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Pharmacotherapy for the management of achalasia: Current status, challenges and future directions

Ammar Nassri, Zeeshan Ramzan

Abstract

This article reviews currently available pharmacological options available for treatment of achalasia, with a special focus on the role of Botulinum toxin (BT) injection due to its superior therapeutic effect and more favorable side effect profile. The discussion on BT includes the role of different BT serotypes, better pharmacological formulations, improved BT injection techniques, the use of sprouting inhibitors, designer recombinant BT formulations and alternative substances used in endoscopic injections. The large body of ongoing research into achalasia and BT may provide a stronger role for BT injection as a form of minimally invasive, cost effective and efficacious form of therapy for patients with achalasia. The article also explores current issues and future research avenues that may prove beneficial in improving the efficacy of pharmacological treatment approaches in patients with achalasia.

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