

Section 1

General Concept for Target-based Safety Assessment

1

Side Effects of Marketed Drugs: The Utility and Pitfalls of Pharmacovigilance

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1.1

Introduction

Drug discovery projects can learn a lot from existing drugs, for instance, how well they perform in a particular indication and patient population, but also which side effects they cause. While efficacies for a particular indication may be quite similar between compounds, their side effect profiles may vary considerably. Many diseases are managed by drugs acting at various targets and diverse chemical structures might be available for the same target. Incidence of adverse drug reactions (ADRs) could vary for drugs acting at the same target due to different off-target profiles and different levels of required exposure of parent and metabolites. These are strongly dependent on the pharmacological interaction with the target (e.g., potency and binding kinetics [1]) and availability in different organs (e.g., blood–brain barrier penetration and high concentrations in the gastrointestinal system or liver).

One can differentiate between ADRs associated with on- and off-targets and we recognize that on-target-related side effects could also vary by exposure in a particular organ (e.g., presence or absence of brain access of H1 antihistamines [2]) or the mode of interaction with the therapeutic target (e.g., inhibition, full or partial agonism, and allosteric modulation [3]). One can learn a considerable lesson from on-target-related side effects and apply this knowledge when the same target emerges as an off-target with a different drug in a different indication [4]. In this respect, monoclonal antibodies (mAbs) can provide excellent opportunities for the study of on-target ADRs due to their high target specificity. mAbs for various kinase targets in oncology indications highlighted pathways that were involved in various physiological functions in addition to pathways associated with cancer [5].

To unequivocally identify off-targets for clinical ADRs is not an easy matter. Common symptoms such as headache, chest pain, or cough could

be associated with several targets or not associated with any, just developing as concomitant symptoms during treatment with a drug. However, when the same side effect is observed with drugs for different indications or with diverse structural features, a common off-target can be suspected. These clinical observations do not always manifest during clinical trials, either because their incidence is low and linked to a particular patient subpopulation [6] or because the development of the side effect takes a long period of time [7]. Until recently, there was little knowledge of the underlying mechanisms of most ADRs, and they were often denoted as “idiosyncratic” adverse reactions. The vast majority of hepatic and cardiac side effects fall into this nebulous category. Recent increase in off-target and pathway profiling has opened the door to the understanding of many side effects [8–10]. The concept is very simple: drugs or any new molecular entity (NME) can be tested in assays representing targets that are closely associated with clinical side effects [8]. This method was applied to marketed drugs and environmental chemicals/toxins in various formats and recently applied to over 8000 compounds in the frame of a federal collaboration called “Toxicity Testing in the 21st Century” (Tox21), comprised of EPA, the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences/National Toxicology Program, National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences, and the Food and Drug Administration. Data from this orchestrated effort is being released to the public as the collection of ToxCast.¹⁾

In vitro safety pharmacology profiling has opened the door to the identification of target–ADR pairs by common target–side effect linkage to different drugs, based on the principle described above. The data obtained from these studies revealed unknown off-targets and, in a significant number of drugs, pharmacological promiscuity. Importantly, it helped to develop *in silico* models [11] that extended the scope of ADR prediction during drug discovery beyond the capabilities of *in vitro* profiling. The integration of the experimental and *in silico* approaches flourish within the concept of the reductionist chemistry approach to drug discovery [12]. The new, large-scale capability of predictive safety profiling demands uniform ontology, which could be used broadly with clarity for various models and supports translation of preclinical findings into clinical ADRs. Today, the MedDRA (Medical Dictionary for Regulatory Activities) terms are broadly used for ADR annotation of targets and conveniently link their function to system organ classes with the benefit of clinical interpretation. Table 1.1 demonstrates this concept on a selected set of CNS targets, highlighting the diverse effects of agonists and antagonists. In this chapter, we will apply the above-described approach to marketed drugs to demonstrate its powerful translational capabilities, including applications for drug design, competitive intelligence, and possible drug repositioning.

1) ToxCast, <http://epa.gov/ncct/toxcast/data.html>.

