embase)	RCTs at least 4 wks "scheduled treatment" of COX-2 vs placebo or NSAID that reported serious CV events	145,373	only described as RCTs (n=138); either placebo (n=121) or active	numerous indications, including: RA, OA, low back pain, ankylosing spondylitis, polyps and Alzheimer's Disease.

Appendix F. Evidence Table 10[1]. Systematic reviews of COX-2 inhibitors

Author Year	(7) Characteristics of identified articles: interventions	(8) Main results
<b>Celecoxib reviews</b>		
Garner 2004 (Celecoxib for RA)	<p>1 study celecoxib (200mg 2x/day) v diclofenac (75mg 2x/day)</p> <p>1 study celecoxib (400mg 2x/day) v diclofenac (75 mg 2x/day) or ibuprofen (800mg 3x/day)</p> <p>1 study celecoxib (200mg 2x/day) v naproxen (500mg 2x/day)</p> <p>1 study celecoxib at varied doses (40mg, 200mg or 400mg 2x/day each) v placebo</p> <p>1 study celecoxib at varied doses (100mg, 200mg or 400mg 2x/day each) v naproxen (500 mg 2x/day) or placebo</p>	<p><b>Efficacy</b></p> <p>Celecoxib v naproxen: Differences in withdrawal rates according to intervention or dosage were not statistically significant (29% for naproxen, 28%, 21% and 27% respectively for 100mg, 200mg and 400mg.) Percentage of patients showing improvement were also similar regardless of intervention or dosage. When compared to naproxen, RR of improvement were 1.1 (95% CI: 0.8, 1.4) at 100mg 1.2 (95% CI: 1.0, 1.5) at 200mg and 1.1 (95% CI: 0.9, 1.4) at 400mg.</p> <p>Celecoxib v diclofenac: Withdrawals due to lack of efficacy were essentially the same for both interventions (8% for celecoxib and 7% for diclofenac). Percentage of patients showing improvement according to ACR 20 responder index was also essentially the same (25% for celecoxib, 22% for diclofenac. RR 1.1 (95% CI: 0.8, 1.5))</p> <p>Celecoxib v placebo: Withdrawal rates due to lack of efficacy varied widely between the two placebo-controlled studies: Placebo -18% and 45%; 40mg -17%; 100mg -28%; 200mg - 4% and 21%; and 400mg - 6% and 27%.</p> <p>Percentage of patients showing improvement: 100 mg - 40%; 200mg - 44% and 51%; 400mg - 39% and 52%; placebo - 29% for both studies. There was no statistically significant difference between 40mg and placebo.</p> <p><b>Safety</b></p> <p>Celecoxib v naproxen: Two studies reported data on endoscoped ulcers at 12 wks at 200mg dose. Pooled RR was 0.2 (95% CI: 0.1, 0.4) For other doses of celecoxib when compared to naproxen the RR of developing an ulcer 3mm or greater was 0.2 at 100mg (95% CI: 0.2, 0.5) and 0.2 at 400mg (95% CI: 0.1, 0.5) Only at 100mg was celecoxib statistically favored over naproxen for GI events (RR 0.3 (95% CI: 0.07, 0.9))</p> <p>Celecoxib v diclofenac: At 24 wks, 15% of diclofenac and 3% of celecoxib patients had endoscopically detected ulcers of 3mm or greater (RR 0.3 (95% CI: 0.6, 0.9)) Total number of AEs was similar for both interventions (68% of patients taking celecoxib and 73% of patients taking diclofenac) but more diclofenac patients withdrew due to AEs (10% of celecoxib patients v 19% of diclofenac patients (RR 0.5 (95% CI: 0.4, 0.8)). Two diclofenac patients required hospitalization due to gastric erosions/ulcer.</p> <p>Celecoxib v placebo: For one study, only number of patients withdrawn due to AEs was reported. There was no significant difference amongst doses or v placebo (40mg - 4%; 200mg - 5%; 400mg - 5%; placebo - 6%.) For the other study, GI AEs were also similar (100mg - 28%, 200mg - 25%, 400mg - 26%, placebo - 19%.) No clinically significant GI events were reported.</p>



Appendix F. Evidence Table 10[1]. Systematic reviews of COX-2 inhibitors

<b>Author Year</b>	<b>(7) Characteristics of identified articles: interventions</b>	<b>(8) Main results</b>
Ashcroft 2001	Various doses of celecoxib ranging from 50mg - 400 mg/day v naproxen (500mg), diclofenac (75mg) or ibuprofen (800 mg)	<p>Celecoxib v diclofenac (200 mg v 75mg 2x/day)                      One study found no difference b/t celecoxib v diclofenac at 12 wks (RR 0.73 (95% CI: 0.11-0.52)).                      However, another trial comparing ulcers at 24 wks found lower rates with celecoxib (RR 0.24 (95% CI 0.11-0.52))                      Sensitivity analysis revealed that there were significantly fewer endoscopic ulcers w/celecoxib 200mg 2x/day v modified-release diclofenac 75mg 2x/day. RR 0.24 (95% CI: 0.16-0.40)                      Celecoxib v ibuprofen (200mg v 800mg 3x/day)                      Fewer ulcers were found at 12wks w/celecoxib RR 0.30 (95% CI: 0.20-0.46)                      Celecoxib v naproxen (doses 100mg - 800mg v 1000 mg)                      For all doses, fewer ulcers w/celecoxib at 12 wks. Pooled data for dose of celecoxib 100mg resulted in RR 0.22 (95% CI: 0.13-0.37) At 200mg, pooled RR was 0.24 (95% CI: 0.17-0.33)                      Celecoxib v placebo                      Doses from 100-800mg/day. Pooled analysis - celecoxib 100mg 2x/day RR 1.96 (95% CI: 0.85-4.55)                      200mg 2x.day RR 2.35 (95% CI: 1.02-5.38)</p>
<b>Rofecoxib reviews</b>		
Juni 2004	Rofecoxib at various doses ranging from 12.5mg to 50mg v diclofenac (150mg), ibuprofen (2400mg), nabumetone (1000mg or 1500mg, naproxen (1000mg) or placebo	<p>All serious CV event risk based on available comparisons: 85 AEs in rofecoxib groups, 38 in control groups. RR 1.55 (95%: CI 1.05-2.29)                      MI risk based on all comparisons: 52 AEs in rofecoxib groups, 12 in control groups. RR 2.24 (95% CI: 1.24-4.02)                      Stroke risk for all available comparisons: 25 AEs in rofecoxib group, 19 in control groups. RR 1.02 (95% CI: 0.54-1.93)</p> <p>Cardioprotective effect of naproxen: Meta-analysis of 11 studies showed RR 0.86 (95% CI: 0.75-0.99) No difference compared to non-naproxen NSAIDs RR 0.86 (95% CI: 0.75-0.99) For both analyses there was considerable between-study heterogeneity (<math>I^2</math> 68% and 43% respectively) Studies funded by Merck indicated larger cardioprotective effects (<math>p=0.001</math> and <math>p=0.056</math>, respectively, by test of interaction.)</p>

