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Originally published October 29 2013

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Lawsuits claim Pfizer drug Lipitor gave women type 2 diabetes

by David Gutierrez, staff writer

(NaturalNews) Drug giant Pfizer has recently been hit with a flurry of lawsuits from women claiming that the company's blockbuster cholesterol drug Lipitor caused them to develop type 2 diabetes.

Pfizer released Lipitor in 2007, promoting it as a safe way to lower levels of LDL cholesterol, commonly called "bad cholesterol" and linked to an elevated risk of heart disease.

In 2011, however, a study showed an increased risk of type 2 diabetes among Lipitor patients. Critics of the study suggested that the results were due to the fact that patients on cholesterol-lowering drugs are already at higher risk for diabetes than the general population, because they tend to have higher blood pressure and blood sugar levels. Nevertheless, in 2012, the FDA instructed Pfizer to add a warning label to Lipitor showing that the drug might increase the risk of type 2 diabetes.

Then, in May of this year, a study in the *British Medical Journal* showed that Lipitor increases the risk of type 2 diabetes even more than other drugs in the same class (the statins), showing that the link cannot be due to preexisting risk alone. Women are particularly susceptible to this side effect: female Lipitor patients have a 22 percent higher risk of developing a new case of type 2 diabetes than women taking other statins.

A new lawsuit every month

The lawsuits started coming almost immediately following the publication of the *British Medical Journal* study. In June, Joyce Jones of North Carolina filed a lawsuit accusing Pfizer of falsely promoting Lipitor as safe, even though it knew for years before the 2012 FDA ruling that the drug could cause type 2 diabetes in women.

Even though Jones has a good diet and maintains a healthy weight, she developed diabetes after taking Lipitor between 2009 and 2010 - years before Pfizer adopted the new warning label. Because type 2 diabetes has no cure, she must now engage in blood sugar monitoring for the rest of her life. If she'd known the risks of Lipitor in 2009, she said, she'd never have started taking the drug.

The specific charges against Pfizer include product liability and failure to warn, negligence, breach of implied warranty, fraud, constructive fraud and unjust enrichment. She is seeking punitive damages.

Just days later, a West Virginia woman filed a lawsuit seeking restitution for the physical and emotional suffering caused by her Lipitor-induced diabetes.

"Had defendant properly disclosed the risks associated with Lipitor, Plaintiff would have avoided the risk of diabetes by either not using Lipitor at all or by closely monitoring her blood glucose level to see if the drug was adversely affecting her metabolism," the lawsuit reads.

A lawsuit from another woman followed in August, and yet another in October.

In addition to suffering from the direct effects of diabetes, the plaintiffs are also now at significantly increased risk of diabetes side effects, including cardiovascular disease - the very condition they meant to prevent by taking Lipitor.

Other side effects of diabetes include nerve damage (neuropathy), kidney damage, osteoporosis, skin and mouth disorders, blindness and even Alzheimer's disease.

Statins carry other risks

Some of Lipitor's other side effects may also increase the risk of diabetes and its complications. Specifically, the drug can lead to increased weight gain, high blood sugar and high triglyceride levels.

All statins, including Lipitor, are also known to increase the risk of muscle injury and kidney problems.

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