Table 1.1 Selected CNS receptors potentially involved in psychoactive effects.

CNS receptor	Associated neurological/psychoactive effects (selection)	
	Agonism	Antagonism
5-HT _{1A}	Nervousness, agitation, miosis, hypothermia, cardiovascular regulation (hypotension and bradycardia)	May contribute to depression and suicidal ideation
5-HT _{2A}	Behavioral effects, smooth muscle contraction, hallucination	No relevant CNS side effects known
5-HT ₇	May alter circadian rhythm, psychiatric disorders/schizophrenia might be a concern	No relevant CNS side effects known
CB1	Alteration of cognition and memory, sleep disturbance, drowsiness, sedation, locomotor dysfunction, bronchodilation, cardiovascular regulation (hypotension and bradycardia)	Emesis, depression, suicidal tendencies; the inverse agonist rimonabant may cause suicidal ideation
D ₁	May induce dyskinesia, extreme arousal, flushing, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, locomotor activation	Tremor; depression, anxiety, and suicidal intent were observed with D ₁ and D ₅ antagonists; hypertension
D _{2L}	Drowsiness, dizziness, and nausea especially with the first dose and some psychosis may occur after long-term treatment; vasodilatation, ↓ heart rate; ↓ pituitary hormone secretions (e.g., prolactin)	Tardive dyskinesia (impairment of voluntary movement), akathisia (an inability to sit still or remain motionless), and other extrapyramidal effects (Parkinson-like syndrome)
D ₃	Cognitive and emotional functions, psychosis, neurodegeneration, coordination, substance abuse, sedation, schizophrenia; it may induce hair loss (see pramipexole)	Dyskinesia (impairment of voluntary movement), akathisia (an inability to sit still or remain motionless), and other extrapyramidal effects (Parkinson-like syndrome)
D ₅	No relevant CNS side effects known	Suicidal intent (observed with D ₁ and D ₅ antagonists)
GABA-A	Major receptor involved in inhibitory neurotransmission: psychological, neurological, sensory functions, sedation, movement disturbances, hallucinations, and potentially leading to tolerance	Mimics the symptoms of epilepsy, potential anxiogenics, and proconvulsants
GABA-A benzodiazepine	Somnolence, suppression of REM sleep or dreaming, impaired motor function, impaired coordination, impaired balance, dizziness, depression, anterograde amnesia (especially pronounced in higher doses), withdrawal and abuse risks	May cause seizures (strong black box warning)

(continued)

Table 1.1 (Continued)

CNS receptor	Associated neurological/psychoactive effects (selection)	
	Agonism	Antagonism
NMDA	Glycine site: may reduce negative and improve cognitive function in schizophrenics, cause seizures, neurotoxicity	PCP site: anesthetic properties, may induce psychosis (schizophrenia-like), hallucination, delirium and disoriented behavior, may cause seizures, neurotoxicity, ligands of the PCP receptor induce symptoms in humans that are virtually indistinguishable from schizophrenia; polyamine site: polyamine system is linked to suicidal ideation
OpD	Analgesia, sedation, physical dependence, emotional behavior, decrease of GI motility	No relevant CNS side effects known
OpK	Analgesia, sedation, hypotension, tachycardia, diuresis, dysphoria, dizziness, paresthesia and antipruritic effects (TRK-820), interaction with dopaminergic transmission, hallucination; full or partial agonists produce psychotomimetic effects, in the case of the mixed (partial) agonist/antagonist analgesic drugs (e.g., butorphanol, nalbuphine, pentazocine) the psychotomimesis is undesirable and serves to limit abuse potential	Selective kappa opioid antagonists explored for their effects in the treatment of a wide variety of areas including cocaine addiction, depression, and feeding behavior, and have been proposed as a treatment for psychosis and schizophrenia
OpM	Analgesia, sedation, physical dependence, bowel dysfunction, constipation, respiratory depression, modulation of cough reflex, development of tolerance and addiction risks	Selective peripheral antagonists are used to treat postoperative ileus and to reverse the effects of opioid agonists (e.g., naloxone, naltrexone, and nalmefene), may cause diarrhea

Adapted from Ref. [8].