Appendix F. Evidence Table 10[1]. Systematic reviews of COX-2 inhibitors

Author Year	(7) Characteristics of identified articles: interventions	(8) Main results
Garner 2004 (Rofecoxib for RA)	1 8-week trial rofecoxib 5mg, 25mg or 50mg/day v placebo; 1 trial 50mg/day rofecoxib v 500mg naproxen 2x/day. Trial duration 4 weeks to 13 months.	<p><b>Efficacy</b>                      Rofecoxib v placebo: No SS difference between 5mg rofecoxib and placebo (10.1% and 14.2% respectively.) ACR 20 responders who received 25mg or 50mg (48% and 53% of patients, respectively) was statistically significantly more than those patients receiving placebo (35%) RR 1.39 CI:1.07, 1.80 and RR 1.55 CI: 1.20, 1.99 respectively.) There were fewer withdrawals due to lack of efficacy in patients taking 25mg (6.4%) or 50mg (6.8%) v placebo (14.3%) RR 0.45 CI: 0.23, 0.89 and RR 0.48 CI 0.24 and 0.94 respectively) and overall at 25 mg (15.2%), 50mg (16.1%) and placebo (22.0%) (RR 0.69 CI: 0.44, 1.09 and RR 0.72 CI: 0.47, 1.15.)</p> <p>Rofecoxib v naproxen: No statistically significant differences between comparators for withdrawals due to lack of efficacy: rofecoxib withdrawals 6.3% v naproxen withdrawals 6.5% (RR 0.97 CI: 0.82, 1.14)</p> <p><b>Safety</b>                      Rofecoxib v placebo: There was no statistically significant difference in the number of withdrawals due to AEs for all doses of rofecoxib and placebo (placebo - 3.0%, 5 mg - 3.2%, 25 mg - 4.7% and 50 mg - 6.2%) except that more patients experienced rash at 50mg.                      Rofecoxib v naproxen:Withdrawal rates due to AEs were similar for rofecoxib (16.4% of patients) v naproxen (16.1%) (RR 1.02 CI: 0.92, 1.12)</p>
Garner2004(Rofecoxib for OA)	Rofecoxib v:-NSAIDsdiclofenac (3 RCTs)ibuprofen (4 RCTs)nabumetone (3 RCTs)naproxen (3 RCTs)nimesulide (2 RCTs)diclofenac+misoprostol (1 RCT)-Other Cox-2scelecoxib and paracetamol (2 studies)celecoxib (10 studies)valdecoxib (1 study)-Placebo (12 RCTs)	<p><b>Efficacy</b>Rofecoxib v NSAIDs: Study design greatly effected the ability to pool data regarding rofecoxib v various NSAIDs. For diclofenac, ibuprofen, naproxen, nabumetone, diclofenac+misoprostol, and nimesulide all studies showed that efficacy was not statistically significantly greater for rofecoxib and the comparator, however nearly all the studies suffered from inconsistent methodologies and data reporting.Rofecoxib v Cox-2s: There was no SS difference between withdrawals due to lack of efficacy between rofecoxiib 25mg and celecoxib 200mg at 6 wks. RR: 0.76 CI: 0.47, 1.24). Patient global response pooled data indicated that patients taking 25mg rofecoxib v celecoxib had good-excellent improvement (RR 1.14 CI: 1.05, 1.24)Rofecoxib v placebo: The result of meta-analysis showed that rofecoxib was superior to placebo for most outcome measures (e.g. WOMAC, patient/investigator ratings.) NNT with rofecoxib v placebo to achieve improvement in patient global assessment was 5 (95% CI: 4, 6)Safety1) GI eventsRofecoxib v NSAIDs: Rates of GI events difficult to interpret due to methodology of included studies and lack of reported data. The only statistically significant difference relating to GI events was that rofecoxib caused less GI pain than diclofenac (0.8% in the rofecoxib group and 5% in the diclofenac group.) Naproxen caused more withdrawals due to GI events. Endoscopic evidence indicates that rofecoxib at 25mg and 50mg caused fewer gastric ulcers and fewer duodenal ulcers at 25mg when compared to ibuprofen.Rofecoxib v placebo: The risk of GI AE was not significantly increased with rofecoxib for most studies, however one study reported increased GI events at doses of 25mg RR 3.39 CI: 1.47, 7.84) Endoscopic evaluation at 18wks showed no difference in ulcers or erosions except that rofecoxib caused fewer large ulcers/erosions (&gt; 5mm) RR 0.42 CI: 0.20, 0.86.2) CV eventsRofecoxib v NSAIDs: Many studies did not report specific data on CV events. One study of rofecoxib v diclofenac reported withdrawal due to CV events (hypertension: 3/231, palpitation 4/232, TIA 3/230) RR 1.0 (95% CI: 0.2, 4.9) for diclofenac v RR 1.3 (95% CI: 0.3, 5.8) for rofecoxib. For rofecoxib v naproxen, one withdrawal due to CHF was reported in the rofecoxib group of the Naproxen 901 studies. The ADVANTAGE study report 5 patients with MI in the rofecoxib group v 1 in the naproxen group (RR 4.98 CI: 0.58, 42.57) and 6 strokes in the rofecoxib group v 0 in the naproxen group (RR 1.22 CI: 0.89,</p>

Appendix F. Evidence Table 10[1]. Systematic reviews of COX-2 inhibitors

Author Year	(7) Characteristics of identified articles: interventions	(8) Main results
		<p>1.68.) Higher rates of CV events occurred in patient with pre-existing hypertension. Rofecoxib v placebo: Two trials that reported withdrawals due to CV events showed no SS difference between rofecoxib withdrawals and placebo withdrawals.3) Other AEs Rofecoxib v NSAIDs: Rofecoxib seems to be associated with increased systolic blood pressure compared to celecoxib, diclofenac and naproxen. One study also reported an increase in diastolic blood pressure. Other reported AEs include oedema (v diclofenac, RR 19.20 CIL 1.17, 314.55), hypertension (v diclofenac 15.54 CI: 0.93, 258.58) and weight gain (v diclofenac RR 19.20 CI: 1.17, 314.55) Rofecoxib v placebo: Overall risk of AEs was statistically significantly higher at 6wks at 12.5mg. RR 3.95 CI: 1.05, 14.63</p>
<b>Valdecoxib reviews</b>		
Eisen 2005	<p>OA patients were randomly assigned to one of five treatment groups - placebo, valdecoxib (5, 10 or 20 mg) or nonspecific NSAID (500 mg naproxen, 800 mg ibuprofen, or 75 mg diclofenac.) RA patients were randomly assigned to one of five treatment groups - placebo, valdecoxib (10, 20 or 40 mg) or naproxen (500 mg.) weeks. Low-dose aspirin (&lt; 325 mg/day) and acetaminophen (&lt; 2 g/day) were permitted as concomitant medications. Prednisone up to 10 mg/day was permitted for RA patients.</p>	<p>Cumulative 12-wk incidence of any moderate to severe upper GI AE based on Kaplan-Meier time-to-event estimates were:                      NSAIDs (n=1185): 15.0 (12.8-17.2)                      Valdecoxib (n=2236): 9.0 (7.7-10.4)                      Placebo (n=973): 10.5 (7.3-13.7)</p> <p>Pooled analysis demonstrated decrease in dyspepsia and improvement in GI tolerability for valdecoxib v NSAIDs.</p>
<b>Etoricoxib (included for safety only)</b>		
Ramey, et al 2005	<p>For all PUBs, etoricoxib v NSAIDs RR 0.48% (95% CI ).32, 0.73; p&lt;0.001</p>	<p>Effect in favor of etoricoxib remained across the following subgroups: age; history of PUB; GPA users; gender; disease (OA or RA) and ethnicity</p>

