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# The case for recalling Lupron Depot

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"Pack your bags and run. If your doctor says the word Lupron, get up and walk out. It's not worth it! It's just not worth it!" says Derrick Fenner.

We spoke to Derrick and his wife, Rachelle, for our first story on Lupron Depot.

"There's days that I panic and my husband has to come home because I feel like I'm gonna die," Rachelle explains.

This highly toxic cancer drug is prescribed to chemically castrate men dying from prostate cancer, to relieve pain in women suffering from endometriosis, for infertility, and even for children with early puberty.

"I want to stop the next man, woman or child from taking this drug," says Chicago resident and Lupron patient Marne Rafferty, who contacted us after our investigation aired in early November.

"All the time I've spent trying to find a resolution--it was like doctors would ignore it. They would deny that it's Lupron. If they can't find a problem right away it just can't be. But your story brought out the fact for all of us that we're not alone."

Lupron is manufactured by Illinois-based Abbott Labs - formerly Takeda Abbott Pharmaceuticals (TAP)... a drug company with a criminal record for bribing doctors to prescribe Lupron.

"Since Lupron does not treat the disease but only treats the symptoms," says Endometriosis expert Dr. David Redwine, "it's just an expensive cliche' and it's ineffective."

Doctors like David Redwine, and patients like Marne say the side effects far outweigh the benefits.

"I was told that it was safe and the only side effect that I would have possibly is the menopausal symptoms," Marne recalls. "Not that I would lose my memory, not that I would have bone and joint pain, not that I would end up losing the eyesight in my left eye, and just all the other things that you go through."

Her husband, Ted, has been forced to take on three jobs to afford all the medical bills she's amassed since taking Lupron.

"She's developed the lupus, she wakes up with horrible bone and joint pain almost on a daily basis, rashes and fevers and it makes me feel very sad to see this happening to her, to our marriage, to our family."

In multiple interviews and dozens of e-mails, every patient tells us they wish they could turn back time, and turn down the Lupron shot.

"It's a terrible drug," says Marne. "It's a drug that destroys your life."

Marne and her father, Henderson resident Bernie Povitsky, have reached out to the FDA.

But like us, they got no answers as to what would be done to investigate Lupron--a drug for which the FDA has collected more than 12,000 reports of adverse events, including more than 1100 deaths.

"The FDA is in charge of these kinds of problems, and when you can't get a response, who do you go to?" Bernie asks.

Congress serves an important oversight role in ensuring that consumer products, including prescription drugs, are not harmful to the public.

So we took our investigation to the entire Nevada congressional delegation.

"I want them to look into this!" Bernie demands. "I want to know why, with all the complaints that are out there with the FDA, why nothing has been done that we know of."

It looks like something may be on the horizon.

Senator Reid and Congressman Heller weren't aware of the Lupron issue until they heard from Contact 13.

They've thanked us for raising awareness and say because of our report, they both plan to look into it.

Senator Ensign's and Congresswoman Titus' staff have already contacted the FDA.

And Congresswoman Berkeley's office says she, too, will be reaching out to FDA officials to make sure they're aware of the concerns raised by Nevadans and others who say they were negatively affected by this drug.

She wants to know more about how FDA plans to respond to the issues outlined in our reports and the incidents they detail.

"I think that the stories--your past stories--are going to make a difference," Marne says, hopefully. "And I think as a group we're going to get there and get this drug off the market. It might not happen today. But I feel it in my heart and I will not give up until I do whatever it takes."

A former FDA medical officer has said in court records that Lupron's manufacturer intentionally suppressed knowledge about the drug's real danger... misleading both doctors and patients.

But Abbott Labs counters that Lupron has had more than two decades of clinical experience and is an important treatment option for patients.

They say both the benefits and risks are well known and clearly outlined in the label.

The FDA ultimately has the final say.

Patients hope their voices, bolstered by help from Congress will be enough.

If you've experienced problems after taking Lupron, our Congressional representatives need to hear from you.