



## AADE Practice Advisory

### Insulin Glargine Use - Role of the Diabetes Educator in Addressing Recent Studies

In June 2009, *Diabetologia* (<http://www.diabetologia-journal.org/cancer.html>) published and reported on results from four studies about the relationship between the insulin analog, glargine (brand name Lantus), and the increased risk of certain cancers. Glargine is an analog form of insulin that has been widely used since 2000; it is typically administered one time per day subcutaneously. The studies do not relate to other insulin analogues.

On 7/1/2009, the FDA stated that observational studies evaluated large patient databases and all reported “some level of association between the use of insulin glargine, and other insulin products, and various types of cancer.” The scientific community cautions that the findings of the four studies are inconclusive because of inconsistencies and differences in study methods, populations observed, and other study design limitations. Recognizing the limitations and conflicting nature of the study findings, the FDA recommends that: *“patients should not stop taking their insulin therapy without consulting a physician, since uncontrolled blood sugar levels can have both immediate and long-term serious adverse effects.”*

#### Role of the Educator:

1. Become familiar with the emerging evidence on insulin use and the associated relative risk of malignancies.
2. Follow FDA recommendations and advise patients to:
  - a. Continue taking their prescribed medications to avoid uncontrolled blood glucose levels.
  - b. Talk with their provider if they have concerns or further questions about their medications.
3. Report side effects from the use of insulin glargine to the FDA's MedWatch Adverse Event Reporting Program. MedWatch 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 20852-9787

#### Additional Sources of Educator and Consumer Information:

Food and Drug Authority (FDA). Early Communication About Safety of Lantus (insulin glargine). 2009.  
<http://www.fda.gov/Drugs/DrugSafety/PostmarketDrugSafetyInformationforPatientsandProviders/DrugSafetyInformationforHealthcareProfessionals/ucm169722.htm>



European Association for the Study of Diabetes. Insulin analogues and cancer: a possible link that needs further investigation. 2009.

[http://www.jdrf.org/files/General\\_Files/Research/FY\\_09/Lantus\\_EASD\\_Patient\\_Info\\_Sheet\\_June\\_2009.pdf](http://www.jdrf.org/files/General_Files/Research/FY_09/Lantus_EASD_Patient_Info_Sheet_June_2009.pdf)

American Diabetes Association. Insulin Glargine and Cancer: Questions & Answers. 2009. <http://www.diabetes.org/for-media/insulin-glargine-cancer.jsp>

Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation. Webcast. 2009.

[http://www.jdrf.org/index.cfm?page\\_id=112155](http://www.jdrf.org/index.cfm?page_id=112155)