CBI: cannabinoid 1; D_{1,2L,3,5}: dopamine 1, 2 (long form), 3, 5; GABA-A: gamma-aminobutyric acid A; NMDA: *N*-methyl aspartate; OpD, -K, -M: opioid delta, kappa, mu; PCP: phencyclidine; 5-HT_{1A,2A,7}: serotonin 1A, 2A, 7.

1.2

Postmarketing Pharmacovigilance

ADRs (or their absence) are major contributors to the well-being of patients, compliance, and medical expenses [13–16]. They are mostly discovered during clinical trials; however, the full scope and impact of ADRs can be

determined only by postmarketing monitoring and surveillance (e.g., FDA Adverse Event Reporting System (FAERS) [17]). FAERS is a public database containing reports on adverse drug reactions and medication errors submitted to the FDA. It is designed to align with the international safety reporting guidance issued by the International Conference on Harmonization (ICH) E2B(R3). The database contains over 4.6 million entries and is updated on a quarterly basis. The database provides ADRs associated with a particular drug with rich patient information, including age, gender, reason for hospitalization/doctor's visit, medication, and outcome. Although it gives information on the dosage, it lacks pharmacokinetic (PK) data; thus, determination of exposure and, more importantly, therapeutic index in a particular case is not possible. This is rectified by complex searchable databases such as the FDA, API, and Thomson-Reuters' Integrity or PharmaPendium,²⁾ an online information repository that reviews drug safety issues by providing access to integrated preclinical, clinical, and postmarketing adverse effects together with PK data. Figure 1.1b is a screenshot from the FAERS profile of panitumumab (Vectibix) in PharmaPendium. The reported side effects are listed by preclinical and postmarketing appearance. As Vectibix affects a single protein kinase target, epidermal growth factor receptor (EGFR, HER1), it is presumed that all observed side effects are associated with this single target [18]. As expected, EGFR inhibitors would affect epidermal integrity and health (see Chapter 15); therefore, it is not surprising that panitumumab carries a box warning³⁾ for severe dermatitis, clearly recorded by FAERS. The association of skin lesions with EGFR inhibition is further confirmed with all marketed small-molecule EGFR inhibitors (Figure 1.1a). Armed with this information, one can deselect small-molecule kinase inhibitors that carry EGFR as an off-target. Thus, this approach (termed reverse translation) is used to identify target-ADR associations and it is applied to the drug discovery process for early mitigation of off-target effects that would be a safety risk in the clinic [19].

As kinase inhibitors are relatively new in the clinic, their side effect profiles are relatively less well known. Pharmacovigilance is therefore of major importance to determine their ADR profiles and drug labeling (Table 1.2). The clinical introduction of monoclonal antibodies for kinase targets made it possible to link ADRs with well-defined therapeutic targets as these antibodies provide selectivity, which is a rare feature of small-molecule kinase inhibitors.

While FAERS is by far not perfect, it can provide a rich source of postmarketing information and supports identification of ADRs undetected during clinical trials. PharmaPendium²⁾ gives access to the FAERS database and

2) <http://thomsonreuters.com/integrity/>; http://www.elsevier.com/online-tools/promo-page/pharmapendium/pbt_pp_adwordsgeneric_jan2014/home.

3) Vectibix, www.vectibix.com/.

(a)

ErbB1 (EGFR, HER1)			
	Preclinical Data view all 574	Clinical Data view all 3541	Post-Marketing Reports (AERS) view all 31788
▶ Viewing by area affected			
▪ View by name			
⊕ Blood and lymphatic system disorders	24	139	3720
⊕ Cardiac disorders	4	118	2270
⊕ Skin and subcutaneous tissue disorders	60	609	7557
⊕ Vascular disorders	3	91	2765

(b)