Appendix F. Evidence Table 10[1]. Systematic reviews of COX-2 inhibitors

<b>Author Year</b>	<b>(7) Characteristics of identified articles: interventions</b>	<b>(8) Main results</b>
<b><i>Lumiracoxib (included for safety only)</i></b>		
Matchaba, et al 2005	15 studies lumiracoxib (200-1200mg) v celecoxib (200mg), diclofenac (75 mg bid), ibuprofen (800mg tid), naproxen (500mg bid) or rofecoxib (25 mg), 8 studies lumiracoxib (100-400mg) v placebo	For all comparisons, no SS difference was found in CV event rates with lumiracoxib v comparator. Lumiracoxib compared less favorably with naproxen (0.37% event rate with lumiracoxib v 0.22% event rate with naproxen) but again did not meet statistical significance.
<b><i>Multiple COX-2s (reported adverse events only)</i></b>		
Kearney, et al 2006		NA

Appendix F. Evidence Table 10[1]. Systematic reviews of COX-2 inhibitors

Author Year	(9) Subgroups	(10) Adverse events	(11) Comments
<b>Celecoxib reviews</b>			
Garner 2004 (Celecoxib for RA)	Celecoxib v placebo No effect for H. pylori status, concurrent aspirin or corticosteroid use, history of GI tract bleeding and ulcers.  No other subgroup analysis reported	Celecoxib v diclofenac Total AEs: 68% v 73% RR 0.9 (95% CI: 0.9, 1.0) GI: 36% v 48% RR 0.8 (95% CI: 0.6, 0.9) Peripheral oedema: 3% v 2% Hypertension: 1% v 2% Celecoxib v naproxen No difference between total AE rate and withdrawal rate due to AEs GI: RR of ulcer 3mm or greater at 200mg of celecoxib 0.2 (95% CI: 0.1, 0.4) Celecoxib v placebo GI: In celecoxib patients, RR of ulcer development 3mm or greater at 12 wks was 1.5 at 100mg (95% CI: 0.5, 4.8); 1.0 at 200mg (95% CI: 0.3, 3.5); and 1.5 at 400mg (95% CI: 0.5, 5.0)	Study design problems with both CLASS and VIGOR studies
Ashcroft 2001	Not reported	Celecoxib v diclofenac Risk of endoscopically detected ulcer - pooled analysis: RR 0.24 (95% CI: 0.16-0.40) Celecoxib v ibuprofen Risk of endoscopically detected ulcer - RR 0.30 (95% CI: 0.20-0.46) Celecoxib v naproxen Pooled analysis - celecoxib 100mg 2x/day RR 0.22 (95% CI: 0.13-0.37) 200mg 2x/day RR 0.24 (95% CI: 0.17-0.33) Celecoxib v placebo Pooled analysis - celecoxib 100mg 2x/day RR 1.96 (95% CI: 0.85-4.55) 200mg 2x.day RR 2.35 (95% CI: 1.02-5.38)	
<b>Rofecoxib reviews</b>			

Appendix F. Evidence Table 10[1]. Systematic reviews of COX-2 inhibitors

Author Year	(9) Subgroups	(10) Adverse events	(11) Comments
Juni 2004	Not reported	MI - RR (95% CI) Rofecoxib: 12.5mg: 2.71 (0.99-7.44) 25mg: 1.37 (0.52-3.61) 50mg: 2.83 (1.24-6.43)  Naproxen: 2.93 (1.36-6.33) non-Naproxen NSAIDs: 1.55 (0.55-4.36) Placebo: 1.04 (0.34-3.12)	Restrictive inclusion criteria resulted in few study participants with history of CV disease. Other studies (Ray et al, 2002) looking at rofecoxib use in routine clinical settings report that 40% of rofecoxib patients had history of CV disease resulting in an eight-fold increase in MI (11.6 v 1.45 per 1000 patient years)
Garner 2004 (Rofecoxib for RA)	Patients with previous GI events showed a lower rate of GI events in patients treated with rofecoxib (RR 0.4 CI: 0.2, 0.8) v those with no previous events (RR 0.5 CI: 0.3, 0.7). For patients with very low risk (<65 years of age, H. pylori negative, no history of clinical GI event and not taking glucocorticoids) the RR of clinical GI events was significantly lower (RR 0.1 CI: 0.02, 1.0)	Rofecoxib v placebo Withdrawals due to GI events: 0% placebo, 1.3% rofecoxib 5mg/day, 1.8% rofecoxib 25 mg/day, 0% rofecoxib 50mg/day. No PUBs reported. Lower extremity oedema: 1.2% placebo, 1.3% rofecoxib 5mg/day, 2.3% rofecoxib 25 mg/day, 2.5% rofecoxib 50mg/day Hypertension: 1.2% placebo, 0% rofecoxib 5 mg/day, 2.9% rofecoxib 25 mg/day, 3.1% rofecoxib 50mg/day Renal: Little reported data, however 1 patient in both 25mg and 50mg groups withdrew due to elevated serum creatinine level Rofecoxib v naproxen Upper GI events incidence: 1.4% rofecoxib, 3.0% naproxen RR 0.43 CI: 0.24, 0.77 Severe GI events incidence: 0.4% rofecoxib, 0.9% naproxen (RR 0.43 CI 0.24, 0.77). Renal AEs: 1.2% rofecoxib, 0.9% naproxen (RR 1.4 CI: 0.9, 2.1) CV events were higher in the rofecoxib group at unspecified doses. CV death rate was 0.2% for both rofecoxib and naproxen. MI rate was 0.45% for rofecoxib v 0.1% for naproxen (RR 5.0 CI: 1.5, 13.2)	In rofecoxib v placebo study, AEs were only reported if experience >3% of patients in any group. Also, no data on mortality was presented in the rofecoxib v placebo study.

