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PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY

Deferiprone therapy improves the oxidative status of LDL in patients with β-thalassaemia/HbE

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Article available at: https://doi.org/10.7573/dic.2025-7-6

What is β-thalassaemia?

β-Thalassaemia is a genetic blood disorder that can cause serious health problems, including an excess of iron in the body. This excess iron can lead to oxidative stress, which is like rust forming in your body and can damage important fats called LDL (low-density lipoprotein, or 'bad cholesterol'). This damage can increase your risk for heart and blood vessel diseases.

What did the study investigate?

This study looked at a medication called deferiprone (L1), which is used to remove excess iron, to see if it could also help protect against oxidative stress caused by the iron. A total of 29 patients with β-thalassaemia/haemoglobin E who were on L1 treatment were asked to stop taking their medication for 4 weeks and then start taking it again for 12 weeks. We took blood samples at different times to measure iron levels and the health of their LDL.

Study findings

- When patients stopped taking L1, their protective antioxidants (like vitamin E) in LDL decreased and markers of oxidative damage increased. This shows that without the medication, the LDL was more vulnerable to damage.
- When they started taking L1 again, the levels of protective antioxidants went back up and the signs of damage decreased.
- The study confirmed that L1 helps to protect LDL from damage, not just by removing iron but also by helping to preserve the antioxidants that naturally protect your body.

Conclusions

This study suggests that patients with β-thalassaemia should take their L1 medication continuously to protect their heart and blood vessels. L1 helps to fight oxidative stress and keep LDL healthy, which can prevent complications from β-thalassaemia.