Panitumumab			
Adverse Effects / Toxicity :			
	Preclinical Data view all 112	Clinical Data view all 867	Post-Marketing Reports (AERS) view all 5252
▶ Viewing by area affected			
▪ View by name			
⊕ Blood and lymphatic system disorders	1	14	809
⊕ Cardiac disorders	1	13	283
⊕ Congenital, familial and genetic disorders	1	no data	18
⊕ Ear and labyrinth disorders	no data	1	15
⊕ Endocrine disorders	1	no data	4
⊕ Eye disorders	3	47	168
⊕ Gastrointestinal disorders	6	132	1700
⊕ General disorders and administration site conditions	5	96	1357
⊕ Hepatobiliary disorders	1	12	158
⊕ Immune system disorders	no data	24	102
⊕ Infections and infestations	2	62	1255
⊕ Investigations	36	41	715
⊕ Metabolism and nutrition disorders	15	93	1111
⊕ Musculoskeletal and connective tissue disorders	no data	11	198
⊕ Neoplasms benign, malignant and unspecified (incl cysts and polyps)	1	3	530
⊕ Nervous system disorders	3	21	508
⊕ Pregnancy, puerperium and perinatal conditions	5	no data	no data
⊕ Psychiatric disorders	1	8	113
⊕ Renal and urinary disorders	1	4	284
⊕ Reproductive system and breast disorders	6	no data	28
⊕ Respiratory, thoracic and mediastinal disorders	1	69	963
⊕ Skin and subcutaneous tissue disorders	22	191	1515
⊕ Vascular disorders	no data	25	453

Figure 1.1 FAERS representation of side effects of epidermal growth factor receptor (EGFR, HER1, ErbB1) inhibitors. (a) Enhanced skin and subcutaneous ADR representation of marketed EGFR inhibitors (cetuximab, lapatinib ditosylate, and panitumumab) (not

all ADRs shown). (b) FAERS profile of panitumumab (Vectibix) represents the typical high occurrence of skin and GI lesions associated with the inhibition of the therapeutic target. (Courtesy of PharmaPendium.)

allows the search for PK information that is essential to determine the therapeutic index for drugs [20]. The most reliable source of information on ADRs is obtained from drug labels, and the FDA ensures they are updated regularly.

Table 1.2 Kinases involved in cardiovascular risks: clinical evidence based on monoclonal antibody treatment.

Kinase target	Human safety (information based on FDA label)	Animal toxicity	Animal genetics – KO (OMIM)
ErbB2 (HER2)	Trastuzumab: black box for cardiomyopathy (supported by multi-KI lapatinib: warning for decrease in LVEF)	Trastuzumab: no cardiac toxicity in mice/monkeys; no TCR in adult monkey and human cardiac myocytes	Severe dilated cardiomyopathy, decreased contractility
EGFR (HER1)	Cetuximab: black box for cardiopulmonary arrest and/or sudden death (multi-KI erlotinib: warning for myocardial infarction/ischemia)	Cetuximab: no cardiac toxicity in mice/monkeys EKB-569 and AG-1478: significant changes in left ventricular wall thickness and cardiac function	Aortic valve disease and aortic stenosis
VEGFR2 (KDR)	Bevacizumab (anti-VEGF-A): warning for arterial thromboembolic events (ATEs) and hypertension (supported by multi-KI sunitinib: warning for cardiac toxicity/ decrease in LVEF; supported by multi-KI sorafenib: warning for cardiac ischemia/ infarction and hypertension)	Bevacizumab: no cardiac toxicity seen preclinically	Lack of VEGF(R)-deficient mouse models due to lethality
PDGFRa	Possibility for contributory factor for cardiac ADRs associated with certain KIs (current label data for dasatinib, sunitinib, and sorafenib); PDGFRs are expressed in cardiomyocytes	Depending on kinase spectrum	

Note that preclinical safety pharmacology evaluation did not signal cardiac toxicity; however, genetic evidence supported the observed side effects.