Appendix F. Evidence Table 10[1]. Systematic reviews of COX-2 inhibitors

<b>Author Year</b>	<b>(9) Subgroups</b>	<b>(10) Adverse events</b>	<b>(11) Comments</b>
Garner2004(Rofecoxib for OA)	Rofecoxib v naproxen-One study analyzed patients receiving concomitant low-dose aspirin which showed no SS difference in GI events	Rofecoxib v diclofenac:Total AEs: Fewer withdrawals due to AEs for 12.5mg and 25mg of rofecoxib (RR 0.71 CI: 0.52, 0.97 and RR 0.70 CI: 0.51, 0.95 respectively). No SS differences for withdrawals due to GI or CV AEs. SS fewer liver function disturbances reported with rofecoxib, but there are no numerical data supplied to support this.Rofecoxib v ibuprofen:GI: Fewer gastric ulcers 25mg RR: 0.15 CI: 0.09, 0.25 and 50mg RR: 0.23 CI: 0.14, 0.36. Fewer duodenal ulcers at 25mg RR 0.24 CI: 0.09, 0.63 but no SS difference at 50mg. Other AEs ambiguously reported.Rofecoxib v naproxen:GI: Study data pooled for 2 of 4 studies. Fewer GI events reported in rofecoxib group for two studies (63/471 v 114/473 RR: 0.55 CI: 0.42, 0.73) No PUBs in rofecoxib group, 3 in naproxen group (RR 0.14 CI: 0.01, 2.77) Serious AEs: 6/17 serious AEs considered drug-related. One CHF in rofecoxib group, 5 other serious AEs in naproxen group. Other discontinuations for hypertension (2/471 v 0/473; RR 5.02 CI: 0.24, 104.31) and oedema (3/471 v 0/473; RR 7.03 CI: 0.36, 135.77)Rofecoxib v nabumetonePooled analysis showed no difference in total or serious AEs (RR 1.09 CI: 0.99, 1.20 and RR 1.28 CI: 0.57, 2.89 respectively)Rofecoxib v placeboSS AEs were for total withdrawals in rofecoxib group 12.5 mg at 6/8 wks. (RR: 2.18 CI: 1.34, 3.55) and 50mg at 12wks (RR 2.04 CI: 1.24, 3.36)	Lack of adequate reporting of outcomes and lack of consideration of variations in NSAID toxicity in many of the included studies severely hampered the ability to draw conclusions regarding efficacy and safety.
<b>Valdecoxib reviews</b>			
Eisen 2005	Not reported	AEs estimated using Kaplan-Meier time-to-event analysis Valdecoxib (n=2236) abdominal pain: 4.2 (3.3-5.2) dyspepsia: 3.9 (3.0-4.8) nausea: 2.7 (1.9-3.5) NSAIDs (n=1185) abdominal pain: 6.9 (5.3-8.4) dyspepsia: 6.8 (5.2-8.3) nausea: 4.0 (2.8-5.2) Placebo (n=973) abdominal pain: 4.1 (2.6-5.7) dyspepsia: 3.8 (2.4-5.2) nausea: 4.8 (2.0-7.6)	Patients taking <5mg of valdecoxib were excluded from the final results - final number of participants was 4394.
<b>Etoricoxib (included for safety only)</b>			

Appendix F. Evidence Table 10[1]. Systematic reviews of COX-2 inhibitors

Author Year	(9) Subgroups	(10) Adverse events	(11) Comments
Ramey, et al 2005			
<b><i>Lumiracoxib (included for safety only)</i></b>			
Matchaba, et al 2005	No subgroup analysis		quality of included studies not considered in meta-analysis
<b><i>Multiple COX-2s (reported adverse events only)</i></b>			
Kearney, et al 2006	No subgroup analysis	<p>COX-2 vs placebo short- and long-term studies: COX-2s associated with increase in rate of MI - 0.6%/yr vs 0.3%/yr (RR 1.86 CI 95% 1.33-2.59 p=0.0003) RR or all vascular events increases to 1.45 (95% CI 1.12-1.80, p=0.0003) when only long-term (&gt;1 yr) were analyzed.</p> <p>COX-2 vs NSAID: Overall RR of any vascular event among heterogeneous studies 1.0%/yr vs 0.9%/yr was 1.16 (CI 95% 0.97-1.38, p=0.1)</p>	<p>quality of included studies not considered</p> <p>of 121 placebo trials, nine were long-term. 2/3 of CV events occurred in long-term trials.</p>



Appendix F. Evidence Table 10[1]. Systematic reviews of COX-2 inhibitors

Author Year	(1) Is there a clear review question?	(2) Were there explicit inclusion/exclusion criteria reported relating to selection of the primary studies?	(3) Is there evidence of a substantial effort to search for all relevant research?	(4) Was the literature search strategy stated?	(5) Is the validity of included studies adequately assessed?	(6) Is sufficient detail of the individual studies presented?	(7) Are there any important studies missing?	(8) Are the primary studies summarized appropriately?	(9) Quality rating
<b>Celecoxib reviews</b>									
Garner 2004 (Celecoxib for RA)	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	good
Ashcroft 2001	yes	yes	yes	partially	yes	yes	no (2001 publication)	yes	good
<b>Rofecoxib reviews</b>									
Juni 2004	yes	yes	yes	partially	yes	yes	no	yes	good
Garner 2004 (Rofecoxib for RA)	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	good
Garner 2004 (Rofecoxib for OA)	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	good
<b>Valdecoxib reviews</b>									
Eisen 2005	yes	yes	no	no	no	yes	no	yes	fair
<b>Etoricoxib (included for safety only)</b>									
Ramey, et al 2005	yes	no	no	no	no	yes	no	yes	fair

Appendix F. Evidence Table 10[1]. Systematic reviews of COX-2 inhibitors

Author Year	(1) Is there a clear review question?	(2) Were there explicit inclusion/exclusion criteria reported relating to selection of the primary studies?	(3) Is there evidence of a substantial effort to search for all relevant research?	(4) Was the literature search strategy stated?	(5) Is the validity of included studies adequately assessed?	(6) Is sufficient detail of the individual studies presented?	(7) Are there any important studies missing?	(8) Are the primary studies summarized appropriately?	(9) Quality rating
<i>Lumiracoxib (included for safety only)</i>									
Matchaba, et al 2005	yes	yes	yes	no	no	yes	no	yes	fair
<i>Multiple COX-2s (reported adverse events only)</i>									
Kearney, et al 2006	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	no	yes	good

Appendix F. Evidence Table 11[1]. Systematic reviews of acetaminophen

Author Year	(1) Aims	(2) Time period covered	(3) Eligibility criteria	(4) Number of patients	(5) Characteristics of identified articles: study designs	(6) Characteristics of identified articles: populations	(7) Characteristics of identified articles: interventions
Lee, 2004	To compare efficacy and safety of recommended doses of NSAIDs, including Cox 2 inhibitors, vs acetaminophen in the treatment of symptomatic hip and knee osteoarthritis	1966 through February 2003 MEDLINE 1991 to 1st quarter 2003 EMBASE Drugs and Pharmacy database	Original clinical trials with direct comparisons of an NSAID with acetaminophen or paracetamol without combination with a nonnarcotic analgesic or narcotic agent. Duration of NSAID exposure $\geq$ 7 days. Sufficient analyzable data	1252	7 clinical trials: 2 randomized active comparator trials without placebo arms, 2 randomized parallel-group double-blinded trials, 2 randomized crossover trials, and 1 randomized placebo-controlled double-blinded trial.	All trials included patients with knee OA, and 2 also included patients with hip OA. 71% were women.	1 study compared acetaminophen to placebo, and 5 compared acetaminophen to NSAIDs. Acetaminophen dose ranged from 2600 mg/d (1 study) to 4000 mg/d (5 studies).  Mean duration of trials was 22 weeks, with a range from 6 days to 2 years. If outlier study (104 weeks) removed, mean duration was 5.8 weeks.
Towheed, 2005 Cochrane review: most recent substantive update 9/16/02	1) To assess the efficacy and safety of acetaminophen (or paracetamol) vs placebo and 2) vs NSAIDs (ibuprofen, arthrotec, celecoxib, naproxen and rofecoxib) for treating osteoarthritis (OA)	1966 - July 2002 MEDLINE Through March 2002 Current contents To August 2002 Cochrane Controlled Trials Registry	Published RCTs evaluating efficacy and safety of acetaminophen alone in OA for adults with a diagnosis of primary or secondary OA at any site.	1689	6 RCTs, including 2 with crossover and 4 with parallel-group designs	All trials were of patients with OA of the knee, with one also including OA of the hip	2 trials of paracetamol vs placebo, 4000 mg/d and 3000 mg/d. 2 trials of NSAIDs vs paracetamol vs placebo, 150 - 200 mg, and 4000 mg, respectively. 6 trials of NSAIDs vs paracetamol, 12.5 mg/d - 2400 mg/d and 2000 mg/d - 4000 mg/d respectively. Duration of trials 1 week to 2 years.

