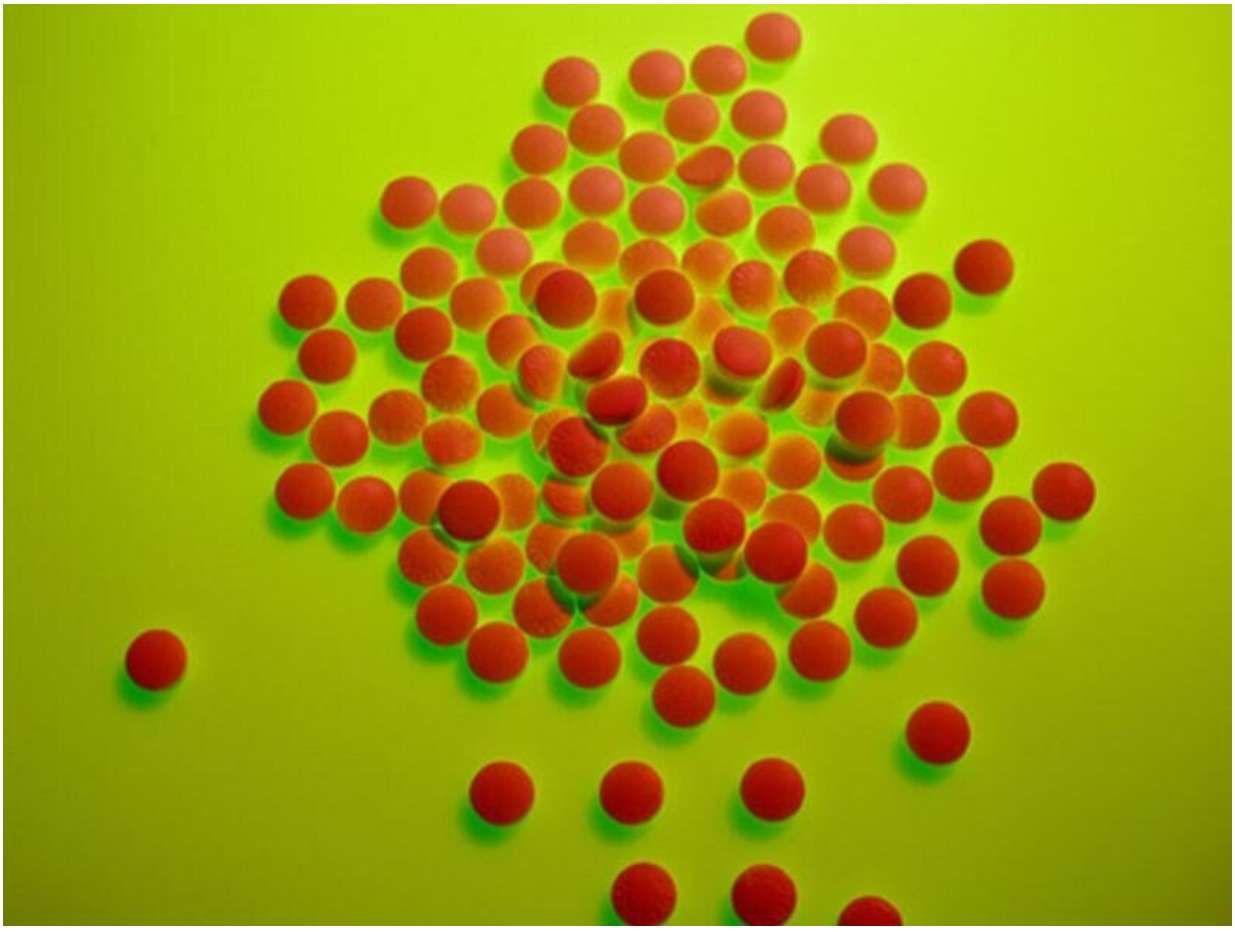
Impact of valsartan recall examined for Ontario, Canada

November 18 2019



(HealthDay)—The generic valsartan recall has had population-level

impacts on patients in Ontario, Canada, according to a research letter published online Nov. 11 in *Circulation* to coincide with the annual meeting of the American Heart Association, held from Nov. 16 to 18 in Philadelphia.

Cynthia A. Jackevicius, Pharm.D., from the College of Pharmacy at the Western University of Health Sciences in Pomona, California, and colleagues examined the consequences of the July 9, 2018, Health Canada drug recall of six generic valsartan products on patients and health care systems. The analysis relied on linked data from the prescription claims database, the database for vital status, and hospital information.

The researchers found that the majority of the 55,461 patients were switched to a nonvalsartan angiotensin-receptor-antagonist (73.8 percent) or a nonrecalled valsartan product (8.8 percent) within one month of the recall. However, at three months after the recall, 10.7 percent of recalled valsartan users did not fill an alternative medication. There was an immediate increase in emergency department visits for hypertension after the recall; however, there was no change in the rate for hypertension-related hospitalizations either immediately or sustained after the recall. Similarly, there were no changes seen in emergency department visits or hospitalizations for myocardial infarction or heart failure. However, after the recall, there was an increasing temporal trend for stroke or transient ischemic attack-related emergency department visits and hospitalizations.

"These findings highlight the potential burden and risks associated with recalls of chronic oral medications used by large populations," the authors write.

Several authors disclosed financial ties to pharmaceutical and/or medical device companies.

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