1.3

Polypharmacy and Pharmacological Promiscuity of Marketed Drugs

Marketed drugs are optimized molecules with two major requirements to be fulfilled: therapeutic efficacy and acceptable safety window at the prescribed dose [20]. Drug design can focus on a single molecular target or on a pathway with a defined phenotypic readout of the therapeutic effect. Most drugs belong to the first group, even when a combination of targets might be preferable for a therapeutic effect (e.g., for congestive heart failure). Remarkably “clean” compound profiles could be found with antihypertensive, cholesterol-lowering drugs, bisphosphonates, and several other groups of medicines (see Table 1.3 for antihypertensive drugs). In general, drugs for broad applications for non-life-threatening diseases should have a clean sheet of off-targets, particularly as they

Table 1.3 Lack of pharmacological promiscuity of antihypertensive drugs.

Drug	Off-targets found
Adrenergic receptor antagonists	
<i>Alpha blockers</i>	
Bunazosin	hERG
Prazosin	μ-Opioid
Terazosin	μ-Opioid
<i>Beta blockers</i>	
Atenolol	—
Propranolol	5-HT receptor family
Ca channel blockers	
<i>Dihydropyridines</i>	
Nifedipine	Adenosine receptors
Nitrendipine	PXR
ACE inhibitors	
Captopril	H1
Enalapril	—
Cilazapril	—
Angiotensin II receptor antagonists	
Candesartan	—
Losartan	PDE3
Irbesartan	PDE3

are often used in conjunction with other drugs for a different disease in the same patient population. According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC) statistics, about 37% of the over 60-year-old population use more than five prescription drugs [21]. Considering drug–drug interactions, possible cumulative effects of on- and off-targets, the most commonly used drugs in this patient population such as the above-mentioned cholesterol-lowering and antihypertensive drugs should be as safe as possible. As an example, patients who are taking a particular drug for hypertension might also need medication for psychiatric indications, such as depression. Many of the psychotropic agents have effects at adrenergic receptors that will have an additional effect on blood pressure [22] and might cause orthostatic hypotension, a serious issue in the elderly [23,24].

When exploring marketed databases, two classes of drugs, cancer treatments and antipsychotics, generally have a trend to be more promiscuous [25,26]. At present, the majority of small-molecule cancer drugs aim for inhibition of the highly conserved ATP binding site in the kinase family. Thus, binding to this site is likely to produce drugs with low selectivity between kinase targets and occasionally to non-kinase targets as well (see Figure 1.2).

Kinase inhibitors are new to clinical practice; thus, pharmacovigilance is of major importance to determine their long-term side effect profiles and provide information for correct drug labeling. As mentioned earlier, mAbs, but also the more specific allosteric kinase inhibitors, can give the best characterization of ADRs associated with a specific kinase target (as an example, Table 1.2 shows

the drug labels of some mAb kinase inhibitors). A new generation of kinase inhibitors offers less promiscuity as they do not target the ATP binding pocket, but aim for allosteric modulator sites, for example, Akt inhibitors [27].

The other particularly promiscuous group of drugs is the family of antipsychotics [28]. We took several of the most commonly used antidepressants and annotated their on- and off-target hits (Figure 1.3). Adenosine, adrenergic, dopamine, histamine, serotonergic, muscarinic receptors, and neurotransmitter transporters DAT, NET, and SERT are those targets that are often encountered with these drugs. While it is considered that a combination of targets could be responsible for the antidepressant therapeutic effects, it is obvious that they could also exhibit psychiatric ADRs. For example, all SSRIs are labeled for suicidal intent and behavior in pediatric use [29] (see Chapter 20).

