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P01. Antidepressants

P01.01

Gender differences according to clinical effects of antidepressant treatment

M. Grubbe Goetke¹, E.W. Steyerberg², K.B. Stage³, J. Passchier², P. Kragh-Sørensen¹, J.T. Larsen⁴. ¹*Odense University Hospital, Department of Psychiatry, Denmark*, ²*Erasmus University, The Netherlands*, ³*Bispebjerg University Hospital*, ⁴*For the Danish University Antidepressant Group (DUAG), Denmark*

Gender differences in treatment response, side effects and dropout rates of antidepressant treatment were examined in patients with major depression.

The study comprised 292 in-patients (96 men, 196 women) from three Danish double-blind, randomized, controlled trials. All patients fulfilled DSM-III or DSM-III-R criteria of major depression. Clomipramine (150 mg/day) was reference treatment and comparative treatments were citalopram (40 mg/day), paroxetine (30 mg/day) and moclobemide (400 mg/day). Assessments on the 17-item Hamilton Depression Scale (HDS) and the UKU Side Effect Scale were performed. In a subsample (n=110) measurements of clomipramine plasma concentration were obtained.

Both genders had significantly larger reductions on HDS when treated with clomipramine than comparative treatments (Mean difference on HDS total score: -13.1 versus -10.5). The plasma concentration levels of clomipramine were significantly higher for female than male patients. No other gender differences were found.

Male and female patients with major and predominantly melancholic depression experience similar benefits, dropout rates and side effects of common antidepressants. Since women have higher plasma concentration levels of clomipramine than men, gender specific recommendations of dosage of TCAs may be considered henceforward.

P01.02

Citalopram efficacy in PAD and OCD disorders

G. Tavormina. *Psychiatric Studies Centre, Provaglio di Iseo, Italy*

Objective: To assess Citalopram utilization and efficacy in Panic Disorder (PAD) and Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD), and its tolerability too.

Materials and Methods: A total of 21 outpatients were included in this open-label, non-comparative naturalistic study, meeting DSM-IV diagnostic criteria for PAD and OCD.

Global Assessment Scale (GAS) was adopted in determining the effect of Citalopram treatment, before treatment, after four weeks and after eight weeks.

Tolerability was assessed, during clinical interviews, by registering treatment-emergent adverse events.

Results: Before Citalopram treatment all the patients presented a low point with the GAS; after treatment, the GAS showed very good results in both patients groups (with PAD and with OCD).

Tolerability: None of the patients in this study needed to stop the treatment for side effects. Only five patients, between the 21 of this study, presented transient side effects that gradually vanished.

Conclusions: In this naturalistic study, despite the methodological limitations, Citalopram demonstrated its considerable efficacy in PAD and OCD, besides its tolerability and safety.

P01.03

Bright light therapy as an antidepressant modality

G. Tavormina. *Psychiatric Studies Centre, Provaglio di Iseo, Italy*

Background: Bright light therapy (LT) is the recommended treatment for SAD; in addition, LT have new applications, as an antidepressant modality.

Materials and Methods: Eight patients between 26 and 51 years old (three of these patients were pregnant) were included in this naturalistic study about LT, with the following diagnosis (meeting the DSM-IV diagnostic criteria): Major Depression, Recurrent Depression, PAD, Depression in Bipolar Spectrum, Social Phobia, Bulimia crisis. The following rating scales were adopted in determining the effect of the LT: the "HAM-A" for PAD; the "Zung SDS" for all type of depressions; the "LSPS" for social phobia; the "BS" for bulimia crisis.

Three between non-pregnant began the LT as add-on therapy to drugs because their symptoms was not well controlled.

Results: All the patients obtained very good results (the rating scales presented a final score clear-cut). Any treatment-emergent adverse events were not reported.

Conclusions: In this naturalistic study LT confirmed its efficacy with several new applications, and above all its tolerability and safety for all patients but especially during pregnancy.

P01.04

Age-related differences in the side effect profile of citalopram

Y. Barak¹*, M. Swartz¹, R. Weizman². ¹*Abarbanel Mental Health Center, Bat-Yam*, ²*Tel-Aviv University, Israel*

We evaluated the autonomic and cardiovascular side-effects of citalopram with particular emphasis on their relation to the age of treated patients. The data that formed the basis for the FDA (USA) approval of citalopram was provided by A/S Lundbeck, (Copenhagen, Denmark). This data base included placebo-controlled short- and long- term studies in major depressed patients. The list of side effect comprised of all "heart rate and rhythm disorders" as well as "autonomic nervous system disorders" that have been reported by at least 5% more than that reported for the placebo group of subjects. The database encompasses 1,342 subjects treated with citalopram 20-60 mg/day for a period of no less than 6 weeks.

Statistically significant age-related distribution was found for 5 side effects: bradycardia, nausea, diarrhea, sweating and headache. Bradycardia was more prevalent in elderly (>65 years) patients as compared to younger population (2.4% vs 0.2%, $p < 0.05$), while gastrointestinal side effects, sweating and headache were less prevalent in the elderly. The age-related differences in the side effect profile may be attributable to altered sensitivity of the serotonergic system.