Appendix F. Evidence Table 11[1]. Systematic reviews of acetaminophen

Author Year	(1) Aims	(2) Time period covered	(3) Eligibility criteria	(4) Number of patients	(5) Characteristics of identified articles: study designs	(6) Characteristics of identified articles: populations	(7) Characteristics of identified articles: interventions
Wegman, 2004	To systematically evaluate RCT evidence on short and long term efficacy of NSAID compared to acetaminophen for OA of the hip or knee. To critically appraise the quality of guidelines for management of OA, and compare content of recommendations in these guidelines on treatment of OA with NSAID or acetaminophen.	To December 2001	For evidence review: RCTs published as full reports comparing NSAIDs with acetaminophen for patients with pain and/or disability related to OA of the hip or knee. At least one of the following outcomes included: overall change, pain or disability. Random allocation of interventions. For guidelines: Guidelines developed by a professional working group of experts. Recommendations on pharmacological management of hip or knee OA.	655	7 publications describing 5 RCTs, two of which were of cross-over design9 guidelines	All trials included patients with knee OA, and two included those with hip or knee OA.	7 different types of NSAIDs, including 3 coxibs within recommended dose ranges were compared to acetaminophen with daily doses ranging from 2600 mg to 4000 mg. Mean duration of trial period from which data were drawn was $49 \pm 25$ days, with a range of 24 - 84 days.
Zhang, 2004	To assess the best available evidence for efficacy of paracetamol (acetaminophen) in the treatment of osteoarthritis (OA).	1966 through July, 2003	RCTs comparing paracetamol with placebo or NSAIDs for treatment of OA (radiographic evidence or ACR clinical criteria) or OA pain.	1712	10 RCTs: 5 double blind parallel, 3 double blind crossover, one "n of 1" and one undefined RCT (abstract only) design	Patients with either symptomatic OA of the knee (6 trials) or hip/knee (3 trials) or multiple joints (1 trial).	5 types of NSAIDs were compared to acetaminophen with daily doses ranging from 2600 mg/d to 6000 mg/d. Trial periods ranged from 7 days to 2 years.

Appendix F. Evidence Table 11[1]. Systematic reviews of acetaminophen

Author Year	(8) Main results
Lee, 2004	<p>Acetaminophen vs Placebo Based on 1 cross-over, double-blind RCT Improvement in rest pain: 16/22 (73%) vs 2/22 (9%) Improvement in pain on motion: 15/22 (68%) vs 4/22 (18%) Physician global assessment: 20/21 (95%) vs 1/21 (5%) Patient global assessment: 10/10 (100%) vs 1/10 (10%)</p> <p>Acetaminophen vs NSAIDs : absolute values not available except for global assessment Rest pain and HAQ pain: NSAIDs superior to acetaminophen. Rest pain effect sizes measured by standard mean difference (SMD): 0.32(95% CI, 0.08 - 0.56) and 0.34 (95% CI, 0.10 - 0.58). HAQ pain: 0.27 (95% CI, 0.05 - 0.48) and 0.24 (95% CI, 0.03 - 0.45). Pain on motion: SMDs not significant. Physical function: Neither 50 foot walk time nor HAQ showed significant differences between NSAIDs and acetaminophen. Group 1 (ibuprofen 2400 mg, arthrotec, celecoxib, naproxen) Physician global assessment: 23/61 (38%) vs 23/61 (38%) Patient global assessment: 37/94(39%) vs 45/97(46%) Group 2 (ibuprofen 1200 mg, arthrotec, rofecoxib 25 mg, naproxen) Physician global assessment: 23/61(38%) vs 27/62 (44%) Patient global assessment: 37/94 (39%) vs 57/95 (60%) Group 3 (ibuprofen 1200 mg, arthrotec, rofecoxib 12.5 mg, naproxen) Physician global assessment: not reported Patient global assessment: 37/94 (39%) vs 54/96 (56%)</p>
Towheed, 2005 Cochrane review: most recent substantive update 9/16/02	<p>Pain reduction 2 placebo controlled trials provided pain intensity at baseline and end point. Pooled ES 0.21 (95% CI 0.02-0.41, p=0.02), favoring paracetamol. 8 trials of NSAIDs vs paracetamol. Pooled ES 0.20 (95% CI 0.10-0.30, p=0.000) indicating NSAIDs better than paracetamol for OA pain relief. Overall Western Ontario and McMaster Universities OA Index (WOMAC) In the 2 placebo controlled trials, no significant difference between paracetamol and placebo (pooled ES 0.14, 95% CI -0.06-0.34). In the 8 other trials, NSAIDs significantly better than placebo (pooled ES 0.34, 95% CI 0.14-0.54) or paracetamol (pooled ES 0.3, 95% CI 0.17-0.44). Clinical response rate The 2 placebo controlled trials showed paracetamol better than placebo, but results were heterogeneous (Q=4.93; p=0.03). Clinical response RRs were 16 (95% CI 2.32-110.45; p=0.02) and 1.67 (95% CI 1.00-2.76; p=0.05). Trials comparing NSAIDs and paracetamol were homogeneous and showed NSAIDs superior to paracetamol. Pooled response RR 1.24 (95% CI 1.08-1.41, p=0.001). NNT was 8 (95% CI 5-19, p&lt;0.001), indicating 8 persons needed to be treated before NSAID showed benefit over paracetamol for moderate to excellent pain relief. Patient preference for NSAIDs or paracetamol Examined in 3 trials in crossover or n of 1 design. More patients preferred NSAIDs (61% vs 20%). Pooled RR 2.46 (95% CI 1.51-4.12, p&lt;0.001) and NNT was 3 (95% CI 2-7, p&lt;0.001). Percentage of patients preferring paracetamol similar to that preferring neither treatment (18%). Pooled RR 0.96 (95% CI 0.79-1.32).</p>
Wegman, 2004	<p>Rest pain (Based on 5 trials with 1208 subjects)Overall improvement using pooled data: inverse-variance-weighted mean difference (WMD) = -6.33 (95%CI -9.24, -3.41) and an average ES of 0.23 favoring NSAID-treated groups. In 3/6 studies, there was a reduction in rest pain favoring NSAIDs (p&lt;0.05)Walking pain (Based on 6 trials with 1051 subjects)Pooled data demonstrated a WMD of -5.76 (95% CI -8.99, -2.52) and an average ES of 0.23 favoring NSAID-treated groups.</p>