Specific off-target effects within a particular indication may strongly depend on the similarity between chemical structures of drugs associated with different therapeutic targets. As an example, we examined antihypertensive adrenergic receptor blockers, Ca channel blockers, angiotensin inhibitors, and ACE inhibitors (Table 1.3). Most of these drugs show high specificity of binding to the therapeutic target with the angiotensin II receptor blockers showing particularly good selectivity. None of these compounds carry any serious safety-related warnings. We investigated the side effect profile of the angiotensin receptor antagonist FAERS profiles and will use this example to highlight some shortcomings of the adverse reaction reporting systems. While the most common reported effects of angiotensin receptor inhibition include hypotension, dry mouth, excessive thirst, dizziness, and slow or irregular heartbeat, there are no major ADRs that would warrant warnings. However, the compiled ADR profile of these drugs (Figure 1.4) shows a large number of entries with particular emphasis on cardiovascular events. Over 16% of the entries are concerned with cardiac side effects, 18% of the reports are associated with vascular disorders, almost half of the “investigations” reported are related to cardiac and vascular effects, and finally 29% of nervous system disorders are CNS vascular events. This list of major ADRs suggests that this group of drugs or their metabolites seriously affect the cardiovascular system and generate safety issues. However, none of the drugs or their metabolites is promiscuous, and considering the major indications for these drugs (hypertension and congestive heart failure), we can attribute the above-mentioned cardiovascular events as symptoms of the treated diseases themselves, and with the exception of orthostatic hypotension and its consequences, others are not real ADRs. Thus, reports on adverse drug reactions are often biased by the disease the treatment is applied to and carry over many of the original symptoms. While this is a lesser issue during clinical trials, once released onto the market drugs lack the controlled environment of clinical trials; thus, the confidence in the reported ADRs is significantly diminished. This seems to be a general issue with the postmarketing reporting systems and should be taken into account by any pharmacovigilance analysis.

In the case of telmisartan, the observed cardiac disorders during clinical trials were about 7% of all registered ADRs, whereas FAERS reported 14%. One can argue that this can be due to the different, possibly more diverse and

DrugName	TradeName	Drug Class	THR
Reserpine	Risordal	AAP	21
Olanzapine	Zyprexa	AAP	25
Atiprazole	Abilify	AAP	27
Trazodone	Desrel	SARI	19
Venlafaxine	Effexor	SNRI	9
Duloxetine	Cymbalta	SNRI	20
Citalopram	Celebra	SSRI	14
Sertraline	Zoloft	SSRI	15
Escitalopram	Lexapro	SSRI	16
Paroxetine	Paxil	SSRI	22
Amantadine	Elavil	TCA	30
Nortriptyline	Serenaval	TCA	38
PDE4D			10
PDE3			10
MAO A			10
COX2			7
COX1			10
PXR			10
PR			10
GR			10
ERb			10
ERa			10
AR			10
5HT3			2
NMDA			10
Nic(ns)			10
GABA A			10
BZD			10
Ca2(N)			10
Ca2(L)			10
hERG			2
5HTT			10
NET			8
DAT			10
AdT			4
V2			10
V1a			10
TP			10
OpM			10
OpK			10
OpD			10
Y1			10
Motilin			10
MC3			10
M3			1
M2			1
M1			1
5HT2C			1
5HT2B			1
5HT2A			1
5HT1A			1
H3			1
H2			1
H1			1
GHS			1
ETa			1
D4.4			1
D3			1
D2			1
D1			1
CCKb			1
CCKa			1
CB1			1
B2			1
AT1			1
Beta2			1
Beta1			1
Alpha2C			1
Alpha2B			1
Alpha2A			1
Alpha1A			1
Ad3			1
Ad2A			1
Ad1			1

Figure 1.3 The heat map demonstrates the high promiscuity of a group of frequently used antidepressants. SSRI: selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor; TCA: tricyclic antidepressant; SNRI: serotonin-norepinephrine reuptake inhibitor; SARI: serotonin antagonist and reuptake inhibitor; AAP: atypical antipsychotic. Red: $IC_{50} < 1 \mu M$; yellow: $IC_{50} = 1-10 \mu M$; green: $IC_{50} \geq 10 \mu M$; THR = target hit rate, the percentage of targets with an IC_{50} of $< 10 \mu M$ (not all targets are shown).