P01.05

Antidepressant remeron in the treatment of alcoholism

N.N. Ivanets*, T.V. Agibalova. *Research Institute on Addictions, Moscow, Russia*

Antidepressant medications have lately been used successfully to treat chronic alcoholism. At the same time, there is no information concerning the usefulness of a new antidepressant Remeron (mirtazapin) in this respect. So the aim of the present work was to study the effect of Remeron in treating pathological craving for alcohol and affective (depressive) disorders related to alcohol dependence. Thirty male alcoholic patients between the ages of 28 to 54 with the developed alcohol dependence (ICD-10) and alcohol related affective (depressive) disorders were entered into the study. The illness duration varied from 5 to 20 years. Remeron was given in tablets of 30 mg/day for 4 weeks. The therapeutic effect of Remeron was noted as early as the very first days of the treatment course. The study has revealed high therapeutic efficacy of Remeron in the treatment of pathological craving for alcohol and alcohol related affective disorders. Remeron has also anxiolytic, hypnotic and vegetostabilizing effects. So Remeron might be recommended as an effective and harmless medication to be included in the complex therapeutic programs for treating alcoholic patients.

P01.06

Lithium augmentation in venlafaxine non-responders: an open study

G. Bertschy*. *HUG, Belle-Idee, Department of Psychiatry, Geneva, Switzerland*

Thirteen major depressive patients not responding (less than 50% decrease of their baseline MADRS score) to a four-week venlafaxine 300mg treatment were eligible for a four-week open trial of lithium addition. These patients were part of an initial group of 50 patients. If the patients had an insomnia resistant to the allowed sedatives (zopiclone, clorazepate), trazodone could be added to venlafaxine at bedtime during the prelithium phase: 7 of the 13 patients received trazodone. Lithium dose was individually determined according to 24 hrs single dose plasma level: the mean steady state plasma levels ranged between 0.75 and 0.81 mmol/L. Two patients had to stop lithium before the end of the study. Among the 11 other subjects, five patients became responders, including one patient with a dramatic response (dropping of the MADRS score from 40 to 14 in four days) and two patients had a semi-rapid response (within two weeks). The two patients who dropped out did so for similar reasons involving a mixed-manic switch, nausea and trembling. Retrospectively we believe that these may have been moderate cases of serotonin syndrome.

P01.07

Antidepressant and anxiolytic effect of St. John's wort extract ZE-117

M. Friede*, J. Freudenstein. *Schaper & Brümmer GmbH & Co. KG, Department of Medicine, Salzgitter, Germany*

Objectives: The anxi-antidepressant efficacy of ZE-117 was evaluated in depressive patients.

Methods: Three prospective, randomized, multicentre, double-blind controlled studies were conducted in accordance to GCP. Patients (ICD-10 F32.0, F32.1) were treated 6 weeks with 2x250mg/day ZE-117 (Esbericum® forte) or Placebo, Fluoxetine (20mg/day) resp. Imipramine (150mg/day). Severity of depressive complaints was measured by Hamilton Depression Scale (HAMD); anxiety symptoms were evaluated by corresponding subgroup analysis. Secondary variables were Clinical Global Impression (CGI) I-III, analog scales and adverse events (AE).

Results:

Demographic and anamnestic data were comparable.

Based on HAMD-responders ZE-117 was superior to Placebo (56% versus 15%) and Fluoxetine (60% versus 40%) and equivalent to Imipramine (ZE-117: 43; TCA: 40%).

There was a marked decrease of anxiety symptoms during therapy with ZE-117. This relieve was comparable with Fluoxetine and Imipramine and superior to Placebo.

AE were more frequent in patients treated with Fluoxetine or Imipramine in comparison with ZE-117 ($p < 0.01$); and approximately in the same frequency as under Placebo.

Conclusions: ZE-117 shows a favourable benefit-risk ratio in the treatment of the anxi-depressive syndrome in depressive patients

P01.08

Efficacy and tolerability of mirtazapine in HIV-1 infected outpatients

J. Blanch¹*, J. de Pablo¹, G. Masana¹, A. Miñarro², A. Villarroya², A. Rousaud¹, J.M. Gatell¹, C. Gastó¹. ¹ *University of Barcelona Hospital Clinic*; ² *University of Barcelona, Spain*

Objective: Prospective, longitudinal, open-label, observational study to assess the efficacy and tolerability of mirtazapine in the treatment of major depression in HIV-1 infected outpatients. **Methods:** Twenty-seven HIV-1 infected patients with major depression were assessed at baseline and after 1, 2, 4, 8 and 16 weeks of treatment with mirtazapine using Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS), Beck Depression Inventory (BDI), and the Global Clinical Impression (GCI). Side effects were recorded. Outcome of completing patients was analysed using univariate repeated-measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) or Friedman test.

Results: Sixteen patients dropped-out before reaching the last visit, mainly due to somnolence and dizziness (5 patients). Completing patients (41%) showed a significant ($p < 0.05$) improvement in all measures: 58% on GCI, 53% on BDI, and 46% on HADS depression subscale. Most of all the patients improved their insomnia during the first week of treatment. No side effects on sexual functioning were observed. No significant changes on weight were observed.

Conclusions: Despite the risk of abandonment due to side-effects, mirtazapine should be considered in the treatment of depressed HIV-1 infected patients because its rapid improving effect on all measures of depression, especially on sleep disturbances.