

## Micafungin

### A Viewpoint by Raj Chopra

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Micafungin is a novel antifungal agent that exhibits activity against  $\beta$ -(1,3)-D-glycan synthase found in the fungal wall. This specific antifungal activity should theoretically at least, result in limited adverse effects and this is confirmed by the favourable tolerability profile. *In vitro*, the drug shows activity against *Candida* spp. and *Aspergillus* spp., but does not have activity against dimorphic fungi such as *Cryptococcus* spp. In particular, *in vitro*, there is no evidence of antagonism when micafungin is combined with other antifungal agents including amphotericin B.

Micafungin is given intravenously as a once daily dose and no oral preparation is available or envis-

aged. The minimal tolerated dose of micafungin has yet to be attained.

Micafungin has been shown to be effective against invasive candidaemia in patients with HIV and in those with neutropenia, and in a limited number of patients with invasive aspergillosis. There are ongoing trials investigating the place of micafungin in the prophylaxis setting, and for patients with proven aspergillosis. The precise role of micafungin will be defined with the reporting of such studies. However, given the safety profile and the ability to use the drug in combination therapy, micafungin represents an important advance in the therapy of fungal infections which carry a high cost, morbidity and mortality to immunocompromised patients. ▲