Viewing by area affected			
View by name			
	Preclinical Data view all 577	Clinical Data view all 2994	Post-Marketing Reports (AERS) view all 30750
⊕ Blood and lymphatic system disorders	16	55	1547
⊕ Cardiac disorders	31	138	5008
⊕ Congenital, familial and genetic disorders	18	3	284
⊕ Ear and labyrinth disorders	no data	27	529
⊕ Endocrine disorders	15	no data	268
⊕ Eye disorders	3	26	1369
⊕ Gastrointestinal disorders	66	324	4277
⊕ General disorders and administration site conditions	19	240	9294
⊕ Hepatobiliary disorders	20	43	1440
⊕ Immune system disorders	no data	20	606
⊕ Infections and infestations	1	420	2705
⊕ Investigations	165	407	8175
⊕ Metabolism and nutrition disorders	65	104	3863
⊕ Musculoskeletal and connective tissue disorders	no data	171	3613
⊕ Mutagenicity	3	no data	no data
⊕ Neoplasms benign, malignant and unspecified (incl cysts and polyps)	6	6	1681
⊕ Nervous system disorders	21	362	7868
⊕ Pregnancy, puerperium and perinatal conditions	27	4	473
⊕ Psychiatric disorders	7	27	2176
⊕ Renal and urinary disorders	78	99	3694
⊕ Reproductive system and breast disorders	7	5	366
⊕ Respiratory, thoracic and mediastinal disorders	6	184	4268
⊕ Skin and subcutaneous tissue disorders	3	168	3321
⊕ Vascular disorders	no data	111	5585

Figure 1.4 A combined profile comprising representatives from the class of angiotensin II AT₁ receptor antagonists obtained from the FDA Adverse Event Reporting System. The case of angiotensin II antagonists demonstrates that reports on adverse drug reactions are often biased by the original symptoms of the disease the treatment is applied to. (Courtesy of PharmaPendium.)

significantly larger patient population. However, the same is true for vascular disorders, with 5% versus 12%, and for nervous system disorders, 7% compared with 24% of all reports. Accordingly, the label for telmisartan does not carry any warning for major cardiovascular adverse reactions, but correctly points to the possibility of orthostatic hypotension [30].

Drugs that are combinations of different active ingredients also cause a problem in the determination of target–ADR links. For example, local allergy medications have a combination of fexofenadine HCl and pseudoephedrine HCl [31]. This situation also occurs when several drugs are taken concomitantly and in FAERS only one is noted as the “suspect” drug. Thus, care should be taken of drug combinations when FAERS data are interpreted for target-related ADRs.

Finally, drugs withdrawn from the market provide valuable data for the reverse translation process. Drug withdrawals are based on the development of ADRs in the clinical setting that are life-threatening, cause unacceptable burden, or are difficult to manage [32]. The example we take is fenfluramine, an anorexiant that affects the serotonin transporter. Patients treated with fenfluramine developed cardiac valve disorders, a serious irreversible heart condition. FAERS

registered 19,141 reports with 59% of the reports associated with cardiac disorders, an extraordinarily high incidence. When further investigated, 38% of the observed cardiac disorders revealed various cardiac valve anomalies (data from PharmaPendium).⁴⁾ Based on this observation, fenfluramine was withdrawn from the market and the otherwise rare ADR was later linked to the agonist effect of the major metabolite, norfenfluramine, at the 5-HT_{2B} receptor [33].

While this book highlights targets that we consider “antitargets” under various conditions, in this chapter we focus on information gathering (data mining) that would support claims for target–ADR links. We highlighted the importance of using clinical data for reverse translation to identify the targets that are associated with side effects and we use this information to set up predictive assays for hazard identification during the early phases of the drug discovery process. We demonstrated the importance of this method in the process of parallel optimization for therapeutic effects and mitigation of adverse reactions. Targets incorporated into the *in vitro* pharmacological profiling process are annotated with information obtained from clinical ADRs, which enables the cost-effective prediction of side effects of chemical structural classes or single molecules in the preclinical setting.

On the other hand, we have to be cautious with data interpretation from clinical observations. Cases from FAERS demonstrate the pitfalls that can be encountered if a statistical analysis of the data is conducted without taking into account important factors such as the patient population and their medical condition, other administered drugs, and off-label use of drugs. We demonstrated with the case of antihypertensive drugs that symptoms characteristic for a particular disease could mask the true ADR profile of a drug and we need to keep this in perspective by relying more on the ADRs reported from phase 3 clinical trials. However, be aware of the small chance of ADRs developing very slowly during chronic treatment, which would not be seen in the trials, or of rare alleles in the broad random patient population.

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