

TITLE 1: "Ask the Doctor"

TITLE 2:

DATE: May 2000

AUTHOR/S: Michael Silber, MB, ChB

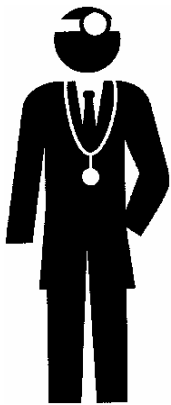
KEYWORDS:

- Pharmaceutical treatment

ABSTRACT OVERVIEW: A reader discussed with Dr. Silber her success with the drugs Sinemet, Klonopin and more recently Remeron used to treat anxiety.

COPY OF ARTICLE:

Q. *As with most folks, I described my RLS symptoms to several doctors and received no help at all. After relocating, the local neurologist instantly diagnosed my RLS. She prescribed Sinemet and Klonopin. There was a 75% reduction in RLS discomfort. The effect was amazing after so much suffering. About a year later, because of a minor problem with anxiety, including night*



panic, the same doctor prescribed Remeron for the anxiety. The results were even more remarkable. The Remeron solved the night panic but I did not like the side effects and might not have continued to take it except for its impact on the remaining RLS symptoms. I now sleep all night, every night and am 98% free of RLS sensations. Although I have not seen Remeron mentioned in any of the RLS literature, there is clearly some synergistic effect between the Sinemet and Remeron that has significant impact on my RLS. Can you explain the reason for this benefit? Is it likely to continue?

A. Remeron (mirtazapine) is an antidepressant that increases the levels of the neurotransmitters norepinephrine and serotonin in the brain. It is not known to affect dopamine levels (which would be relevant to RLS) and is not known to have any synergistic effects with levodopa (Sinemet). There have been no

reports of its efficacy in treating restless legs. I would guess that it may have been effective by helping you sleep better, thus allowing you to sleep through any remaining RLS symptoms. In trials of Remeron, 54% of patients reported sleepiness as a side effect, so it certainly might improve sleep at night. Whatever the mechanism, I am pleased you have found help with this combination of medications.

Michael Silber, MB, ChB

Mayo Medical Center

Rochester, MN