

Lariam Side Effects Attorney

Article by: Anna Henningsgaard

Mefloquine is an anti-malarial drug marketed under the name Lariam. Doctors are still unsure exactly how Mefloquine protects a patient from malaria, but it is generally theorized that it prevents the malaria parasite from breaking down a substance in the blood called haemin by making the haemin toxic to the parasite. However it works, it is the most effective anti-malarial drug on the market, especially in areas where the malaria parasite has grown resistant to more conventional malaria drugs. At first it was believed that mefloquine (Lariam) had a low incidence of side effects, but it turns out that only a fraction of the problems with mefloquine had been made public. As more travelers come out to tell horror stories of Lariam experiences, controversy rises about the pros and cons of taking mefloquine.

Malaria is a serious, sometimes deadly, parasitic infection that is transmitted through mosquito bites in many tropical regions of the world. Mefloquine, or Lariam, is the most often prescribed preventative for the disease. It is very effective at preventing the disease and is usually safe to take, but the adverse reactions that do occur are debilitating and possibly fatal. Forty-six people in Britain have already filed suits against the drug's manufacturer, Hoffmann-La Roche. Another 150 are in the process of doing so and more than 500 more have contacted lawyers leading to action. In America, the first Lariam lawsuit was filed by a 25 year-old Californian man who claims to have suffered crippling Lariam side effects for nearly 3 years.

The Yellow Card scheme, a system through which doctors abroad file concerns with the Committee on Safety of Medicines, reported 1505 adverse reactions to mefloquine between 1990 and 1998. Five of these cases resulted in death. This seems like a very small number until one considers the results of a 1996 survey finding that only 10.15% of suspected adverse mefloquine reactions are reported. The true incidence of negative side effects could be much higher.

So what are these side effects? Serious side effects to mefloquine include dizziness, depression, psychosis, epileptic seizures, fits, suicide, and Stevens Johnson Syndrome (SJS). SJS is a rare but often fatal skin disease. A 7 year-old girl died of Stevens Johnson Syndrome just this year after taking Lariam for a family vacation. According to its own internal documents, Roche pharmaceuticals has received over 3,000 reports of psychiatric problems associated with Lariam, from nightmares, depression, hallucinations, to paranoia, psychosis, and aggression. Lariam was also a suspected part of the Fort Bragg murders in 1992, when four army officers on leave from Afghanistan (where they were prescribed Lariam) killed their wives on an army base in South Carolina. Two of the officers then killed themselves.

Roche Pharmaceuticals insists that only one in 10,000 patients suffer debilitating side effects from taking Lariam, but a British survey found that the number is closer to one in 140. It turns out that Roche defined a debilitating side effect as one that resulted in death. In fact, it can take years for the serious side effects, such as seizures and psychotic paranoia, to wear off. Hundreds of people return from vacations only to be committed to asylums or sit at home collecting disability checks.

Part of the reason that Lariam is still so widely used is that only about 10% of those suffering from Lariam side effects have spoken up. If you or someone you love has taken Lariam and experienced any of this, contact a lawyer immediately and discuss your options. Though Roche Pharmaceuticals has improved the warnings on its packaging, it still does not own up to the worst of Lariam's side effects, and for many years the drug was marketed without serious warnings at all. To find out why you need a Lariam lawyer and read articles about dangerous drugs and Lariam side effects, visit our website at hugesettlements.com.

If you have any questions or concerns about filing a Lariam lawsuit, please contact a professional Lariam attorney right away!