

Implementation of Bright Light Therapy as Adjuvant Treatment for Depression and Insomnia Among Inpatients

V. Hantelius¹, S. Steingrimsen², E. Christodoulou¹, Z. Szabó¹

¹Clinical Department of Psychiatry, Sahlgrenska University Hospital, Gothenburg, Sweden ; ²Centre of Ethics Law and Mental Health (CELAM), Sahlgrenska Academy, Gothenburg, Sweden

Introduction: Several effective treatment alternatives exist for depression, however, not everyone responds to antidepressants and the time lag to response can be long. Bright light therapy (BLT) has successfully been used as an adjuvant treatment to antidepressants in severe depression among inpatients.

Aim: The aim of this study was to evaluate the implementation of BLT as an adjuvant treatment among inpatients with depression.

Methods: BLT was introduced as an adjuvant therapy to patients admitted to a psychiatric department in October 2013. The protocol included exposure to 10,000 lux for 30 minutes every day for one week. The first 18 patients completing BLT were compared to 36 inpatient-controls matched for age, sex and diagnosis. All participants filled in Montgomery-Åsberg Depression Rating Scale (MADRS-S) and Insomnia Severity Index (ISI).

Results: The groups did not differ in age, sex or diagnosis. The mean MADRS-S end score was 27 points for the BLT-group and 13 point on the ISI compared to 23 and 13 for the control group ($p=0.52$ and $p=0.89$, respectively). The mean length of stay was 16 days for the BLT-group and 19 for the control group ($p=0.60$). The daily dosage of diazepam was 4.3 mg/day in the BLT-group compared to 4.8 mg/day in the control group ($p=0.73$).

Conclusion: There was no statistically significantly decrease in length of stay in patients treated with BLT. Although the results are non-conclusive from this historical comparison, BLT may provide shorter length of stay and decrease the need for benzodiazepines.