IN BRIEF

Lowering the Dose of *Lunesta*

The FDA has required the manufacturer of eszopiclone (*Lunesta* – Sunovion), a benzodiazepine receptor agonist approved for the treatment of insomnia, to lower the current recommended starting dose to 1 mg for both men and women because a new study found that an evening dose of 3 mg can impair driving skills, memory, and coordination for more than 11 hours.\(^1\)

Eszopiclone's half-life is longer than that of any other drug in its class, which includes zolpidem (*Ambien*, and generics) and zaleplon (*Sonata*, and generics).

All benzodiazepine receptor agonists may impair performance the next morning, including driving.\(^2\) Anterograde amnesia and complex sleep-related behaviors without conscious awareness may also occur. Hallucinations have been reported. Like the benzodiazepines, benzodiazepine receptor agonists are schedule IV controlled substances; withdrawal, dependence, and abuse can occur.
