

Question 23 – Week of May 14

Silymarin (Milk Thistle) is a complementary agent commonly implemented for the treatment of liver disease. This agent has been shown to inhibit CYP3A4 and uridine diphosphoglucuronosyl transferase, leading to interactions with traditional prescription medications such as quinine, lidocaine, and cyclosporine. Other adverse effects include:

- A. Headache
- B. Impotence
- C. Nausea
- D. All of the above

Answer: D

Adverse effects of silymarin include nausea, diarrhea, dyspepsia, headache, arthralgias, skin reactions, impotence, and anaphylaxis. Most importantly, milk thistle has been shown to inhibit CYP3A4 and uridine diphosphoglucuronosyl transferase, thereby leading to interactions with traditional prescription medications such as quinine, lidocaine, certain calcium channel blocking agents, and cyclosporine, all of which are metabolized in part by CYP3A4.

References:

1. Mulrow C, Lawrence V, Jacobs B, et al. Milk thistle: Effects on liver disease and cirrhosis and clinical adverse effects. Evidence Report/Technology Assessment No. 21. AHRQ publication No. 01-E025. Rockville, MD, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, 2000.
2. Levy C, Seeff LD, Lindor KD. Use of herbal supplements for chronic liver disease. Clin Gastroenterol Hepatol 2004; 2:947-56