Appendix F. Evidence Table 11[1]. Systematic reviews of acetaminophen

Author Year	(8) Main results
Zhang, 2004	<p>General pain/rest pain (Based on 3 trials, OA of hip or knee, 4 - 6 weeks follow-up)                      Pooled standardized mean difference of 0.33 (95% CI 0.15 - 0.51), indicating a small effect in favor of NSAIDs. Pain on motion, comparison with high dose ibuprofen: 0.24 (0.00, 0.48); with low dose: 0.18 (-0.06, 0.42)                      Functional disability, comparison with high dose ibuprofen: 0.19 (0.01, 0.37); with low dose: 0.18 (0.00, 0.35)                      Overall change (physician assessment): 0.22 (0.02, 0.43)</p> <p>3/9 guidelines satisfied more AGREE criteria than others, especially rigor of development. Most guidelines had poor descriptions of stakeholder involvement, applicability and editorial independence were poorly described in most guidelines. The recommendations on use of NSAIDs or acetaminophen was fairly consistent.</p>

Appendix F. Evidence Table 11[1]. Systematic reviews of acetaminophen

<b>Author Year</b>	<b>(9) Subgroups</b>	<b>(10) Adverse events</b>	<b>(11) Comments</b>
Lee, 2004	Not reported	<p>Acetaminophen vs Placebo No participant removed from study due to side effects. Withdrawals/total number of AEs: 10/25 (40%) acetaminophen vs 8/25 (32%) placebo.</p> <p>Acetaminophen vs NSAIDS Group 1: Total # of AEs: 164/360 (46%) vs 179/353 (51%). Withdrawals due to toxicity: 35/448 (8%) vs 38/443 (8%). Group 2: Total # of AEs: 164/360 (46%) vs 170/352 (48%). Withdrawals due to toxicity: 35/448 (8%) vs 38/442 (9%). Group 3: Total # of AEs: 164/360 (46%) vs 180/353 (51%). Withdrawals due to toxicity: 35/448 (8%) vs 39/443 (9%).</p> <p>GI events, acetaminophen vs traditional NSAIDs 10/148 (7%) vs 38/212 (18%) GI events, acetaminophen vs Coxib NSAIDs 16/94 (17%) vs 47/288 (16%) GI withdrawals, acetaminophen vs traditional NSAIDs 9/151 (6%) vs 24/213 (11%)</p>	<p>Results do not account for differences in baseline pain</p> <p>Most trials had short follow-up periods.</p> <p>1 included trial was an abstract only (Altman 1999)</p>

Appendix F. Evidence Table 11[1]. Systematic reviews of acetaminophen

<b>Author Year</b>	<b>(9) Subgroups</b>	<b>(10) Adverse events</b>	<b>(11) Comments</b>
Towheed, 2005 Cochrane review: most recent substantive update 9/16/02	Not reported	Paracetamol vs placebo GI discomfort: 5/55 (9.1%) vs 6/55 (10.9%) Nausea: 1/25 (4.0%) vs 0/25 (0) Headache: 2/55 (3.6%) vs 2/55 (3.6%) Dizziness: 1/55 (1.8%) vs 7/55 (12.7%) NSAIDs overall vs paracetamol GI discomfort: 108/704 (15.3%) vs 82/702 (11.7%) RR 1.35 (95%CI 1.05-1.75) Nausea: 29/491(5.9%) vs 23/492 (4.7%) Headache: 27/581(4.6%) vs 32/580 (5.5%) Dizziness: 5/288 (1.7%) vs 3/282 (1.1%) Conventional NSAIDs vs paracetamol GI discomfort: 105/416 (25.2%) vs 76/420 (18.1%) RR 1.39, 95% CI 1.07-1.80 Nausea: 15/203 (7.4%) vs 8/210 (3.8%) Headache: 5/293 (1.7%) vs 8/298 (2.7%) Dizziness: - Coxibs vs paracetamol GI discomfort: 3/288 (1.0%) vs 6/282 (2.1%) RR 0.65, 95% CI 0.17-2.52 Nausea: 14/288 (4.9%) vs 15/282 (5.3%) Headache: 22/288 (7.6%) vs 24/282 (8.5%) Dizziness: 5/288 (1.7%) vs 3/282 (1.1%)	Only the 2 placebo controlled studies considered baseline pain levels  Most trials had short follow-up periods of approximately 6 weeks  1 included trial was an abstract only (Shen 2003)  One RCT was an "n of 1" design
Wegman, 2004	Not reported	Dropouts due to adverse events All NSAID groups: 63/752 (8.4%) High dose NSAID groups only: 48/497 (9.7%) Acetaminophen: 32/500 (6.4%) The overall safety measure derived from pooled data for dropouts due to AEs showed no statistically significant difference between NSAID vs acetaminophen (OR 1.45; 95% CI 0.93, 2.27). Specific types of AEs resulting in withdrawal were not discernable due to lack of data in primary studies.	No data on specific AEs



Appendix F. Evidence Table 11[1]. Systematic reviews of acetaminophen

<b>Author Year</b>	<b>(9) Subgroups</b>	<b>(10) Adverse events</b>	<b>(11) Comments</b>
Zhang, 2004	Not reported	Not reported	Main results based on 3 trials with a total n of 589  Baseline pain levels not accounted for in analysis

Appendix F. Evidence Table 11[1]. Systematic reviews of acetaminophen

Author Year	(1) Is there a clear review question?	(2) Were there explicit inclusion/exclusion criteria reported relating to selection of the primary studies?	(3) Is there evidence of a substantial effort to search for all relevant research?	(4) Was the literature search strategy stated?	(5) Is the validity of included studies adequately assessed?	(6) Is there sufficient detail of the individual studies presented?	(7) Are there any important studies missing?	(8) Are the primary study summarized appropriately?
Lee 2004	Yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	Amadio 1983, Bradley 1992, Zoppi 1995	Yes
Towheed 2005	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	March 1994 awaiting assessment, Bradley 1992, Solomon 1974, Zoppi 1995 not included. Specific information on excluded studies not provided	Baseline pain levels not controlled. Specific data on how pooled SMDs were derived was not provided on tables
Wegman 2004	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes, although not much detail on study designs	Amadio 1983 March 1994 Zoppi 1995 Specific information on excluded studies not provided.	yes Baseline pain levels not controlled
Zhang 2004	yes	yes	yes	yes	Not sure - method of randomization not assessed, and only randomization, masking & withdrawal considered	One was abstract only	Altman 1999 Bradley 1992 Solomon 1974 Specific information on excluded studies not provided.	An "n of 1" study included, as well as an abstract only study

