

Tysabri trials show possibility of 'sustained improvement'

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Elan's Tysabri drug has shown in tests that it may lead to sustained improvement of physical disability caused by multiple sclerosis, the company said today.

The phase three trial of the drug found it increased the probability of achieving sustained improvement in physical disability over two years when compared to placebo, and is the first evidence that the drug is associated with a significant improvement, rather than simply slowing or preventing the progression of disability in those living with relapsing multiple sclerosis.

"These results show that Tysabri treated patients are significantly more likely to experience a sustained improvement in disability compared to placebo patients. This finding from a post-hoc analysis of the pivotal Affirm trial supports both the earlier findings from the Affirm trial that Tysabri is associated with an improvement in quality of life as well as anecdotal evidence of recovery of function in some patients," said Frederick E. Munschauer, Department of Neurology, State University of New York at Buffalo.

"While, like Tysabri, other therapies have shown a slowing of progression in disability, this analysis represents the first evidence supporting a sustained improvement in function associated with an approved disease modifying therapy."

In a research note this morning, NCB Stockbrokers said the announcement was "significant".

"The news should at least offset any negative sentiment towards the drug amongst physicians following the recent PML cases," it said.

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