Appendix F. Evidence Table 12[1]. Topical NSAIDs trials

Author Year (Quality Score)	Eligibility criteria	Interventions (drug, dose, duration)	Run-in/ Washout Period	Allowed other medications/ interventions	Method of Outcome Assessment and Timing of Assessment
Tugwell 2004	Men and nonpregnant women 40 to 85 years old, with symptomatic primary OA of the knee and recent (<3 months) x-ray showing osteoarthritis (confirmed by radiologist)	Topical diclofenac solution (Pennsaid, 1.5% diclofenac sodium + 45.5% DMSO) tid Oral diclofenac 50 mg po tid  12 weeks	3-10 days	Aspirin up to 325 mg/day for cardiovascular prophylaxis	Pain and physical function (WOMAC VA3.1 OA Index)  Patient Global Assessment (100 mm VAS)  Stiffness by WOMAC stiffness dimension  Responder defined as >50% improvement in pain or function of >20 mm on VAS or >20% improvement in at least two of pain, function, or patient global assessment of >10 mm on VAS  All assessments at baseline and week 12
Bookman 2004	Primary OA in at least 1 knee, verified radiologically with previous 6 months and at least moderate pain in 2 weeks before randomization	Topical diclofenac solution (Pennsaid, 1.5% diclofenac sodium + 45.5% DMSO) qid DMSO solution qid Placebo solution qid  4 weeks	1-week washout for patients on NSAIDs	Aspirin up to 325 mg/day for cardiovascular prophylaxis Acetaminophen up to 650 mg qid except during 24 hours prior to baseline and final WOMAC assessments	Patient Global Assessment of arthritis (0=very good to 4=very poor): Weekly  Western Ontario and McMaster Universities Osteoarthritis (WOMAC): Daily  Pain on walking (first question of WOMAC pain dimension): Daily

Appendix F. Evidence Table 12[1]. Topical NSAIDs trials

Author Year (Quality Score)	Eligibility criteria	Interventions (drug, dose, duration)	Run-in/ Washout Period	Allowed other medications/ interventions	Method of Outcome Assessment and Timing of Assessment
Roth2004	Men and nonpregnant women 40 to 85 years old, with symptomatic primary OA of the knee and recent (<3 months) x-ray showing osteoarthritis who had flare of pain after washout of stable therapy	Topical diclofenac solution (Pennsaid, 1.5% diclofenac sodium + 45.5% DMSO) qid DMSO solution qid 12 weeks	Washout with flare (at least 3 days per week for 1 month) required for enrollment	Aspirin up to 325 mg/day for cardiovascular prophylaxis Acetaminophen up to 4 325 mg tabs/day allowed except for 3 days prior to scheduled final assessment	Patient Global Assessment (0=very good to 4=very poor) Western Ontario and McMaster Universities Osteoarthritis (WOMAC) pain, physical function, stiffness subscales Pain on walking (first question of WOMAC pain dimension) Timing of outcome assessment not clear
Trnavsky 2004	Men and women 40 to 75 years old with primary knee osteoarthritis, chronic and decompensated according to classification criteria of the American College of Rheumatology	Topical ibuprofen (Dolgit 5% ibuprofen cream) tid Placebo tid  7 days	Washout of 1 to 60 days if patients were on other drugs for OA	Acetaminophen only allowed during washout	Percent responder (reduction of at least 18 mm on 100 point VAS for pain, or at least 23% from baseline)  Pain with motion (0 to 100 mm VAS)  Pain at rest and overall pain (0 to 100 mm VAS)  Lequesne index (measures pain, maximum distance walked, and activities of daily living) (maximum score 24)  Patient/investigator global assessment of efficacy (0=bad to 4=very good)

Appendix F. Evidence Table 12[1]. Topical NSAIDs trials

Author Year (Quality Score)	Age Gender Ethnicity	Other population characteristics (diagnosis, etc)	Number screened/ eligible/ enrolled	Number withdrawn/ lost to fu/ analyzed	Results
Tugwell 2004	Mean age=63.5 57% female 94% white	Mean OA duration not reported Total x-ray score 6.4 vs. 6.2 WOMAC composite index (pain): 288 vs. 289	1057/NR/622	18 not included in ITT analysis b/c they did not have primary OA or did not take any medication 39% (245) withdrawn/10 lost to follow-up/604 analyzed in ITT analysis and 492 in per-protocol analysis	Topical vs. oral diclofenac (intention-to-treat analyses) Mean changes from baseline WOMAC pain (0-500 mm): -134 vs. -118, NS  WOMAC physical function (0-1700 mm): -348. -438p=0.06  WOMAC stiffness (0-200 mm): -45 vs. -52, NS  Patient global assessment (0-100 mm): -27 vs. -32, NS  Number of responders: 66% vs. 70%, NS
Bookman 2004	Mean age=62 63% female Race not reported	Mean OA duration NR Baseline WOMAC pain score (mean VAS):9.1 vs. 9.3 vs. 9.4	267/262/248	14% (35) withdrawn/lost to f/u not reported/247 analyzed	Topical diclofenac (A) vs. DMSO control (B) vs. placebo control (C) (intention-to-treat analyses) Mean changes from baseline WOMAC pain: -4 vs. -2.5 vs -2.5, p<0.05 for A vs. C  WOMAC physical function: -11.6 vs. -5.7 vs. -7.1, p<05 for A vs. C, p<0.01 for A vs. B  WOMAC stiffness: -1.5 vs. -0.7 vs. -0.6, p<0.01 for A vs. C, p<0.05 for A vs. B  Pain on walking: -0.8 vs. -0.4 vs. -0.6, p<0.05 for A vs. C, p<0.01 for A vs. B  Patient global assessment (mean summary score from weeks 1, 2, 3, and 4): 6.7 vs. 7.8 vs. 7.8, p<0.05 for A vs. C and A vs. B  Mean acetaminophen use (tablets): 36.2 vs. 49.5 vs. 54.9, NS

Appendix F. Evidence Table 12[1]. Topical NSAIDs trials

Author Year (Quality Score)	Age Gender Ethnicity	Other population characteristics (diagnosis, etc)	Number screened/ eligible/ enrolled	Number withdrawn/ lost to fu/ analyzed	Results
Roth2004	Mean age=64.168% femaleRace not reported	Mean OA duration NRBaseline WOMAC pain score (mean VAS): 13 vs. 13	568/466/326	30% (98) withdrawn/3 lost to FU/322 analyzed	Topical diclofenac vs. DMSO control (intention- to-treat analyses)Mean changes from baselineWOMAC pain: -5.9 vs. -4.3, p<0.005WOMAC physical function: -15.4 vs. - 10.1, p<0.005Patient global assessment: -1.3 vs. -0.9, p<0.005WOMAC stiffness: -1.8 vs. -1.3, p<0.01
Trnavsky 2004	Mean age=67 78% female Race not reported	Mean OA duration NR Baseline pain (0 to 100 mm VAS) score: 63 vs. 59	Not clear/not clear/50	None withdrawn/lost to follow-up/50 analyzed in intention-to-treat analysis	Topical ibuprofen vs. placebo (intention-to-treat analysis) Proportion of responders: 21/25 (84%) vs. 10/25 (40%), p<0.0001  Patient global assessment (good or very good): 17/25 (68%) vs. 4/26 (16%), p not reported  Mean changes from baseline (100 mm VAS) Pain on motion: -31.4 vs. -6.9 Pain on rest: -23.5 vs. -10.3 Overall pain: --22.6 vs. -12.3  Mean change from baseline (24 point scale) Lequesne index: -2.9 vs. -0.9

Appendix F. Evidence Table 12[1]. Topical NSAIDs trials

Author Year (Quality Score)	Method of adverse effects assessment?	Adverse Effects Reported	Total withdrawals; withdrawals due to adverse events
Tugwell 2004	Not clear how adverse events identified; categorized according to COSTART, severe AE pre-defined as one causing significant impairment of function or incapacitation and definite hazard to patient's health; adverse events defined according to Compendium of Pharmaceuticals and Specialties	Topical (n=311) vs. oral (n=311) diclofenac All GI events: 35% vs. 48%, p=0.0006 Abdominal pain: 12% vs. 22%, p=0.0008 Diarrhea: 9% vs. 17%, p=0.001 Dyspepsia: 15% vs. 26%, p=0.001 Flatulence: 10% vs. 17%, p=0.009 Melena: 1% vs. 2%, NS Nausea: 25% vs. 41%, p=0.4 Dry skin: 27% vs. 1%; p<0.0001 Rash: 12% vs. 2%, p<0.0001 Vesiculobullous rash: 5% vs. 0%, p<0.0001 Asthma: 0.6% vs. 3%, p=0.02 Dizziness: 0.6% vs. 4%, p=0.002 Dyspnea: 0% vs. 2%, p=0.01	30% vs. 30% withdrawals due to AE or lack of effect 21% vs. 26% withdrawal due to adverse events
Bookman 2004	Patient-recorded, GI complaints assessed by investigators weekly using checklist and dermatological exam performed	Topical diclofenac (n=84) vs. DMSO control (n=80) vs. placebo control (n=80) Minor skin dryness or flakiness: 36% vs. 14% vs. 1% Rash: 13% vs. 8% vs. 4% Paresthesia: 14% vs. 22% vs. 6% GI side effects: No differences	12% vs. 18% vs. 18% withdrawals 6% vs. 4% vs. 0% withdrawal due to adverse events
Roth 2004	Open-ended questions and checklist questionnaire used at each clinic visit and with telephone visits. Dermatological assessment at clinic visits.	Topical diclofenac (n=164) vs. DMSO control (n=162) GI side effects: No differences Dry skin: 37% vs. 25%, p<0.05 Rash: 11% vs. 5%, p<0.05	27% vs. 33% withdrawals 4.8% vs. 2.5% withdrawal due to adverse events
Trnavsky 2004	Not reported	No adverse events recorded	4% vs. 0% withdrawals No withdrawals due to adverse events

Appendix F. Evidence Table 12[1]. Topical NSAIDs trials

<i>Internal Validity</i>						
<b>Author Year</b>	<b>Randomization adequate?</b>	<b>Allocation concealment adequate?</b>	<b>Groups similar at baseline?</b>	<b>Eligibility criteria specified?</b>	<b>Outcome assessors masked?</b>	<b>Care provider masked?</b>
Tugwell 2004	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Bookman 2004	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Roth 2004	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	unclear
Trnavsky2004	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes



Appendix F. Evidence Table 12[1]. Topical NSAIDs trials

<b>External Validity</b>							
<b>Author Year</b>	<b>Patient masked?</b>	<b>Reporting of attrition, crossovers, adherence, and contamination</b>	<b>Loss to follow-up: differential/ high</b>	<b>Intention- to-treat (ITT) analysis</b>	<b>Post- randomization exclusions</b>	<b>Quality Rating</b>	<b>Number screened/ eligible/ enrolled</b>
Tugwell 2004	yes	no/no/no/no	no	yes	no	good	1057/NR/622
Bookman 2004	yes	no/no/no/no	no	yes	no	good	267/262/248
Roth 2004	yes	no/no/no/no	no	yes	no	good	568/428/326
Trnavsky2004	yes	no/no/no/no	no	yes	no	good	50/NR/50

Appendix F. Evidence Table 12[1]. Topical NSAIDs trials

<b>External Validity</b>	
<b>Author Year</b>	<b>Exclusion criteria</b>
Tugwell 2004	Secondary arthritis related to syphilitic neuropathy; ochronosis; psoriasis; metabolic bone disease; acute trauma; chondrocalcinosis with a history of pseudogout; fibromyalgia; previous major surgery to the knee or recommendation for knee replacement/reconstruction; recent intra-articular viscosupplementation; current or recent corticosteroid use; topical product use at the application site; history of sensitivity to any of the study drugs, acetylsalicylic acid or other NSAID; severe, uncontrolled cardiac, renal hepatic or other systemic disease; documented recent gastroduodenal ulcer or GI bleeding; history of alcohol or other drug abuse; lactational concomitant skin diseases at the application site; clinically significant elevation of serum creatinine or of AST or ALT; previous participation in a clinical trial within 30 days.
Bookman 2004	Secondary arthritis related to syphilitic neuropathy; ochronosis; psoriasis; metabolic bone disease; acute trauma; sensitivity to diclofenac, ASA or other NSAID, DMSO, propylene glycol, glycerin or ethanol; clinically active renal, hepatic or peptic ulcer disease; history of alcohol or drug abuse; lactation; concomitant skin disease at application site; corticosteroid use; use of another topical product at the application site; oral use of analgesic or glucosamine.
Roth 2004	Secondary arthritis related to systemic inflammatory arthritis; sensitivity to diclofenac, aspirin or any other NSAID, dimethyl sulfoxide, propylene glycol, glycerin, or ethanol; clinically active renal, hepatic, or peptic ulcer disease; a history of alcohol or other drug abuse; lactation; concomitant skin disease at the application site; corticosteroid use, including oral corticosteroid within 14 days, intramuscular corticosteroid within 30 days, intra-articular corticosteroid into the study knee within 90 days, intra-articular corticosteroid into any other joint within 30 days of study entry, or ongoing use of topical corticosteroid at the site of application; use of a topical product, treatment, or device at the application site for the relief of OA; ongoing use of prohibited medication, including NSAIDs, oral analgesic, muscle relaxant, or low-dose antidepressant; ongoing use of glucosamine or chondroitin sulfate sodium (unless used continuously for 90 days before study entry); intra-articular viscosupplementation (eg, hyaluronate sodium derivative) into the study knee in the preceding 90 days; current application for disability benefits on the basis of OA of the knee; fibromyalgia; and other painful or disabling condition affecting the knee.
Trnavsky2004	Secondary OA; obesity (body mass index $\geq 30$ kg/m <sup>2</sup> ); chronic painful disease of the hip or the ankle joint; allergic diathesis, bronchial asthma, or known hypersensitivity to NSAID; eczematous skin eruption; any physiotherapy.

Appendix F. Evidence Table 12[1]. Topical NSAIDs trials

<b><i>External Validity</i></b>				
<b>Author Year</b>	<b>Run-in/ Washout</b>	<b>Class naïve patients only</b>	<b>Control group standard of care</b>	<b>Funding</b>
Tugwell 2004	run-in NR/washout 3-10 days	no	NA	Dimethaid Healthcare Ltd.
Bookman 2004	run-in NR/washout 7 days (NSAIDs)	no	yes	Dimethaid Healthcare Ltd.
Roth 2004	run-in NR/washout 3 days	no	yes	Dimethaid Healthcare Ltd.
Trnavsky2004	run-in NR/ no washout (exception: 1-60 day washout for pts with previous treatment with drugs having a therapeutic effect on the knee joint)	no	yes	Dolorgiet Pharmaceuticals (Germany)